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**Official Report
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Thursday 21 April 2016

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Jeudi 21 avril 2016

**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

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Thursday 21 April 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES

Jeudi 21 avril 2016

The committee met at 0901 in room 151.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Good morning, everybody. I'd like to call the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to order. We're here today to discuss how to proceed with Bill 181, An Act to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts.

The floor is now open for motions. Ms. Hoggarth.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Good morning, everyone.

I move: (1) That the committee meet during its regularly scheduled times on Thursday, May 5, 2016, and Thursday, May 12, 2016, for the purpose of public hearings.

(2) That the Clerk of the Committee post information regarding public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly website, and on Canada NewsWire.

(3) That the deadline for requests to appear be 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 28, 2016.

(4) That the Clerk of the Committee provide a list of all interested persons to the subcommittee following the deadline for requests.

(5) That all witnesses be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

(6) That all witnesses be offered 10 minutes for presentation and nine minutes for questions by committee members, evenly divided on a rotation by caucus.

(7) That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2016.

(8) That amendments to Bill 181 be filed with the Clerk of the Committee by 6 p.m. on Friday, May 13, 2016.

(9) That the committee meet for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 181 on Thursday, May 19, 2016, during its regularly scheduled meeting time.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Is there any discussion on the motion? Mr. Hardeman.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Chair, I have some questions and concerns with the process that got us here. We have a system in this place that says that when a bill is ordered to a committee, that in fact the committee Chair calls a meeting of the subcommittee to decide on a report, as was just read into the record. Being appointed as the

subcommittee designate for the PC Party for this bill, I was waiting for that call so we could have a meeting to talk about how we're going to facilitate the public portion of the committee.

Then, this morning, I get an email that actually came from the House leader's office on the government side, which prepared this report, because the subcommittee has never met. The concern with that is—and it's not so much what's wrong or what's right in here—the government seems to be usurping the opposition's equal voice on the subcommittee to make the decision on what this should read.

For those people watching, there's only one place in the whole process where we, as a party, have the same say as the government side and as the third party. It's a three-way subcommittee, one member from each party to decide not the contents of the bill, not how we're going to vote on the concept of the bill, but how we're going to consult—

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Do you have a point of order?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Yes, point of order.

Mr. Hardeman, I would wholly agree with you. We were going to meet—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): What is your point of order?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: The point of order is that he's making a point to which he may not have substantive information. Yesterday, we were to meet right after question period, and were ready to do so, to go over this in subcommittee, Mr. Hardeman, but the NDP member, Catherine Fife, did not show up.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Ms. Vernile, state your point of order, not—it's not a matter of debate. I didn't hear a point of order there.

Mr. Hardeman, please continue.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I would just continue: I'm not suggesting that that didn't happen, but not being able to, at the last moment—the vote had just taken place. So not being able to get a subcommittee meeting that same day is not out of the ordinary. What is out of the ordinary—and the rules are quite clear that if you have a subcommittee meeting, you cannot have that meeting unless you have a member from every party there. That's to make sure that everybody has input, equal input, into how we run this place.

So when you take that away and say, “Oh, we couldn’t have a subcommittee meeting, so we will have the government take the initiative, and the government House leader will write the subcommittee report and present it to the committee the next day”—no one would believe that anyone made great efforts to find a way to have a subcommittee meeting and have it come to this committee as the report from the subcommittee so we could have this hearing. I take great exception—

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Point of order: Ms. Vernile.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: You’re suggesting it was taken away; it was not taken away. It was scheduled; however, it did not occur because the NDP member, Catherine Fife, did not show up.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): No, Ms. Vernile, that’s not a point of order because the stated purpose of that subcommittee meeting was different. It was not meant to be for Bill 181.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I’m just glad to get it on the record.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): That was not a point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of information, Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Ms. Vernile has suggested that the meeting couldn’t happen because one of our members didn’t show up. One of our members wasn’t in the House at all yesterday, and was never notified, therefore, that there was a subcommittee meeting. Had that been the case, a substitute could have come. I was in the House yesterday; I was not informed. I am here today, and I could have filled in yesterday. That did not happen from the government side. So that’s balderdash, what they’re suggesting over there.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Just to clarify, for all members, yesterday I called subcommittee meeting. I called it for a different purpose, not to review Bill 181’s organization. It was to have a discussion about our meeting with the FAO.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Chair, did you inform Ms. Fife about the subcommittee meeting, though?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of information, Chair? If I had been subbed in before, Ms. Fife would not have been notified; I would have been notified. I was not notified. That is balderdash over there. Can we get on with—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Thank you, Mr. Hatfield.

So, just to be clear, yesterday’s subcommittee meeting was called for one purpose, and that was to discuss the organization of a meeting with the FAO, not to discuss Bill 181. So all the discussion about whether we did or didn’t have a subcommittee meeting yesterday to discuss Bill 181 is moot, because there was no meeting called to discuss Bill 181 at a subcommittee yesterday.

Mr. Hardeman has the floor for his comments.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Going on with that, I understand the government’s comments about the subcom-

mittee, but the last explanation, in fact, makes the situation even worse.

As I mentioned, the subcommittee is meant so that for each party, the representative who has the responsibility, the carriage of the job that’s to be done—I’m representing the Conservative Party as we do the public review of this bill; Mr. Hatfield, of course, represents the third party; and I’m not sure who’s the point person on that for the subcommittee over there, but whoever that is—would be speaking for how we’re going to do the public consultation on this bill.

Now, we all know that the full committee members that are there all the time aren’t necessarily the point person for this bill. So because the vote was just yesterday, there was no opportunity for the Chair to call the subcommittee meeting for this purpose, because at that point the Chair would not have known who the point person would be for the other two parties. So not only was there no meeting held, it wasn’t even enough information for the Chair to have called a meeting. As you’ve explained, Mr. Chair, the meeting for this purpose didn’t happen.

0910

Having said that, I have two real concerns. One is that the main item of this bill, Bill 181, includes changing the way that municipalities can hold their elections. Now, this isn’t the first time that this issue has come before the Legislature. A couple of years ago, a private member had a bill to do just this. It went to committee, and when we got to committee, there was a great debate at the committee—I believe it was the agencies committee—about hearing that one ahead of some other ones. I had the privilege of chairing that meeting. There was great debate in the committee and, finally, the committee decided that an issue, such as the subcommittee’s work, should not be done in full committee; we should adjourn our proceedings and have the subcommittee come back with a recommendation as to how we should proceed with that. That’s exactly what happened.

I think that putting this before that, with absolutely no opportunity for the subcommittee to talk about how this consultation should take place—this is a fine report, if it had been written by a subcommittee. But it’s possible, Mr. Chair, that in fact, because it has such a great impact in the rural parts or the outer parts—away from Toronto, shall we say—of the province of Ontario, maybe we should have some meeting outside of this precinct. We have a week coming up in which we could actually do that.

I don’t know whether the House leader, in his internal office, discussed that issue or not, but if we’d had a subcommittee meeting, that might have come up during the meeting, as to what type of consultation we should be doing before we finish this. This here is written like it’s a closure motion from the Legislature, introduced by the House leader of the governing party. I believe that’s totally wrong.

Think back, folks, to this past week, the discussion we’ve had in the House about changing of election financing rules. We keep hearing from—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hardeman, try to stick to this motion.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: It's directly to this, Mr. Chair. The discussion was about the Premier saying that the Legislature is set up in a democratic way, so people can be heard and the end result will be a democratic solution. If that's true, that set-up includes having a subcommittee meeting before this bill is heard. We haven't done that.

In fact, not only do I think that it's wrong that it came this way, but the Premier seems to think that, too. She believes that we should be following the rules so everybody is heard properly.

I'm saying, as the opposition, that there is only one place where we, as the opposition, have the same power and voice as to what needs doing, which is in how it's done—not what's in the bill, how it's done—and they just took that away from us. I think that's totally wrong, and I really would suggest that we postpone any further debate on this motion until the subcommittee meets to talk over what this report should say.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield, and then Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have great respect for the member from Kitchener Centre, but I believe that she just tipped her hand as to the Liberal majority's intention here on this bill—that they have every intention of ramrodding this bill through the committee, of steamrolling it and of trampling all over the traditional democratic process of the committee—

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Point of order, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Point of order, Ms. Vernile.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Mr. Hatfield is making certain assertions. He used the words “ramrodding” and “steamrolling.” I would assert that this is unparliamentary language. Unless he has developed the powers of mind-reading, he cannot presuppose what it is that I'm thinking or planning.

I would appreciate it if he would not use language like that. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Thank you, Ms. Vernile.

Mr. Hatfield, don't impugn the motives of members of the committee.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Chair. Actually, I wasn't specifying Ms. Vernile; I said that she tipped her hand on the part of the Liberal majority. I do not believe, subject to your interpretation, that words such as “ramrodding,” “steamrolling” or “trampling” are undemocratic in any way, shape or form.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): In any case, Mr. Hatfield—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I will not withdraw those terms.

Let me continue. Mr. Hardeman has laid it out for the members of the committee that haven't been on a subcommittee before, if there are any present. There is a traditional democratic process. It has not been followed.

Initially, we heard from members of the government—not to name anyone—that the process wasn't followed

because the New Democrat didn't show up for the meeting. Thanks to your ruling, that the meeting that was called had nothing to do with the purpose for which a member, not to be named, asserted incorrectly that a member of the New Democrats didn't show up—that wasn't the purpose of the meeting.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): I ruled on that, Mr. Hatfield—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Right, and I'm giving you credit for ruling on it.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Could you stick to discussion of the motion?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'm speaking to Mr. Hardeman's point that if we're going to follow the traditional democratic process, a subcommittee is formed. Members of that subcommittee, whose names you have, are notified of the meeting. We get together, from all three parties, and we attempt to get consensus on the approach we're going to take to the hearing on the bill. That hasn't happened.

Mr. Hardeman has suggested that this committee today should therefore adjourn, recess or whatever until the subcommittee has met and that we follow the accepted practices, the democratic practices and the traditions of this committee, of this House and of this Legislature. I am suggesting to you, sir, that you accept Mr. Hardeman's suggestion or motion, because that's the way we do things around here.

We don't—not to use those similar terms that have been challenged already—try to do other things to take away the rights of the official opposition, of the third party or of the members of this House. We have rights to be heard, we have rights to be consulted and we have rights to have input on a committee hearing process, and that has not happened. Therefore, I think you should rule on Mr. Hardeman's suggestion.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Not to belabour the subcommittee—I think we've heard loud and clear, Chair, from your decision as well—but just to be clear, what we have in front of us is not a report of a subcommittee, as was suggested across the way. It's a motion that this side of the House put forward for discussion this morning.

Like I say, I don't want to relive the subcommittee and all those types of things. We do have a week's break next week, and we thought if we get this organized—and we're prepared to make some adjustments. To be clear, this is not a pretend subcommittee report. It's a motion that has been brought in by this, which is totally appropriate, subject to ruling from the Chair, that anybody can bring a motion to the floor.

I would encourage that we maybe proceed with the motion, besides just wiping it all out. It's a suggestion. Let's talk about some of the issues. Mr. Hardeman suggested that maybe this is not a bad thing, but we might have to make some adjustments. I don't know where those are. I think if we could take it on its face value, what we did here this morning, and not replay—this is not the first time that this has happened where there

wasn't a subcommittee meeting but the actual organization was handled by the whole committee. This is not something that's out of the ordinary.

Chair, I'd like to hear from the other side on the adjustments we might make to this, to what extent those adjustments might be made and what one could support. I would encourage that we carry on with the motion.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Just to carry on with the discussion of the motion, we see the two dates, May 5 and May 12—it doesn't specify where. With municipal issues, over the years, so many MPPs attend AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. I think it was in Niagara Falls last summer.

0920

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Yes, it was.

Mr. Toby Barrett: For a number of years, it was held in Ottawa. I recall I've attended AMO in Windsor, in London. That's the nature of AMO, the province's municipal association, that they do hold their meetings across the province, accessing various regions and convenient for municipal councillors and staff and other people that attend those particular meetings.

I guess I kind of assumed there would have been one day of travel, just given the nature of dealing with an issue that has relevance for municipalities right across the province of Ontario. That's just my thought, not only for this finance committee but also for the subcommittee.

I've certainly chaired many subcommittee meetings over the years. We get together after question period. Question period is coming up in an hour, two hours from now. There is an opportunity, before we break for the week in our ridings, to have a subcommittee meeting. I just throw that out.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hardeman.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I appreciate the comments from my colleague. I think that, really, part of my debate was that there is a need to talk about whether the consultation process that's being proposed is appropriate. That's why the structure of the subcommittee is meant to be able to do that, so that everybody has an equal voice, and then two out of three makes it—recognizing that this full committee gets to accept or to reject that subcommittee report, so it's not to say that the parties have the power to make something happen.

The government side may not realize that there is a big difference between coming into this room and having a debate about the government having to explain why they disagree with the subcommittee report, and us coming in here and speaking against or trying to convince the government members, who all know that what we're debating.

One of the members suggested that this isn't the subcommittee report; this is just a motion you've put forward. Not only is it a motion put forward; it is a motion put forward by the government House leader into this—yes, it was read into the record by one of your members, but I have a copy here with the signature of the executive assistant to the minister, who is the government House

leader, so we know where this came from. It's going to be very difficult to have any member on the opposite side agree with changing what the government House leader has suggested.

I'm just saying that we're not starting from a fair—

Interjections.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Oh, yes, I've been through these before. Everyone will start reading the answer that the government House leader prepared, and that's how we will go through it. I just think that it's just the wrong approach to use.

As the member said, at least we did get a notice that says that we're going to have the organization of Bill 181. So I come here and I would assume that that would be a subcommittee report that they didn't notify me they were preparing. Obviously, they didn't. So we come here and it's just suggested that we have a motion.

I question, Mr. Chair, whether the motion is even in order, because if you're going to have a substantive motion, I think the committee has the right to notice of motion, to know what's coming, so I can do the research on it. I didn't know it was coming, supposedly, until I walked into the room. I think I would just make a motion that we table that motion until we have sufficient time to research as to what we agree with and what we disagree with.

I don't think you can just ride roughshod over the system by not having a subcommittee meeting. I just don't think that's proper. This system is structured for a purpose.

I was thinking, on my drive in this morning, that maybe the finance committee doesn't do a lot of work with bills, so maybe they don't have these subcommittee reports very often. They do pre-budget consultations and so forth, but maybe they don't review a lot of bills. But the committees that review a lot of bills know that the first thing you have to do is have a subcommittee meeting. If you can't get the members together for a subcommittee meeting, it doesn't mean you rush through without one. You figure out how you're going to go about getting one timed in so you can get on with hearing the bill.

There was no closure motion from the House that said that this had to be done by today. There is no closure motion from the Legislature. If they wanted us to ride—shall I use the word?—roughshod over the system because we're in a hurry to get it done, the Legislature has the power to do that through a closure motion and tell the committee that they have to move along. None of that happened. This is here. In the fullness of time, in the proper structure, we should review this bill and we should not rush it through without having the protections in there for all three parties to make sure that we're doing the best that we can.

As the critic for the party, we have a lot of stakeholders who we have to deal with. We have a responsibility to know how the bill is going to affect them, how it's processed. The fact that unbeknownst to me, within a week they're going to have been notified, they're going

to get three days to get their name in, then they maybe get to speak and then it's over—if that's how quick it has to be done, I think that as a member of the Legislature I have a right to know that, or I had a right to know yesterday when the House passed it and sent it to committee that that's how it was going to be.

I don't think the House leader has the right to run it from his office and make this committee do his bidding because he's decided he wants this done in this order. Again, I request that the Chair give serious consideration as to the appropriateness of dealing with this without having a subcommittee report.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: That was to be my point exactly. I think we should rule after discussion with Mr. Rennie and others on whether the subcommittee should meet first before we even deal with the motion that's on the floor.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Just a quick, short comment, Chair, to the comment that we need to travel and all those things: I'm just wondering—and I know it's not in a motion here—but certainly part of the hearings could use technology. We're in the 21st century; it's 2016.

Interjection.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's 2016, right? Isn't that what I said?

Mr. Arthur Potts: “Because it's 2016?” That's a phrase in my head.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Certainly, in the past, not too long ago, when I was on committee we dealt with input from the public through telephone. I know it's not new; it's been around for a while. And certainly people have contacted us, of course, in writing.

We're allowing an ample amount of time. It's not that the hearings are going to start tomorrow and end by Friday at 5 o'clock. We have well over a week to get the notice out. I would suggest, if we get to that stage, that those notices will be specific on how people are allowed to participate, to get a more fulsome discussion, Chair.

To say that we're just having the meeting here in this room or whatever committee room and nobody is allowed to come in—I would suggest, for example, in fairness, to make an amendment to the motion to do with that piece where we say that witnesses are scheduled first-come, to have some kind of a ranked system. We've done that in the past, where based on the number of people who want to talk to us as a committee, it's evenly split amongst all three parties, to be fair.

Ontario is a big province. I don't have to preach that. As suggested by MPP Barrett, to say that we can travel at least one day, I'm not sure to what communities we would go. We're talking about the Municipal Elections Act. All 444 municipalities all go through it; it's not just a select few. So I'm not sure where we go to.

My understanding is that the president of the AMO—and I had a chat with him—will be applying to be a delegation to come and speak to us, and with the exception of

Toronto, he represents the majority—not all—of the municipalities of Ontario.

0930

We talk about a potential opportunity to alter the way—to give the municipality an option—the way they vote. Yes, it's different; absolutely. But, I'm going to repeat, it's 2016.

I think municipalities have been given ample warning since, I believe, last July when we started talking about this. I talked to a lot of folks at AMO. I know the minister has talked to a lot of folks at AMO. There were at least one, maybe two municipalities that, on that issue of ranked balloting, were supportive. Now they've changed their mind, and that's fair. That's democracy at work. Municipalities are driven by a democratic process, just like we are here. We get elected by the people we represent.

To say that there's not an opportunity to contact us—I just worry that if we pick one day, then who picks what, when and where we go? Having the opportunity to talk to us by phone, by email, by snail mail—and the folks that we choose equally, as a committee, to talk to us would give us ample—and in that part alone, the people are going to be able to talk to us. If my math is correct—and I'm not saying it's always correct—we'll have about 10 and a half hours of time allocated to listen to folks who want to talk to us one-on-one or by phone.

So I would encourage that we carry on with the motion, as I said a minute ago, and look at how we can tweak it, like one of the suggestions I just made. People expect, when we're here for the four years that we have the privilege of serving our constituents and the people of Ontario, that we get things done. I'm going to end it there.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Potts?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have great respect for the member opposite, and particularly—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: A point of order, Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Yes, Mr. Hatfield?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Chair, you've been asked to rule on whether we should even be discussing the motion. We're continuing to discuss it, as opposed to hearing from you on the request that you decide whether it's in order or not, or whether we go a different route.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): The motion before us is in order. It would certainly be up to the committee to decide to go a different route.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: So, by accepting the motion, you're ruling that the subcommittee has no business meeting prior to this motion being heard?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): No, that's not my ruling, Mr. Hatfield. My ruling is that the motion is in order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Mr. Hardeman has suggested to you that the subcommittee should meet and then we should talk about what we're going to present. This motion jumped the queue on that process. So are we just spinning our wheels listening to this before the sub-

committee meets to decide if that's going to be the approach forward?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): The committee could decide that it wishes to proceed with the subcommittee, but the motion is in order before the committee.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Well, if that's the case, I have an amendment I'd like to make before we continue.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield, the motion is in order, and it is amendable.

Mr. Potts has the floor.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Can I put my name on the list, then, please?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Certainly.

Mr. Potts?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Chair. As I was saying, I have tremendous respect for the member opposite, particularly the sense of due process and the considerations and the historical and democratic traditions that we abide by around the House. I share the concern, very much so, that a subcommittee wasn't called in order to vet the ordering of this motion before us and I appreciate that. At the same time, I share the concerns of all of us that we have a lot on the agenda, a lot on the plate, which we want to move forward. I appreciate the fact that it wasn't a directed order from the Legislature—closure—that we meet on a certain timeline, but also that we want to move this thing forward.

We shared this motion with the member opposite much earlier in the day today. There was some time to think about it. We appreciate that.

I want to just clarify the record that we haven't been directed by anybody and would never take a direction from anybody that we just do exactly what we're told to do. That's not our way. We're all free, independent thinkers here and we'll work very hard to do the thing that is the right thing to do. We're looking forward to the input from the members opposite about how this might move forward. I mean, this is not a new subcommittee-type report. We see this in every committee, and there are adjustments: timelines, numbers, dates. There can be adjustments. We are totally open to those suggestions from the members opposite.

The suggestion that we travel, however—I think the member would appreciate that in order to have hearings outside of the precinct, we need an order from the House. So even if the subcommittee were to come forward with it, it's my understanding that it would have to be ruled out of order. Maybe we can get some clarification on that from the Chair, but it's my understanding that the House has to be able to direct to hold hearings outside of the precinct, which it has not done, in which case we can avail ourselves of the technology—phone calls, written submissions and such—and have ample opportunity for people to have deputations here and to speak their mind, and that's what we're hoping to do.

We're open to hearing, outside of travelling, what you'd like to do with this in terms of timelines and numbers and deputations and such. Our minds are open to it. This is not a fait accompli as it stands here.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Potts, just to clarify something: The committee can choose to travel. However, it has to be during periods of time that the committee is authorized to be sitting.

Mr. Barrett?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Just very briefly, I guess, I just wanted to reiterate the importance of one day of travel. I gave you the reasons for that and offer that as advice not only to the committee but, most importantly, to the subcommittee.

I'm just surprised that this committee or other committees would make a decision without having a subcommittee meeting. As I said, I've chaired a number of committees and I've chaired a number of subcommittees. Peter Kormos sat on the committee. Peter Kormos sat on the subcommittee. As a Chair with Peter Kormos sitting there, I just don't think I could have gotten away with this. I just leave that with you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Chair. I have an amendment to make to the motion that's on the floor, that we delete everything after the first "That" and replace with the following:

"the Chair write to the House leaders for authorization to meet during the summer recess for purpose of public hearings, with dates and locations to be determined by the subcommittee.

"That dates, deadlines and timelines for other related business be determined by the subcommittee following the response of the House leaders."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Do you have it in writing, Mr. Hatfield?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I do. I have it in printing—not writing, but printing.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): We'll have a quick recess just so that can be photocopied and distributed to members.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): We'll recess for five minutes.

The committee recessed from 0939 to 0945.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): The committee is back in session.

When we left off, Mr. Hatfield had tabled an amendment. Is there any debate on the amendment? No? Are there any comments or questions on the amendment?

Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Chair, I'm not sure that I can support this amendment. Once again, referring to the comments made before, this was just presented to us five minutes ago. I think we would probably need a couple of more minutes, maybe five minutes or so. As it stands, I can't see us supporting it, because this kind of takes us into no man's land here, starting all over again.

I wonder, Chair, if I could ask for at least another five-minute recess to consider some of this stuff.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Is there agreement from the committee for another brief recess? All right, we're recessed for another five minutes.

The committee recessed from 0947 to 0949.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): The committee is back in session.

Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Chair, as I said a minute ago, for the time being, I would put aside the amendment to the motion.

But here is what I would suggest—and I don't have it in writing, but I'll speak very slow: That this committee adjourn and that we call a meeting of the subcommittee right after question period. I believe this committee reconvenes at 2 o'clock?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): No, if you adjourn, Mr. Rinaldi, and committee agreed to adjourn, then we're finished today.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: So let's not adjourn, then. Let me get to where I want to go and then please help.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): You can recess.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Recess. So recess in order for the subcommittee to meet right after question period, and then the meeting reconvenes, I think, at—2 o'clock is our regular time. Is it 2 p.m.?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Yes, 2 p.m.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: At 2 p.m. to deal with the subcommittee report. Is that—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Rinaldi, to place that is certainly in order. However, a 2 p.m. meeting was not scheduled in advance. No advance notice was given. It would require unanimous consent to proceed in that way.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: From the committee?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): From the committee.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: So I guess you need to ask for unanimous consent. That's what I asked for.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Rinaldi has put forward a motion. Does everybody understand the motion? Is there any discussion on that motion? No? Is there unanimous consent for that motion? Agreed. Very well. We will recess until 2 p.m. and the subcommittee will meet immediately after question—Mr. Hatfield?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: And where is the subcommittee meeting?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): I believe in the opposition lobby.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Point of order, Ms. Hoggarth.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I just want to ask a question. Once motions are read in, do they not have to be dealt with?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): No.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'm just asking for my own personal—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): By what Mr. Rinaldi did, it was an agreement to postpone the other motions that were on the floor.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Okay, thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Committee is recessed.

The committee recessed from 0952 to 1400.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): The committee is back in session. When we recessed, we were debating Mr. Hatfield's amendment to Ms. Hoggarth's motion on Bill 181. I do note that we also have a subcommittee report before us now.

Is there further debate on Mr. Hatfield's amendment? No? So we put the question on Mr. Hatfield's amendment.

Ms. Vernile.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Chair, just for the record, as we're starting fresh this afternoon, could you or could the member please reread the amendment?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: With your permission Chair, delete everything after the first "That" and replace it with the following:

"the Chair write to the House leaders for authorization to meet during the summer recess for purpose of public hearings, with dates and locations to be determined by the subcommittee.

"That dates, deadlines and timelines for other related business be determined by the subcommittee following the response of the House leaders."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Any further debate? Are members ready to vote?

All in favour? Opposed? That does not carry.

Ms. Hoggarth, your motion?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'm going to withdraw that motion.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Ms. Hoggarth wishes to withdraw her motion, so Ms. Hoggarth's motion is withdrawn.

Now before us we have the subcommittee report. A member of the committee must read the subcommittee report into the official record. Mr. Hardeman, do you want to do that?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a draft report here of the subcommittee.

Your subcommittee on committee business met on Thursday, April 21, 2016, to consider the method of proceeding on Bill 181, An Act to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts, and recommends the following:

(1) That the committee meet at Queen's Park on Thursday, May 2, 2016, and Thursday, May—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hardeman, you said May 2.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: May 5; I saw a "2" there—May 5, 2016, and Thursday, May 12, 2016, for the purpose of public hearings.

(2) That the Chair write to the House leaders asking authorization for the committee to meet for one day during the week of May 23, 2016, at a location to be determined by the committee.

(3) That the Clerk of the Committee post information regarding public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly website, and on Canada NewsWire.

(4) That the deadline for requests to appear be 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 28, 2016.

(5) That the Clerk of the Committee provide a list of all interested presenters to the subcommittee following the deadline for requests.

(6) That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to schedule all interested presenters, if all requests received by the deadline can be accommodated.

(7) That the subcommittee provide the Clerk of the Committee a prioritized list of presenters chosen from the Clerk's list, should the number of requests exceed the number of time slots available.

(8) That late requests from interested presenters be accommodated, space permitting.

(9) That the witnesses be offered 10 minutes for presentation and nine minutes for questions by committee members, evenly divided on a rotation by caucus.

(10) That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on the last day of public hearings.

(11) That amendments to Bill 118 be filed with the Clerk of the Committee—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hardeman, the bill number.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Bill 181?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): You said Bill 118, so if you could reread it.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'll go back to number (11): That amendments to Bill 181 be filed with the Clerk of the Committee by 6 p.m. on the Tuesday following the last day of public hearings.

(12) That the committee meet for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 181 on its next regularly scheduled meeting date following the last day of public hearings.

(13) That the research officer provide a summary of the oral and written submissions by the Monday following the last day of public hearings.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Thank you, Mr. Hardeman. Is there any discussion on the subcommittee report? Ms. Vernile.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you very much, Chair. I do appreciate the time that everyone gave this afternoon as we met in subcommittee to go over all of these issues. I do want to state, for the record, that I do agree with Mr. Hardeman and Mr. Hatfield on point 1 and points 3 through 13, and did so in our subcommittee meeting.

But for the record, I disagreed with point number 2, "That the Chair write to the House leaders asking authorization for the committee to meet for one day during the week of May 23, 2016 at a location to be determined by the committee." My commentary at the time was that it's unnecessary for us to have to go on the road and be selective with one particular community and disregard other communities in Ontario.

Also, we can give the opportunity for people to call in and to speak to us through conference calls, as we have done many times in the past. So we would have that extension to the people of Ontario who wish to comment on Bill 181.

The fact that we did receive 3,400 submissions from the public, from municipal leaders and from staffers on this particular issue, I think, is a demonstration of the fact that we have been inclusive.

I would have to disagree with the point that the opposition would like us to take this on the road, as I believe that it's costly and unnecessary. We do have provisions within the way we are going to handle this so that people can contact us to give us their feedback.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Ms. Hoggarth, you had your hand up.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Yes. There are several points that I agree with in the subcommittee report, but there are some amendments that we would like to make.

We would like to take number 2 away, which is, I think, what Ms. Vernile just said.

Numbers 1 and 3 are fine.

Number 4: "That the deadline for requests to appear be 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 28, 2016"—which is what is in there. Sorry.

Number 5 is fine.

Number 6: "That all witnesses be offered 10 minutes for presentation and nine minutes for questions by committee members, evenly divided on a rotation by caucus."

Number 7—

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Excuse me. I think that you've missed the numbers. You're looking on the wrong sheet for the numbers.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Oh, sorry.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): You should be following the subcommittee report.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Okay. Number 6 is fine.

Number 7: That's fine.

Number 8: That's fine—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: What isn't fine?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: What isn't fine?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: That might speed things up.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Number 11 is not fine. The rest is fine.

I agree with MPP Vernile that there be no travel. There are lots of ways for us to get submissions without travel.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): I just wanted to be clear, Ms. Hoggarth: Did you move an amendment?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I did. Number 8, that the amendments be at 12 p.m., Monday, May 16—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: That's not number 8.

Mr. Arthur Potts: That's number 11.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Sorry, it's number 11—by 12 p.m. on Monday, May 16, 2016.

We're okay with it being ranked by the subcommittee or their delegates.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: So just for clarification, for my purposes, is she saying, as Ms. Vernile did, that they want number 2 deleted and number 11 is the only other one that they had a problem with?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): That's what I believe Ms. Hoggarth amended.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Ms. Hoggarth, could you put those amendments in writing and submit them to the Clerk?

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): The Clerk advises me that we should recess for—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Yes, please.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): —for five minutes or so.

The committee recessed from 1410 to 1418.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): The committee will reconvene. Before we recessed, Ms. Hoggarth, you were moving an amendment.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Yes.

I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended as follows:

(1) That clause number 2 be struck out; and,

(2) That in clause number 11 the word “Tuesday” be struck out and replaced with “Monday”.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Thank you. I just wanted to bring to the attention of the committee the advice that staff gave me that, should your number 2 be adopted, amending clause number 11, that has an impact on item number 13 on the subcommittee report. So you may want to make an adjustment to that as well.

Maybe, Mr. Parker, you could explain—or Mr. Hardeman?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I think it would be part of the debate as we’re debating whether that previous one should be changed. I think that’s the real challenge here. The benefit of changing—I would like to hear from the government side, because in fact it does take away the ability of research to have the weekend and Monday to get their summary ready for the committee to deal with. It has to be ready Monday morning, so they would have to have it done on Thursday or Friday, or take away his whole weekend just to do the summary. He may have to do that anyway.

The question is, is there really enough benefit to having number 11 change from Tuesday to Monday, to cause the commotion of trying to find time for research to put the thing together?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): I was not attempting to direct the debate; I was just pointing out that it has implications on item number 13.

Further discussion on Ms. Hoggarth’s amendments? Mr. Hardeman.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Chair, I just want to speak primarily to number 2. There was a fair bit of discussion at committee on number 2 as to whether we shouldn’t have some hearings beyond the city of Toronto. A lot of the issues—particularly the big issue of ranked ballots, but there’s another issue in there that the people who don’t represent rural areas wouldn’t be too much involved in: the big issue of how this bill deals with volunteer firefighters if they want to run for council, too. In my community, I was one of those people. We still

have a lot of people who are both on council and in the fire department.

With this bill they could still do that, except that they can’t do that during the election period. So all of a sudden they have to take a leave of absence from being a volunteer to put the fire out if their neighbour’s house is on fire because they’re running for municipal office. Not all municipal firefighters would agree with that, but in Toronto we don’t have any volunteer firefighters, so the people here wouldn’t be interested.

I think the reason that it was suggested at committee was that—we should go to North Bay and the north, where both of those things exist. The people may very well have a totally different view on ranked ballots for municipal elections. At the same time, all around in the north, they have volunteers. I’m not sure that their emergency services would run very well for the length of period—we’re also, incidentally in the bill, extending the writ period, so they would not have the ability to answer the call during those six or seven or eight weeks—it may even be longer—from the middle of July till the first part of October. That’s a long time that they’re not allowed to do their volunteering within the fire service.

It was suggested that we go to North Bay and hear from the people in the north to see what they thought of these changes that are being made. I think it’s very important that we don’t just discard that because we think the people have heard enough.

The comment was made that we’ve heard from 3,400 people. I’m not saying it isn’t so, but I haven’t seen any evidence that there was one of those 3,400 who spoke about the impact there was going to be upon the fire departments, because there wasn’t any fire department that I knew of where that issue was even being discussed. They weren’t part of the consultation that caused that to happen. I can tell you there wouldn’t have been a single volunteer firefighter that came forward and said, “You know, what you really should do in this bill is make sure that if I decide to run for council, I should have to take a leave of absence from the fire department to do that.” I think the government side would agree that that’s not likely happened in those 3,400.

I really think it makes sense, too, to go to the north and to find out what these people think about this. That’s why I’m supporting—I’m not supporting taking it out; I support leaving it in.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yes, at the subcommittee we talked about the possibility of getting permission from the House leader to take it on the road. Mr. Hardeman has already enunciated a lot of the things that were said. It was also suggested—we threw out North Bay; we talked about Thunder Bay, we talked about Sault Ste. Marie—communities in the north that we don’t normally hear from. It’s a lot easier for people in the north to get to one of their own locations as opposed to coming all the way down here. I am disappointed, I guess, that the government doesn’t want to hear from the north on this issue.

During the debate in the House yesterday when we talked about Peter Kormos, I was reminded of one of his

favourite lines: “The Liberals don’t want to work.” If Mr. Kormos was here today, he would probably be saying the same thing: The Liberals don’t want to work, they don’t want to go on the road, they don’t want to listen to the people to get input.

To the position that Ms. Vernile suggested, that we’ve already heard from 3,400 people, there were perhaps 3,400 submissions that were made to the merits of bringing in amendments to the Municipal Elections Act, but none of those people, as of yet, have been consulted on, “Okay, you told us you wanted something. This is the wording we’ve come up with. Do you agree with the wording we’ve come up with? Did we capture correctly what you had suggested to us that you would like to see in this act, or did we leave out something very important to you that either we didn’t hear correctly or we put in here incorrectly?”

The purpose of going on the road to those smaller communities, especially in the north, is to say to those people who may have made a submission, “Did we get it right?” before we present it to the Legislature. I think that’s an important thing. You can ask people for their opinion but then, when you put their opinion into proposed legislation, you would, I would think, first want to check with them, “Is this what your intent was, did we capture that correctly?”

I’m disappointed that we can’t take it on the road. Ms. Vernile started off by saying that because we only talked about one community, it would leave out a whole bunch of other communities that we wouldn’t get to. Well, I fully support going to a whole bunch of communities. I suggested one, I suggested two, I suggested three: Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay and North Bay. I’ll go to Pembroke. I don’t care. Let’s go. I’ll give up my constituency week and make that happen. I’m here, prepared to work, prepared to listen, and prepared to consult on the merits of this bill and the wording in this bill.

This is going to affect every municipal council in the province. It’s going to affect school board trustees across the province. There’s a lot of information out there and we just want to make sure we get it right. We don’t want to bring in bad law. We don’t want to bring in laws that we are going to have to change because we didn’t get it right the first time.

I cannot support not taking it on the road, especially because of what we suggested at committee, that we’d go to the north, and I think the people in the north deserve to be heard on this.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Thank you. Mr. Potts?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Chair. I agree that people in the north should absolutely be heard but I think you overstate the case to say that we won’t hear from them. I know that our members from Thunder Bay and Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie will be very active in ensuring that there is an opportunity that those ideas be heard. They can be heard through letters and through phone calls, as happens regularly around here.

I point out that the central tenets of this bill are all promissory. They are not directory, in the sense that we

are not telling municipalities to have ranked ballots; we are giving them the option. The city of Toronto has very strongly, in the past, asked us to do this. Rather than just put it in the City of Toronto Act, as we have done with other pieces of legislation such that now other municipalities are coming to us and saying, “We want that authority too,” we’re saying let’s put it in all municipalities.

I know that the local volunteer firefighters will come to their local councils and they will make the pitch about what the rules should be, if there are allowed to be ranked ballots in the next municipal elections, and they will make that case. They will make it very clearly, on a municipality-by-municipality basis. But as the member, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, said, there are 444 municipalities, so you are not really going to canvass the entire spectrum but people will have a chance to write in. We support not taking it on the road for a day.

To the other concern on our second motion, that “Tuesday” be struck out and replaced with “Monday,” our concern is if we go with Tuesday, it’s only going to give us one day before we go to clause-by-clause hearings to put all the millions and hundreds of motions that will likely be coming from the other side. We think we have got the legislation pretty well but we’ll listen to what people have to say, and maybe there will be some motions that we want to bring in as well. But we don’t want to have just one day for you to be looking at our amendments and getting a sense of what we should do with them or us to be looking at your amendments.

1430

By moving it to Monday—I appreciate there may be an issue here with legislative research. I would be interested in legislative research telling us whether he would have difficulty reporting by Friday. That would give time for people to reflect on it.

I know that you’ll be doing notes every day during the course of the hearings and having a chance to give us a report on Friday. We can maybe make a further amendment, then, to clause 13.

I’d be interested in hearing, Chair, from Mr. Parker on that matter.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Parker?

Mr. Jeff Parker: To answer some of the discussion that has been going on: The reason we set Monday for the deadline is because at the subcommittee, the members decided that they wanted to see both the oral and written submissions. In legislative research, it will be tight, but we can likely have the oral submissions fully completed for you by the end of Friday. The written submissions, because we can’t control the number of those that may come in at the last minute, are the ones that we are—I can’t promise you that we’d actually be able to complete those by the end of Friday and get that to you in the package at the quality that the members deserve.

Mr. Arthur Potts: The review of them all, in summary.

Mr. Jeff Parker: Yes, it’s a summary of the testimony that we’ve heard and to get an idea of what groups

and what individuals have made submissions and made similar recommendations so that you have those for your process of crafting amendments.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Am I correct in saying, though, that all of those submissions would be shared with us on an ongoing basis as they came in, in which case, we'll have a chance to reflect on them as well, and we won't necessarily, on the written, have to rely on your summaries? We can actually do some of them ourselves. We may have to work a little harder. I know the members love working a little bit harder.

Mr. Jeff Parker: Yes, you will have access to all the written submissions as they come in, as we will. We just wouldn't be able to summarize those that came in at the deadline.

If we were to move forward, then, we may want to restate the 13th clause. If we decide not to amend the 13th clause, assuming the current amendment were to pass, then we'd be in a position where legislative research would still fulfill its mandate to get you oral and written submissions, but it would come on Monday, potentially very close to the deadline for amendments—if that is clear.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Well, I'm tempted to push a motion here that makes it Friday for oral and Monday—or best efforts.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Potts, what I'd suggest is that if you want to table an amendment, put it in writing and we can get back to you on that as the debate unfolds.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Sure.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hardeman?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I've got a couple of things that relate to the comments from across the way. First of all, in number 11, changing the Tuesday to Monday: We can have great debate, but as I asked the Clerk at the subcommittee—and I can ask him here again—it's a procedural time for the amendments. Because the committee is not time-allocated from the Legislature, as a member of the committee, I can introduce an amendment to the bill while we're doing the clause-by-clause. The deadline, whether it's Monday or Tuesday, is only there to facilitate the presenting of the review or the analysis from legislative research from all the things that we've had.

So my view is that there would be a much better chance of—getting the information from them and then me being able to prepare the amendments and get them done so that you have a chance to look at them all before the clause-by-clause is likely to be more accurate if we have till Tuesday than if we had to have it done by Monday. If we turn half of them in on Monday, then the other half will come on Thursday when we start the clause-by-clause—because no one can stop any member of the committee from introducing an amendment at the time of the clause-by-clause. So I think it's kind of a moot point to be debating that one. I'll leave it at that. I'm willing to settle for whatever you come up with.

The other thing that I think is rather interesting is that it was mentioned that we didn't need to go to the north

because they'll hear from their members. If that's true, then why are we having these hearings at all? Because I'm sure that the good folks in Beaches–East York are going to hear from their member. So why do we need to provide them with the opportunity to speak directly to the committee, but not the people in the north? That, to me, doesn't make any sense.

The other part was the firefighters and the ranked ballot. I just want to point out that the issues with the two are not connected. The firefighters have no problem with the ranked ballot; it's that under this bill they have to take a leave of absence from being a volunteer firefighter for 12 or 13 weeks, or whatever it is, from mid-July until election day in October—not because that's their job, because they have another job, but they volunteer and find they can't go out on a call. They can't be part of the volunteer department during the time that they're running for election.

Now, until other legislation is changed, after they get elected, they can go back to being a volunteer firefighter, because the Municipal Act allows that to happen. I'm not saying that's not going to change, but that's the way it is now. It seems strange to me that we would take this approach, but even stranger that we wouldn't want the fire departments to have an opportunity to speak to that, particularly in areas where they have almost all-volunteer departments. That's why I think going to the north is a great idea. Like I said, in the north, they have no concerns about the choice.

The one comment I have heard already in the debate about ranked ballots is not whether it's good or bad, but that because of how it's being implemented, which is the choice of the municipalities, you're going to have a different way of running municipal elections from municipalities right side by side. One municipality does it; the other doesn't do it, and all of a sudden we have a patchwork of all kinds of rules and regulations.

It's the same with the election financing. When you make it a local choice, everybody gets to make a different choice. So you can have corporate donations on the south side of the town line, but you can't have it on the north side of the town line because that's a different municipality. I think we need to hear from the municipal people in those areas that are going to be affected by that issue and hear what they think about that.

I think the member said that he'd heard comments about ranked ballots being a good idea, but maybe we should talk to these 3,400 people again to see whether they think it should be discretionary or should be mandated that they all have to do it. I think you might get a different answer. That's why I think it's so important that we get as broad a section of the people that we can to talk to, as to what the end result of this bills should be.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Ms. Vernile?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Respectfully, I would say that we've had a very fulsome discussion on this today. I would submit to you that we move ahead, and we vote on the subcommittee amendment as presented by MPP Hoggarth.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): No, I don't think there's calling the question here.

Do you have any other comments? Because I have a list of people who indicated they want to speak.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm just encouraging us to move forward and vote on this because we seem to hear the same thing being repeated over and over again.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): That's unfortunately often politics.

Mr. Hatfield?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Just if I could, Mr. Potts had suggested that the city of Toronto had talked about being in favour of ranked ballots. We've heard from the minister—Laura will correct me if I'm wrong—that he has heard at one point or another from Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton and London; I think those are the four that he has mentioned. But in some of those municipalities, or at least one of those municipalities, the members of those municipal councils have changed their mind now.

I'm not sure if the city of Toronto councillors currently in office were the same ones that presented prior or, once they're in office, whether their opinion has now changed: "Are you still in favour of ranked ballots or not?" So there is a question of going back and saying, "Is this what you really intended?"

Somebody had suggested to me that in certain regions with—I don't know, make it up, make up a number—21 or 22 people in a regional government, are you going to have to rank your first choice out of those 22, and how long is it going to take you to mark your ballot when you go down? Or is it going to be the top 21—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield, if you could keep your comments on the amendments before us. We're not debating the bill.

1440

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I respect your opinion, Chair, and I will try to do that. I'll be very brief. It's just that what I was saying, I thought, gave legitimacy to the argument that because you've listened to 3,400 people, you want to check back with some of them at least—some who won't necessarily travel to Toronto in person to talk to you—to make sure that what ended up in legislation is what they thought they were going to get when they first presented to the committee. That's why I had suggested going on the road, especially to the north.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Ms. Hoggarth.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I believe that number 2 should be out of there. I do think that anyone who's interested in this will either do a written submission or an email submission, or they can call in or, if they're so inclined, come here. I know AMO will. If they've changed their mind since then, we'll hear about it.

I don't think there's any need to go anywhere in order to hear everyone's views. I'm sure that my colleague across the table here has already talked to volunteer firefighters, and they're ready to tell us, no matter where we are, that they would like an amendment. So I don't think that we need to travel with this bill.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Potts.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Yes, very shortly, Chair—thank you very much to the member, Mr. Hardeman, for his comments, particularly for allowing me to realize again that they do have the option for putting amendments afterwards.

I won't put a third motion at this point. I'll stick with what we have, and I'm prepared to vote on it whenever the committee sees fit.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Dong.

Mr. Han Dong: I'm just reading again the second point here: "authorization for the committee to meet for one day during the week of May 23, 2016."

In the limited time that I've spent here as a member, I've travelled with a select committee; I've travelled with public accounts. Whichever way, whether by flying or by bus, it takes a lot of time, especially if we're travelling by bus—three hours or four hours to a location, both ways. I think the time could be better used if we can sit in here and speak to people, whether via telephone or other devices. I think in that time frame, we can hear from a lot more people.

Contrary to the comments made that the Liberals don't want to work, to that point, the caucus on this side actually wants to hear more people, via telephone, from more places in Ontario. I think that's a much more efficient way to do it without travelling. When you travel, it costs more money. It takes more time on the road. Less work gets done; fewer people get heard. That's my point.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'm just looking in here. I don't see anything in here about teleconferencing or Skype, unless I'm missing it. Mr. Dong said he wants to hear people on the phone. I don't see it. Maybe there's a number I'm not getting here.

Are you making an amendment to add something here that says we'll be doing that?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): The Clerk advises me that that's a logistical issue that the Clerks handle anyway.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: The Clerk will do it instead of Mr. Dong?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Yes.

Mr. Han Dong: It's a standard practice here. If there are people from a remote area who want to participate and want to present, they can do it via telephone. You've been here longer than I have, so you know we've done this before in the past. I'm just pointing this out.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): The Clerk advises me that if a witness states that they wish to participate by teleconference, then we accommodate their wish. We don't have to be explicit about it.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I will sleep better tonight, knowing that that's the intent of the committee.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): You can move an amendment, Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Well, if you want to take half an hour for me to do that, I'd be delighted to.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hardeman.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I don't want to prolong the debate. You know I'm one who likes to get it done

quickly. I just can't get my mind around the suggestion that somehow, consulting people outside of Toronto isn't as important as consulting the people in Toronto.

Interjection.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: No, that's exactly what you said, because—

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Order.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: We're going to have meetings for the people in Toronto, two days of hearings for the people who can come to Toronto. Anything more than that, "Why can't they use the telephone?" Well, then the question becomes why can't the people of Toronto use the telephone? Why can't we save all this money and not have these meetings?

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Order. Mr. Hardeman has the floor.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: It seems to me we're trying to suggest—Mr. Dong mentioned that it takes too long. "We've got better things to do with our time." To me, that's—

Mr. Han Dong: That's not what I said.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: That's what you said: It takes a long time. To me, it's worth the time to make sure we do this right. I think the people have a right to be heard and I think just for expediency's sake—

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Debate is through the Chair. Mr. Hardeman has the floor.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Chair, democracy is expensive, but the people of Ontario have decided that they want the money spent so they can be heard.

You are not going to hear anybody complain if the government side agrees to go to North Bay. You're not going to hear one person in North Bay say, "I wish you would have saved the money; I could have just given you a call." They're not going to do that.

I believe that if there were so many people who spoke to needing the bill and wanting it done, I agree with Mr. Hatfield that we should now check with some of these people and find out whether this bill actually does what they asked for. In some cases, we may hear it's not.

With that, I'll leave it, Mr. Chair. The committee will vote as they see fit.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Dong, now you have the floor.

Mr. Han Dong: I just want to make a last comment. Physically, Queen's Park is in Toronto.

To my point, with the time that we spend on travelling, we can use that same time to hear from people from North Bay, Ottawa, Windsor or anywhere in the province. It does not stop them from calling in. There's 24 hours a day, the same as everybody. If we spend eight hours travelling, that's eight fewer hours we could spend on listening to people. That's my point.

Queen's Park is in Toronto. If it was in North Bay, then I would say, "Let's do it in North Bay."

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hardeman, I made sure you had the courtesy of not being interrupted, so please don't interrupt Mr. Dong.

Mr. Han Dong: I'm done.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hardeman.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I just wanted to say that I know travel takes a lot of time and I know that the technology that's being spoken about is in this legislative building. I also know that every day, I spend four hours on the road because I want to be here in person to talk to the issues that I'm here for. I think we should not use the travelling time to say, "Other people shouldn't have that same right to actually speak face to face."

That's really what this is saying. I object to that.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Any further debate? Seeing none, on the amendment by Ms. Hoggarth, all in favour—

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: A recorded vote, please.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): A recorded vote has been requested.

Ayes

Dong, Hoggarth, Potts, Vernile.

Nays

Hardeman, Hatfield.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): That is adopted.

On the subcommittee report—did you want to make any further amendments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I had a couple here, really long ones, but I think it would probably take the rest of the afternoon to read them. So in the interest of getting on with life, I think I'll—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): You're a scholar and a gentleman.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Let the record show.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): On the subcommittee report, as amended, all those in favour?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Recorded.

Ayes

Dong, Hoggarth, Potts, Vernile.

Nays

Hardeman, Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I thought I had my hand up.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): So the subcommittee—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: A clarification, please.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): One moment. The subcommittee report, as amended—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: No, before you do that, we voted on number 2—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): The vote's been taken, Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: On number 11? I don't believe you mentioned number 11. You only—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield, I called the vote on the report, as amended. That was the vote that we had taken.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: But you did indicate number 2. You did not indicate number 11 on that.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): No.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Am I wrong? I could be wrong.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Mr. Hatfield, I asked you whether you wanted to table any further amendments. You declined—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: That's not my amendment.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): —and the vote was on the subcommittee report, as amended.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Point of order: I didn't say anything in the midst of the vote, because I didn't want to disrupt the voting patterns. But I'd really appreciate it if we had a call for a recorded vote before you called the vote. The ask for a recorded vote came after we were already voting, which is contrary to the rule—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): It was contemporaneous, I think.

Mr. Arthur Potts: A little earlier would be appreciated.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): We don't have a stopwatch, so I don't know about that.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I appreciate that. The member knows better.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): The subcommittee report, as amended by Ms. Hoggarth's motions, has been adopted.

Is there any further business? Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: On a go-forward basis, could all of our votes be recorded, please?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): I think you have to do that at the start of each meeting. You can certainly make that request.

The final item, that had been discussed previously: The FAO—the Financial Accountability Officer—had requested to have an informal meeting with members of the committee on finance and economic affairs. Given that our scheduled time will now be quite busy between now and the end of this session, would the committee be interested in having a lunch on an appropriate day when the committee is not sitting?

Mr. Hatfield?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a note from Ms. Fife that she is available. I'll give you the dates when she's available that fit the schedule of the committee—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Why don't you provide that to the Clerk?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Sure. I will.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): I don't think we're going to take up our time now, trying to figure out what that day will be.

But as long as the members of the committee have unanimous consent that they're interested in having an informal luncheon with the FAO, we'll proceed to arrange that—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): —and that the committee authorizes the Clerk to make the arrangements and pay for the lunch.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn): Do I have unanimous consent for that? Yes. All right, I believe that we have unanimous consent.

Committee is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1453.

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président

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Mrs. Laura Albanese (York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston L)

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre L)

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk PC)

Mr. Han Dong (Trinity–Spadina L)

Mr. Victor Fedeli (Nipissing PC)

Ms. Catherine Fife (Kitchener–Waterloo ND)

Ms. Ann Hoggarth (Barrie L)

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn (Etobicoke–Lakeshore L)

Ms. Daiene Vernile (Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre L)

Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

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Mr. Percy Hatfield (Windsor–Tecumseh ND)

Mr. Arthur Potts (Beaches–East York L)

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland–Quinte West L)

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