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Thursday 20 October 2016

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Jeudi 20 octobre 2016

**Standing Committee on
Finance and Economic Affairs**

Subcommittee report

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

Rapport du sous-comité

Chair: Peter Z. Milczyn
Clerk: Eric Rennie

Président : Peter Z. Milczyn
Greffier : Eric Rennie

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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 20 October 2016

Jeudi 20 octobre 2016

The committee met at 0905 in room 151.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): Good morning, honourable members. In the absence of the Chair, it is my duty to call upon you to elect a Vice-Chair for the committee, since the position is currently vacant. Are there any nominations for Vice-Chair? Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I move that Ms. Hoggarth be appointed Vice-Chair of the committee.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): Does the member accept the nomination?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Yes.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): Are there any further nominations for Vice-Chair? There being no further nominations, I declare the nominations closed and Ms. Hoggarth elected Vice-Chair of the committee.

Ms. Hoggarth, would you like to come and take the seat?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Good morning, and thank you very much.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): We'll now move to the second item on the agenda, which is the report of the subcommittee on committee business. The Clerk has distributed copies of the report to each of you. Would someone like to move the report and read it into the record in full?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'll move it.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Your subcommittee on committee business met on Wednesday, October 5, and Wednesday, October 12, 2016, to consider the method of proceeding with pre-budget consultations 2017, and recommends the following:

(1) That the committee hold pre-budget consultations in Toronto on December 1 and 8, 2016, during its regular meeting times.

(2) That the committee hold pre-budget consultations in Dryden, Sudbury, Ottawa, and Windsor on December 12, 13, 14 and 15, 2016.

(3) That the committee hold pre-budget consultations in Toronto, Peel region and London on January 18, 19 and 20, 2017.

(4) That the committee meet for the purpose of report writing in Toronto on February 13 and 14, 2017.

(5) That the Chair, on behalf of the committee, request the House leaders to authorize the committee to meet for up to seven days during the winter adjournment for the purpose of pre-budget consultations, and up to two days for the purpose of report writing.

(6) That the Clerk of the Committee, with the authorization of the Chair, post information regarding the pre-budget consultations on the Ontario parliamentary channel, on the Legislative Assembly's website and with Canada NewsWire.

(7) That the Clerk of the Committee, with the authorization of the Chair, place an advertisement in the Turtle Island News and a major newspaper for one day in each of the cities where the committee intends to hold pre-budget consultations, and that the advertisements be placed in both English and French papers where possible.

(8) That interested people who wish to be considered to appear before the committee contact the Clerk of the Committee by 12 noon on November 28, 2016.

(9) That, following the deadline for requests, the Clerk of the Committee provide the subcommittee members with an electronic list of all potential witnesses who have requested to appear before the committee.

(10) That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to schedule all interested witnesses in a location, if all requests received by the deadline can be accommodated.

(11) That, if all requests to appear cannot be accommodated in any given location, each of the subcommittee members supply the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of witnesses chosen from the Clerk's list, and that the scheduling be done in the order of the government, the official opposition and the third party.

(12) That late requests from interested witnesses be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis, space permitting.

(13) That the deadline for written submissions be 5 p.m. on the last day of public hearings.

(14) That, with the exception of procedural motions during public hearings, the committee consider all other motions during report writing.

0910

(15) That the committee authorize one staff person from each recognized party to travel with the committee, space permitting, for the purpose of pre-budget consultations and that reasonable expenses incurred for travel, accommodation and meals be paid for by the committee upon receipt of a properly filed expense claim.

(16) That the research officer provide a draft report to the committee by February 9, 2017.

(17) That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized to make any arrangements necessary to facilitate the committee's proceedings.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Thank you, MPP Fife. Is there any discussion? MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I don't know if this is now the time in the agenda, Chair, but I would like to move a few amendments to the report, if possible.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Yes, that would be fine.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Okay.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Oh, sorry. MPP Fedeli?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Chair. I've got a couple of different areas. Number one, we had been discussing whether the witnesses will have five minutes or 10 minutes and whether each party will do it or one party will do it. I don't know where that's covered in here, or whether that's covered in here.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): I think that will be in the discussion.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have a motion to that effect.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Oh, you do? Okay. All right, that's one. Number two, I'll ask the Clerk, if I may. Dryden, Sudbury, Ottawa, Windsor: Is that the travel order?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): Potentially. Right now—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's different than what we had set out earlier. Not by much, but—

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): Dryden, Sudbury, Ottawa—potentially. The way that the subcommittee report has been worded and this motion has been worded allows for that flexibility between those dates, depending on hotel availability, room availability and the charter flight.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: So when will you have that decided?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): Really, as soon as possible following adoption of the motion, considering if there are any amendments that might affect the requirements for a certain location. But really, the idea is to get this booked up as soon as possible.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: So why I ask is because it's never convenient from the north to try to hook up with you in Toronto to go to Dryden or Fort Frances—you may not know, because you haven't been here in the past. I would

look for the same flexibility this year that has been accorded me in the past years.

For instance, if Windsor happens to be the last stop, I'd like to be able to arrange travel home from Windsor, as opposed to the normal dropping us off. The flights never line up, and I always need an extra day then, either to either travel down to Toronto—we only have very limited flights out of North Bay, so I have to travel Saturday to make the 4 o'clock Sunday flight, which is ridiculous.

With the Chair's signature, I'd like to be able to book the start and the end of the trip and join the trip for the middle. I don't know how we can go about that, but we've done it every year.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): Sure. I'd be happy to look into these travel options with you and all members.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Okay.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): It also will depend on if enough people show up. If there's not two and a half hours of—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: No, no, I'm talking about the first day and the last day.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Oh, okay.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's only the first and last. The rest I'm fine travelling with everybody, of course, but it's always getting to the first one. The flights out of North Bay never line up with our charter, ever. They never have. I just look for the permission earlier. Of course, on the same thing, we'll be booking hotels. I don't live in Toronto or Peel, so when we do those, we would need reasonable expenses accommodated as well for staying in Toronto.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Thank you, MPP Fedeli.

MPP Baker?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have a number of motions, Chair. First of all, I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended by adding:

“(2.1) That the research officer provide a summary of December consultations to the committee by January 9, 2017.”

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): I do have a package of the amendments here. Mr. Baker, is it okay if we hand them out?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Yes, absolutely.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Okay. MPP Fife?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Just on this point, the motion says that you want a pre-budget report—

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Excuse me, Toby. A pre-budget—

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm just trying to make a point, okay? On January 9, you want a pre-budget report from research to the committee on the first set of the delegations? Is that the idea? Because you said January 9.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's just a summary; I don't want to call it a report.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Oh, okay.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's just a summary of the consultations. I think we've had that in the past. The idea is that, first of all, it helps those of us on the committee who want to prepare for the next stage to internalize what we've heard. But also, as we go into the next phase of consultations, we'll have before us a summary of what was heard in December. It's just a good reminder as we go into the next phase of consultations.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Okay, thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Is there any further discussion on this amendment? Yes, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Yes. Maybe we have had this in the past, like in the middle of hearings, but we've never had it on January 9. In fact, I don't know whether we've had hearings commencing in the new year so early in January. I immediately think: How do some people get back from Florida? It's unusual to be doing this so early in the year.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's a great point, Toby. I think this is the result of a change to the schedule of consultations, which was changed in part because of the feedback, I think, that many committee members offered up from last year's consultations, which was that we wanted to start them earlier. What's different about this year's, for example, is that we're starting consultations—according to the subcommittee report—in December. So there's a December phase and a January phase.

Because there's a December phase and then there will be approximately two to three weeks that will elapse—or more actually—having the summary will be a good reminder, I think, to members of the committee of what was discussed in December when we go into our January consultations. So it's just a tool. It's a summary that allows the members to be more effective in their roles. That's all. But the change, from your perspective—it is different, and I don't disagree. I think part of that is because of the scheduling of the consultations.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Barrett?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Again, I'm not on the subcommittee, but it seems like a good idea to start December 1. No, my only issue was—I don't know about staff, but there's Christmas. Some people do like to have some time off at the beginning of January. I mean, our parliamentary schedule certainly acknowledges that. So to have this committee put people back to work January 9—I just raise that issue. I don't have to write the report for January 9, but—

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any further discussion? Okay, are we ready to vote on this amendment? All those in favour of the amendment? Anyone opposed to the amendment? Thank you. The amendment passes.

MPP Baker?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Chair, if I may, I'll go on to the next amendment. Do you all have copies?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Yes.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Now we do.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Okay, good. I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended by adding:

“(2.2) That the summary of December consultations be provided to the Minister of Finance by the Clerk of the Committee.”

The rationale here—again, going back to our subcommittee conversations, but also to prior years' conversations, I think—is that this allows the minister to receive information as soon as possible after we hear it, so that he can consider it as part of his deliberations on the budget.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I see no trouble with this motion at all. We've bumped everything up because, of course, last year we were doing public consultations and the budget was sort of already being written. We want the Minister of Finance to have whatever information he needs from the public to inform the budget.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any further discussion? All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? It's carried.

MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'll move on to the third amendment. I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended by adding:

“(3.1) That the committee meet for consultations only on days where a minimum of 2.5 hours of in-person presentations have been scheduled.”

So, again, the rationale here is—and I think this has been done in the past—just to ensure that if we're booking a charter plane to fly somewhere, that there's a meaningful amount of presenters who are going to be presenting in that location.

0920

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any further discussion? MPP Barrett.

Mr. Toby Barrett: To make a decision on this, do we have the information of how many presenters would fill two and a half hours? Because I don't think we have the time, do we?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I think that will come later on. I think it's—

Interjections.

Mr. Toby Barrett: So how can you make a decision, not having that information?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I share your concern. We can set this one aside, on when we decide how many people we're going to be seeing. If it's 15 minutes, then that potentially could be 10 presenters, so I think it would be worth listening to 10 presenters.

My recommendation, Madam Chair, is that we pause on this one, we go to the next one, and then we can return back to it.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Is everyone okay with that? Okay, we will come back to that. MPP Baker?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm moving on to the next amendment. I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended as follows:

That in section 4, the words "February 13 and 14" be struck out and replaced with "February 9, 10 and 16".

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any discussion? MPP Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes. We had set February 13 and 14 to accommodate the staff. I would prefer first, at least, to hear from them about advancing that to the 9th and 10th, and having to come back to Toronto two different weeks, which I am absolutely not in favour of, by the way.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Clerk?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): Ultimately, as committee staff, if it's the will of the committee, then we would make arrangements here.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: That's not what I asked, though, with all due respect. We talked about moving it to the 13th and 14th to give proper time—

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): I believe this has been discussed with the staff.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: When? I don't remember it being discussed at the committee.

Interjections.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Baker?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I wouldn't propose anything that I didn't think was possible, Vic, to your point around timelines and the staff's ability to get things done. But our view is that this is achievable and also ensures that we meet all the various scheduling issues that we are trying to accommodate, and also get the consultations done as soon as possible.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any further discussion?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It spreads our work over two different weeks as well. That is onerous. I don't live in Toronto. That is very onerous for the people who don't live here. We had it planned. We debated it in subcommittee, as you well recall. We debated it thoroughly, back and forth, up and down, sideways, and agreed on the 13th and 14th. I would respectfully ask that we remain with those dates to accommodate all of us, including the staff.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Baker?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Just for clarity, Vic, I think what we discussed at the subcommittee was that I would take back the dates that had been proposed, the ones that are in the subcommittee draft report, but I wouldn't go as far as to say that we agree and we decided on that. I want to make that clear. I agreed to take it back, to weigh all the options, including what was possible for staff as far as report writing.

One of the considerations in our subcommittee discussions was scheduling and getting it done as soon as possible. Number two was making sure that staff could

get it done. This is not unusual, to have report writing split over two weeks.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Chair?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: If you want it done sooner than later, the 13th and 14th finishes before the one on the 16th, so I do not understand the logic behind this. And I do not understand making us come to Toronto on a Friday, the only day I generally open my office and work in my office in Mattawa, North Bay. That's our tradition; we're there on Fridays. Now you're backing this up to the 16th. I don't understand how that meets your requirement to get it done earlier when we're going to be done on the 14th in the old plan.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm not really sure why we would be rushing the report-writing piece. We've already moved the entire process up significantly, almost by a full month, our consultation and our report writing.

Generally, in past years, we've delivered the finance report either at the end of March or early April. Now we're looking to be done report writing on, potentially, February 10, but maybe February 16. The original dates of the 13th and the 14th, two days together at the beginning of the week, giving research a full three weeks to compile all that data and all that feedback and present it to us to work through, achieves the goal, really, on February 14, of being done the finance committee report. The 16th is actually a later point, as MPP Fedeli has pointed out, so I'm not really sure why we would move it around. The 13th and the 14th—I took it to my House leaders and, even though people are very surprised that this is all happening very early in the year, they understand that having those two days at the beginning of that week actually makes a lot of sense to be productive, I think.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Rinaldi?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Yes, just a question, I guess, about process. I appreciate what MPP Fedeli is saying, so why do we need three days? Just a question.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): I think the staff needs three days.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: They need three days? I'm just curious.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): If I may, the length for report writing is ultimately up to the committee, depending on if there are any amendments or significant changes to the draft report that's prepared by legislative research. Ultimately, it does not need to last for three days, by any respect, but it could also go past that, depending on how many changes the committee would like to make.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Got you.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): But maybe the research officer could speak to the changes and typing out the changes.

Ms. Susan Viets: The process is as the Clerk has described, that the length of time required for report writing is contingent on the number of changes requested

by the committee. Traditionally, because in this report we're summarizing a very large volume of testimony and recommendations, the report-writing process can be quite lengthy. The recommendations are not drafted on instruction from the committee by research. In the past, the recommendations are coming from the different parties, so that eliminates one part of the work process for us.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fraser?

Mr. John Fraser: So just a question in terms of when you're report writing. I sit on public accounts. The researcher there will go through—they'll have a week to rewrite that report. Just in terms of the timeline, how has that been done? How has that been done in the past? Has the report writing gone over the two days? Is that what they did last year, or do you usually get a gap of a couple of days between committee meetings and approval?

Ms. Susan Viets: I wasn't part of the pre-budget process last year so I can't speak to that. In prior years, the issues with reports have been relatively minor. Often they relate to issues such as attribution, whether each witness should be identified by name or whether they can be grouped together. It has tended to be those sorts of issues, but I can't speak to the experience last year.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Chair?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I can add to that. The report writing doesn't include opinions. It's a report of what was said in the committee. It's pretty pedestrian, in terms of the content, but as our research staff indicated, it may be a choice of, "All right. Do we want all the presenters' names? Do we want all the associations listed? Do we want them listed as 'A presenter said...' or 'Three presenters said...'"? That's really what we end up doing in this.

Mr. John Fraser: So it's not—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: There are no opinions offered. There are no opinions expressed.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fraser?

Mr. John Fraser: Sorry, pardon me.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: There are no opinions.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Martins?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you. I just got a little bit of clarification with regard to the dates. It's my understanding that the 9th and the 10th would be the dates when the draft report is written. This would then provide, up until the 16th, time for the Clerk to provide a final writing, so then that would happen around the 16th. The 9th and 10th are for the draft writing and then there would be some time in between there where there would be a final report for the 16th—or the final writing, if you will.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any further discussion? MPP Fedeli?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I go back to the point that under our original schedule which we hashed out in our subcommittee, we will be finished on the 14th, period.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Martins?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I don't recall, right now, what the 13th and 14th were for. Were they for the draft

writing, as we're proposing right now for the 9th and 10th, in which case there would be a later date, potentially the 20th, which is in and around Family Day, that would then be the final writing of the report, or the final draft of the report? So, moving that to the 9th and 10th—yes, the 16th is after the 13th and 14th, but that would be for the final writing of that report.

0930

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Baker?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Vic, to the point you just made, in the draft report, we have, as you said, February 13 and 14. That's two days of report writing. In the amended version that I've proposed, we have three days of report writing: the 9th and 10th are earlier, and then there's the 16th. So if you're confident that we can get this done in two days of report writing, then we'll be done by February 10. The 16th provides us with a third date, if needed. So in theory, if we're as productive as we discussed at the subcommittee, as you propose we will be, then we'll be done on the 10th rather than being done on the 14th. So this actually moves the timeline up, if we're equally productive, but it gives us the 16th if we need a third date.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any further discussion?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Chair, one says one thing and one says the other. It's a draft on the 9th and 10th, according to one, and the final on the 16th; and the other, it's the report writing—

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Okay.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'm not finished yet. I just don't understand that.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): I wasn't going to move from you.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: We've met in subcommittee. We've hashed this out. We have our dates. I just truly cannot understand the logic of why we go through this charade of picking dates in our subcommittee if there are going to be amendments like this. I just don't get that. I fundamentally do not get that.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Well, everyone has the right to bring amendments.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I bring up that Friday again. That's the one day we're home. At least, if you don't live in Toronto, that's the one day that we book our office. All of our meetings are scheduled weeks, months in advance, on Friday. And you pick a Friday to come to Toronto. That's just unreasonable to ask.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any other discussion? MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Vic, let me try to explain it again. I think your concern is that you don't want to sit on the 16th. If we're as productive as you suggest, we would get this done in two days, which is what you're saying the original subcommittee report provides for, which is only two days. Then we'll be done on the 10th and we won't be back here on the 16th. This provides us with a third date.

What MPP Martins and I are saying are not different. If MPP Martins is right and there are substantial changes

that the committee requests on the 10th and we need an additional week for staff to work on it, then we'll have the 16th. Then, in that scenario, the 16th is available for us. But if we don't need that kind of gap because we come to consensus much more quickly, then we'll be done on the 10th. But the 16th just gives us a buffer. It's just a spare date in addition to the 9th and 10th. This proposal that I've brought forward allows us to get it done sooner if we do it in two days, as you suggest we'll get it done.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Further discussion? All those in favour of amendment number 4? Those opposed? Carried.

MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Chair, I'll move on to the next proposed amendment. I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended as follows: that in section 5, the words "two days" be struck out and replaced with "three days."

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Okay. Discussion?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: So now we want three?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Up to three. MPP Fedeli?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: For the record, that absolutely goes against what we just talked about. Is it two or is it three? Are we ending on the 16th or not? This is what I don't understand. It's inconsistent.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: So, Vic, I think I've been pretty clear that we have three dates for report writing—the 9th, 10th and 16th—and this is consistent with that. If we're done by the 10th, then we'll only have two days. All this says is that we'll have up to three days. It allows us to have three days, but we can be done in two. We can be done in one, if we want.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Further discussion? MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Well, it is semantics. But the Chair has said the amendment reads "up to three days." Mr. Baker has said "up to." It doesn't say "up to"; it just says "with 'three days.'"

We really should have debated this motion before we did the last motion, if we're trying to figure out the report-writing strategy. I'm sort of sharing the same frustration around our subcommittee discussions.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Just for clarification, it does say "up to three days."

Ms. Catherine Fife: "Be struck out and replaced with 'three days.'" This motion that's right before me says "'two days' be struck out and replaced with 'three days.'" It doesn't say "up to three days."

Mr. Yvan Baker: Chair?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Mr. Baker?

Mr. Yvan Baker: In the draft report that I have, Catherine, I have the words "up to."

Ms. Catherine Fife: We're talking about the amendments, the amendment that you've given in your package.

Interjection: It doesn't say "up to."

Mr. Yvan Baker: No, I'm not suggesting it does. What I'm saying is that in the draft report that you read into the record, under point (5), the words are "and up to two days." I'm proposing to replace "two" with "three."

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Okay. The only change is going to be that "two days" is gone and "three days" is in, so "up to" is still there.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It doesn't really matter. We already decided this.

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Not true; not true.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fife?

Ms. Catherine Fife: This motion really is out of order. We've already passed a previous motion that said that we're going to meet on three days. From a Chair perspective and just from the order perspective, if we were going to debate whether or not we wanted to meet for three days, then we've actually already decided that. We will meet for up to three days, because it was in the previous motion. This motion really should be out of order.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fife, the Clerk informs me that although it says that we can meet on those dates, we do have to change number (5) in order that it can be "up to three days." Okay?

Any further discussion? All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? Carried.

MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Chair, I'm just moving on to the next amendment. I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended as follows:

That section (11) be amended by adding the words "or their delegate" after "each of the subcommittee members".

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Okay. Discussion? No discussion? All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? Carried.

MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Next amendment, Chair. I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended as follows:

That section (16) be amended by adding the words "and a summary of all consultations" after "That the research officer provide a draft report".

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Discussion, anyone? Yes, MPP Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Oh, no. I'll wait until the next one.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Okay. Then I'll call the vote. All those in favour of the amendment to section (16)? All those opposed? Carried.

MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended as follows:

That in section (16), the words "February 9, 2017" be struck out and replaced with "January 31, 2017."

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fedeli?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Again, I'll ask the Clerk's office: Is this adequate time?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): In this case, I will defer to the research officer.

Ms. Susan Viets: What becomes complex is incorporating, if it's a summary of—let me just look at the wording here. A summary of the consultations should be manageable, if the request is for the summary of consultations.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This is adding the words. If you look at the motion previous, it did not remove “draft report.” It added “and a summary of consultations,” so you're still providing a draft report. Am I correct?

Ms. Susan Viets: So the two documents.

0940

Mr. Victor Fedeli: So you're still providing a draft report and a summary on January 31. So now I ask you again: Is this reasonable?

Ms. Susan Viets: It's a large volume of material to prepare. Typically, in this situation, what we might do is provide the final report document first. The summary: We might request a few additional days to hand that in at a later date. It is a very large volume of material to process in a short period of time. But if it's the wish of the committee, as the Clerk has said, then we will do our best.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Further discussion?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Again, I'll just defer to what MPP Toby Barrett said. We're having a subcommittee meeting here. This all should have been hashed out in our subcommittee. This is when we do these kinds of things. So I'll get, again, a little pedestrian here: You're talking about having the report done by January 31, only to accommodate that new date of February 9. If we didn't have to meet February 9, if we met on February 13 and 14 as originally planned, we wouldn't be scrambling and packing this onto the Clerk's office and the research office by January 31. It seems unreasonable. I've been doing this for several years and that, to me, does seem unreasonable. I know you're more politically correct, but I would ask you: Is that—I'm looking for an opinion from you. Again, if we would have been doing this in subcommittee, you wouldn't be so hesitant to speak your mind. I'm asking you to speak your mind.

Ms. Susan Viets: I think, as the Clerk had mentioned, the staff is here to serve the committee. It is a very large volume of material to process. Under ideal circumstances, we would have an extra week or we would perhaps request that the summary of consultations be handed in a week after the draft report. But, again, the research service, as is the case with the Clerk's office, is here to serve the committee. If it's the committee's will, we will do our very best.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any further discussion? MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: A few things: First of all, on the point that MPP Fedeli made that this should have been addressed in subcommittee, during the subcommittee discussion I had proposed that we have another sub-

committee meeting, and it was the proposal of the opposition members that we discuss it in committee—first of all. So I don't think it's unfair that we're discussing these points here today. That's the first thing.

The second thing I would say is that we're happy to get this material a week later, but we were trying to accommodate some scheduling conflicts, so that's why we've moved it to this day.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fife?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Okay. So I'm just going to say, for the record, that I think that the integrity of the report is going to be compromised by these timelines. This would be my fourth year going through. It is a huge amount of information that needs to be processed by research. That report needs to inform the minister and our own report writing so that we have a budget that is reflective of what we've heard going through the consultation process.

To Mr. Baker's point: Never have we had so many amendments to a subcommittee report. It's actually unprecedented. There are eight or nine amendments. Essentially, I should not have even bothered reading this original subcommittee report into the record because it so substantively has been changed.

Finally, to the last point around accommodating schedules, the only reason that we are even entertaining such an early process is that last year's process compromised the trust in the work we are doing as a finance committee because we were still consulting as the budget was already being written.

The government has the majority on this committee; they are going to move the amendments as have been presented, but never have we had so many amendments to a subcommittee report in the history of this committee.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fedeli?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I do need to take exception with one thing that MPP Baker said. When we agreed not to have another subcommittee meeting, it was on the understanding that we'd be debating the order of the travel, whether it's Dryden first or that type of thing, with the Clerk. This is substantive. There are 10, by the way—10 amendments. And these are serious amendments. They have actually substantially changed the intent of what the committee was doing in terms of the timing and allowing the Clerk's timing.

I do agree with MPP Fife that the work will be compromised because it's going to be rushed. But I do take exception that we agreed to meet not in subcommittee but to come to committee, because there really shouldn't have been 10 amendments. It was strictly some timing that we were going to talk about. I understood that it might be one date that we were talking about—moving something from the 16th to the 18th; those types of things—very, very minor, and pre-agreed to in subcommittee.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: This was my first time going through the subcommittee. Next time I'll know better, but I was trying to be accommodating and so I agreed to

take a bunch of proposals back from you, Vic, and from Ms. Fife, that we've now come back to in committee and we agreed to discuss in this committee. Those things were not agreed to; they were proposals, and I agreed to come back to you on some of those proposals. So I'd ask you not to represent this as a surprise. There were a bunch of outstanding issues that we agreed I would take back and reflect on, and I've come back and I've proposed something that I think works.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fedeli?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: That discussion that we had and we agreed on in the subcommittee is called the report of the subcommittee. This didn't just happen, like, a bunch of ideas got thrown together; this is the report of the subcommittee. This is what was agreed to in the subcommittee. So this is a surprise. To have 10 of these is a huge surprise, and it's substantively changed.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I will put on the record that I agreed to take back a whole number of points that were proposed by members of the opposition caucuses. At the end of that subcommittee meeting, I suggested that we have another subcommittee. The members decided that they wanted to do it in a full committee; I was fine with that. But for you to now express surprise about the fact that there were some of those items that couldn't be accommodated the way you wanted, I think, is surprising to me. In the future, I'll know, when I'm on subcommittee next time, that I shouldn't approach it that way.

That being said, it's within the authority of the committee to have this discussion. We can debate semantics and when we decided what, but at the end of the day, the full committee is here and we can have the discussion now just as productively as we would in subcommittee.

The proposal that we've put forward is, I think, reasonable. Report writing starts on February 9, so getting the report on January 31 gives us time to review it before report writing, which seems like a reasonable timeline, and it's achievable.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any further discussion? Okay. The amendment to number 16: All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Chair, I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended by adding section 16.1: "That the summary of all consultations be provided to the Minister of Finance by the Clerk of the Committee on the same day that it is provided to the committee."

The rationale for this is that, again, just as in the previous motion that we passed earlier, the finance minister receive information as soon as possible so that he can consider it as part of his deliberations on the budget.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any discussion? MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Just a quick question for the government side: This is so early that you must have a date in mind for the budget. You must know when the budget is going to be presented, because we've accelerated

everything. Do you have any idea when the budget will be coming through?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I don't. But we've moved this forward, I think, based on the consensus of all of the members on all sides that it would be nice to be able to move this forward as much as possible. This is part of that process of just trying to get the information to the minister as soon as possible.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Amendment 16.1: All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: The next amendment, Chair: I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended by adding section 18: "That witnesses be offered a total of 15 minutes: 10 minutes for presentations and five minutes for questioning by party rotation."

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Any discussion? MPP Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes, Chair, we agree with this. This is the amendment we were looking for. Out of all the 10 that were surprising, this is the only one, actually, that we were waiting—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'm sorry?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: We saved the best for last.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: There is another motion coming up, but we'll worry about that later. This is the one that we were talking about. So we're talking about witnesses having 10 minutes, and then rotating five minutes. The option against this would be to have a witness and three minutes each, but it does tend to be a long haul for everybody. This is an acceptable motion for our party.

0950

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Would anyone else like to speak? All those in favour of adding number 18? All those opposed? Carried.

MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Chair, I know we deferred one of the motions. I just wanted to return to that motion, if I may. I'll read it again, if you'd like.

I move that the report of the subcommittee be amended by adding section 3.1: "That the committee meet for consultations only on days where a minimum of 2.5 hours of in-person presentations have been scheduled."

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Discussion? MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Based on the amendment that we just passed, this would mean that 10 delegations would have to register. I think that if eight people make their way to Dryden, I want to hear from those eight people.

Because this is happening so early, on MPP Barrett's point, I think we may have some difficulty, because people are used to doing budget consultations, but later in the spring, wouldn't you say?

I don't support this. I think that if it's eight or nine, there should be some flexibility there.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Further discussion? MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I think that Ms. Fife makes a really good point, and I'm happy to withdraw the motion.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Barrett.

Mr. Toby Barrett: My comments are moot, then. Again, we think of the Dryden example. If there are eight or nine who sign up—and in many cases, it may be wardens representing all of northwestern Ontario or forest industries. Again, it's one person representing virtually every company in forestry or every company in mining.

One thing I will mention. I know that we've debated pre-planning, which is good. It's unprecedented to debate these amendments, have them recorded in Hansard and televised around the system in room 151.

Bearing in mind the last time that we tried to go to Dryden—I think I've travelled with the committee most years for the last 14 years. We left Windsor—I was lead on the committee—and we had to have a meeting in the back of the airplane because of weather, and Dryden was cancelled.

This committee—we travel and we work together for a number of weeks. We have meals together. We should try to get away from this kind of an approach. We have to roll with the punches. Weather is significant; travel. Once, the bus driver—I think this was down in Windsor. We stayed overnight and came out the next morning, and he had left the keys in the bus. He couldn't get in the bus. So we sat there for two hours, waiting for the bus.

There will be other challenges and other decisions that we will have to make on a roll. I just hate to think that a lot of our decision-making might be preordained by someone else, either outside of the subcommittee—I put trust in the subcommittee. I shouldn't have a say in this; I put trust in whoever represents me on the subcommittee. It is our committee. Let's remember that.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I think the only thing I want to ask the members for their thoughts on with regard to this issue is, do we want to set a minimum of any kind at all? I've taken Catherine Fife's point and withdrawn the motion, but I guess I'm just putting it out to the committee. I'm not putting a specific timeline on it. Do we want to put some sort of minimum in place at all, or are we happy to, if there was one delegation—I'm not saying there will be, but if there were only one or two, are we comfortable with that? That's the question.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I always look to leaving it to the discretion of the Clerks to inform us. Again, to go back to what MPP Barrett had to say, we need to be a little bit flexible. When we were shy some, the Clerks called some others who couldn't present in some other city and said, "This is full; you can't come. But this one is half-full. You can come here."

I would look forward to the continued flexibility and leadership of the Clerk to accommodate this. If there is something, in the Clerk's own opinion, that just doesn't

make any sense, then I would think it's incumbent on the Clerk to report to us and say that this can't work for whatever reason.

That's how we've done it in the past, and it seems to have worked with a little bit of flexibility. The Clerk has indeed contacted—let's make one up—the forestry association, that wants to present in Toronto: "Well, Toronto's full, but you have a representative in Dryden. Come to the Dryden presentations." It's been done like that—rather successfully, I might add.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Rinaldi?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Chair, I agree with everything that's been said on this, but I think Ms. Fife travelled with us on Bill 201.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, I did.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: You did, and we did have some—

Ms. Catherine Fife: All summer.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: That's right. Fun, fun, fun.

I guess the point I'm trying to make is that we had to cancel some because there were no deputants. We went to one in western Ontario; I think there were three, and one of them was by phone from Toronto. It took a bus and staff—although I agree with Mr. Fedeli to leave it up to the Clerk, ultimately, the buck stops with the elected officials; right? I would suggest that we at least give the Clerk some direction instead of leaving it right open.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Barrett?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Again, certainly decisions that are made closer to the time of—and we have cancelled when there have only been perhaps one or two people. We have asked them to be part of a teleconference on the committee later, in Toronto. Obviously, we wouldn't ask eight or nine people to do a teleconference, but for one or two—so again, decisions that are made closer, when we have more information.

Sometimes the plane is there, the hotels are booked, time constraints—I think that's all I had to say on that.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): At this point, I'm going to ask the mover of the motion—I thought I heard you say you wanted to do something.

Mr. Yvan Baker: If I may, Chair, I'll just say that I'm happy to hear what people have to say and, again, I'm happy to withdraw the motion. I think the spirit of what I was trying to do was make sure we manage people's time and taxpayers' dollars effectively. That's where I was coming from on this one. But I take the will of the members on this one, as I'm willing to withdraw the motion, Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): The motion has been withdrawn so there is no further discussion.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Barrett.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I thought I was on the list.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Well, you were, after MPP—

Mr. Toby Barrett: I'm just worried about precedent too, as I just said, if there is only one or two. But so oftentimes I sat in this room in Toronto when legislation has come forward and witnesses have been given something like 24 hours' notice. Even in Toronto, we only get two or three presenters that we go forward with, with the

committee. I don't want to set a precedent because if we only get three for, say, government legislation, and 24 hours' notice—I've seen that quite a bit now. Maybe it gets in the *Globe and Mail* overnight and that's about it. Two or three people come forward. They were tipped off; they knew ahead of time what was going to happen. I'd just hate to see a committee cancelled because there are only two or three showing up.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Baker?

Mr. Yvan Baker: There is one more item. I don't know if you've all got copies of this last motion but I just wanted to make sure. I just want to present that motion, Chair, if I may.

I move that each party provide the committee Clerk with the name of one expert witness and one alternate no later than 12 noon on November 28, 2016;

That expert witnesses be offered 10 minutes for their presentations, and one hour as part of an expert witness panel, in which they will field questions from committee members and have an opportunity to interact with other panel members;

That expert witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee in Toronto on January 18, 2017.

The rationale for this—and we've discussed this as a subcommittee but also as members in the past and last year—that there may be value in having experts come. That's what this is designed to address.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: The only thing that's really missing from this motion is the fact that the intention of an expert witness was to comment on the economy and finances of the province. Just for clarity, it should indicate that. Otherwise, we can bring an expert witness on anything. Just for the Hansard, we should at least have some consensus on what kind of expert witness we're calling to the committee.

1000

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Are you suggesting you'd like to do an amendment to this?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Well, I'm just looking to the government as to why they didn't include it. That would be my question.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Baker?

Mr. Yvan Baker: The idea here was to provide flexibility, but I'd welcome taking an amendment on this to provide some specificity as to the kind of experts or what we would like the experts to speak to.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fife?

Ms. Catherine Fife: We should state, unless the PCs are against the idea—what sort of flexibility would you be looking for?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I was giving, frankly, the other caucuses flexibility in terms of the kind of witness you want to bring forward. I proposed this to give everyone, each caucus, maximum flexibility, but I don't disagree with your suggestion, MPP Fife. I think it has a lot of

merit, so I'd be happy to hear how you think the motion should be amended.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Would you like to proceed with an amendment, MPP Fife?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Well, I think the context, for the other members, is that we had discussed at the end of the last year's process that it would be of some value to the finance committee for each party to have the opportunity to call in an expert witness who would comment on the state of the province's economy and finances and then have an opportunity—because we do approach the finances of this province very differently. So I'm happy to see the motion here; I was just wondering why that didn't state that.

But, if the committee is amenable, then we could alter the motion. I would move an amendment to the amendment: That expert witnesses with some knowledge of the economy and finances be invited and offered 10 minutes for their presentation.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Is it the will of the committee that we have five minutes for the Clerk to write this up and present it to us?

MPP Fraser?

Mr. John Fraser: It sounds like we're willing to do that over here.

I think that it's fairly self-evident as to whom we are all going to invite, but I'm open to it being there. I'm just making a comment—I don't sit on this committee; I'm subbing in this morning. But I think that it's evident that each party is going to invite those people who they believe will best give the information that they want to get. I think it's kind of self-evident, but if we want to do an amendment, that's great.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): MPP Fife?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Madam Chair, in the interest of time, if that's the consensus, as long as it's—it's part of the Hansard now. So if you call David Suzuki, I'll take some issue with it.

So I withdraw. I withdraw the amendment to the amendment, and I would respectfully call the vote on this amendment.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): Okay. MPP Fife has called the vote. All those in favour of the original amendment? Carried.

There being no further business, we stand adjourned. Thank you, committee, for being patient.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Ann Hoggarth): All right, there's one small matter of business. We need to vote on the subcommittee report, as amended.

I will call the question: All those in favour of the subcommittee report, as amended? All those opposed? Carried.

Now, I'd like to adjourn the committee, as we have no further business.

The committee adjourned at 1005.

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente

Ms. Ann Hoggarth (Barrie 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)

Mrs. Cristina Martins (Davenport L)

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