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**Standing Committee on
Finance and Economic Affairs**

Committee business

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Thursday 22 November 2018

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

Travaux du comité

1^{re} session
42^e législature

Jeudi 22 novembre 2018

Chair: Stephen Crawford
Clerk: Timothy Bryan

Président : Stephen Crawford
Greffier : Timothy Bryan

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Thursday 22 November 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES

Jeudi 22 novembre 2018

The committee met at 0901 in room 151.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. I would like to call the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to order. We are assembled here for the purpose of discussing pre-budget consultations. Are there any comments? Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: I would like to start by moving a motion. I gave a copy to the Clerk that he can pass out, please, and I'll read through the motion. Maybe I'll start while you're—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): A motion has been moved by Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: Okay, so I'll read it.

I move that the committee hold pre-budget consultations in Toronto on January 1, 2019—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: January 1?

Mr. Doug Downey: Sorry, January 15. Thank you.

Interjections.

Mr. Doug Downey: Let me start over, Mr. Chair. I move:

(1) That the committee hold pre-budget consultations in Toronto on January 15, 2019 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; and

(2) That the committee hold pre-budget consultations in Dryden, Timmins, Ottawa, Sarnia, Kitchener-Waterloo and Barrie during the week of January 21, and on Monday, January 28, 2019; and

(3) That the committee hold an additional day of pre-budget consultations in Toronto on January 29, 2019; and

(4) That the research officer provide an interim summary of oral presentations to the committee by January 31, 2019; and

(5) That the summary of oral presentations be provided to the Minister of Finance by the Clerk of the Committee; and

(6) That the committee meet for the purpose of report writing in Toronto on February 7 and 8, 2019.

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

(8) 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; and

(9) 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; and

(10) That interested people who wish to be considered to appear before the committee on January 15, 2019 contact the Clerk of the Committee by 9 a.m. on January 7, 2019; and

(11) That, following the deadline for requests, the Clerk of the Committee provide the subcommittee members and their designate with an electronic list of all potential witnesses who have requested to appear before the committee by 11 a.m. on January 7, 2019; and

(12) That, if all requests to appear on January 15, 2019, cannot be accommodated, each of the subcommittee members or their designate supply the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of witnesses chosen from the Clerk's list by 10 a.m. on January 8, 2019; and

(13) That the Clerk of the Committee provide the subcommittee members and their designate with a draft agenda of witnesses scheduled to appear on January 15, 2019, by 9 a.m. on January 9, 2019; and

(14) That interested people who wish to be considered to appear before the committee during the week of January 21, and January 28 and 29, contact the Clerk of the Committee by 5 p.m. on January 8, 2019; and

(15) That, following the deadline for requests, the Clerk of the Committee provide the subcommittee members and their designate with an electronic list of all potential witnesses who have requested to appear before the committee by 6 p.m. on January 9, 2019; and

(16) 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; and

(17) That if all requests to appear cannot be accommodated in any given location, each of the subcommittee members or their designate supply the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of witnesses chosen from the Clerk's list by 12 p.m. on January 11, 2019; and

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

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

(20) That, with the exception of procedural motions during public hearings, the committee consider all other motions during report writing; and

(21) That the committee authorize two staff persons 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; and

(22) That the research officer provide a draft report to the committee by February 5, 2019; and

(23) That witnesses be offered a total of 15 minutes, seven minutes for presentations and eight minutes for questioning divided equally among the recognized parties; and

(24) That each recognized party provide the committee Clerk with the name of one expert witness and one alternate no later than January 9, 2019; and

(25) That expert witnesses be offered 10 minutes for their presentations, and 30 minutes 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; and

(26) That expert witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee in Ottawa.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): A motion has been moved by Mr. Downey. Is there any debate? Mr. Bisson.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, there's going to be all kinds of debate. First of all, normally what we do when we get to this point of sending this committee out on the road is that there's a subcommittee meeting. In my understanding, that never happened. The purpose of the subcommittee is for the parties to get together and talk about where we want to go and what some of the details should be. In this case, the government is coming to us and producing a list of where they want to go, which indicates to me that they're not too interested in hearing what the official opposition has to say and what the rest of Ontario has to say in regard to pre-budget consultation.

Is the government prepared to kick this back to subcommittee so that we can actually have a discussion about which communities we go to and some of the terms of reference within this motion? That would be my first question.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Ms. Skelly?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you for raising that concern. Actually, we really have been busy dealing with Bill 47, as you know, so this is the first opportunity that we have had to address this. We wanted to wait until after the finance minister tabled his fall economic statement before we started discussing this. Of course, we want to move forward, as you know. We're heading up to Christmas. We wanted to give everyone an opportunity, I think, to be able

to reach out and to see if there are people who want to testify in front of any of these subcommittees, so we're giving them as much time as possible.

And just in terms of what we have had to deal with so far, this is the first opportunity and we want to move forward and get this moving by January.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Bisson?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Every government since Confederation has faced the same problem. The reality is that we have legislation that is before the House and pre-budget consultations normally happen after Christmas. There are still, after this week, three weeks to be able to deal with this. I don't suggest that this is going to be a long process by which the government is going to miss the window to be able to decide where we're going to go and how we're going to do it.

I would suggest that this committee just adjourn until next week and allow us to have the conversation with you at the subcommittee. Some of this stuff we can agree to; some of it is fine. But there are some communities that we think you should be at, and some of the terms of reference on this have to be changed as well.

0910

My request is: Are you prepared to just adjourn the committee for today, and we come back here next Friday?

It is not our intent to hold this thing up so that there's no pre-budget consultation; do not read into that. That's not where we're going. It's just that normally there's a process. We have a conversation before we ever get to the period of a motion. This is one of the first times I've seen it done this way. I'm not saying it has never been done this way, but it's not the way that pre-budget consultation should be organized.

So I'm asking the government, simply, if they're prepared to adjourn until next week to allow the subcommittee to work out the details, because there are a few things in here that I think need to be changed. It would just be a better use of everybody's time, and we can deal with this next week and have it all completed by next Friday. It is not our intent to push this beyond Friday.

I'm asking so we don't have a motion.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Piccini, did you—

Mr. David Piccini: No.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Is that a motion?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm not proposing a motion. I'm asking if we can agree.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I don't think—is there agreement?

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: I know we've had some informal conversations. I think when we look at giving witnesses—there are only so many places we can meet in Ontario. This will be the most time we'll spend outside of Toronto since 2014. To give witnesses ample time—I think the point here is that you want to get witnesses before committee. We've got ample time, and you've got time to get witnesses, to contact stakeholders and to give an ample runway so that we have thorough consultations.

We just had the FES. I know that in my community, a lot of businesses are keen to talk about Bill 47. They're keen to talk about the FES. They're excited that Ontario is open for business. I think this is going to give a lot of runway for stakeholders to come forward. I think we've got a lot of time here, which is great, that we've tabled this. This is a great schedule. I'm really pleased to see us getting out of the GTA and into this province, getting into all corners of this province. I think this is a comprehensive opportunity here for us to reach out to our communities and a very diverse schedule, so I'm really pleased with it.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I'd like to support Gilles Bisson's request to move forward and maybe adjourn, and then talk about the locations. I know in our inaugural meeting, individually you guys came to me and said that you wanted to visit my riding. My riding is not part of it, so I would like to propose that any part of my riding be included. It's just something that—you have to understand where the north is. I know there's "north" there—to you guys, it's north, but it's not. I want to have that discussion at that time. Thanks.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Roberts.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I think the nice thing here is that we're in year one of four years, so we've got four years to do pre-budget consultations. That's going to give us a ton of good opportunities to visit all sorts of parts of the province. I think the balance that's struck here in terms of where we're going is pretty much an even split in the north between government and opposition ridings, and in the south between government and opposition ridings. I see here—it's wonderful—we'll be visiting the lovely city of Timmins, which I've never been to, so I look forward to Mr. Bisson being able to show us around there.

I think we might as well decide on this today. We've got a wonderful schedule here. I don't see any need to postpone.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Bisson.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm going to make a suggestion that we adjourn for 20 minutes in order for the members of the committee to check back with their people. What we're asking for is not unreasonable. Committees have travelled long before you guys got here. In fact, your comment that we haven't travelled in this way since 2014 is not true. This committee—specifically pre-budget consultations—has actually seen more hearing time in the past than what you've proposed in this motion. But I'm not going to get hung up on that.

Mr. David Piccini: Okay—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Let me finish. There are some items in here that I think need to be addressed. It would be better—rather than entrenching ourselves in further debate, why don't we take a 20-minute recess and have a chance to chat with your people in order to make that decision so that we can move forward?

I want to be extremely clear: The New Democrat official opposition is not suggesting that we slow this process down so that it hamstring the ability for the committee to do its thing. Rather, what we want is an opportunity for the

subcommittee to meet in order to work out the details of the motion. We come back next Thursday, and it will be a simple thing of just voting in favour of the motion by the main committee.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: I do need to confer with officials. I think that's fair. I'd like to propose, rather, 20 minutes. Why don't we go until 2 o'clock and just give some time today, and then we can come back and circle back? Is that fair for everyone?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes. We can live with that. Does the committee normally come back at 2?

Mr. David Piccini: Yes, that's when we come back.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): So can I confirm that we have agreement to recess until 2 o'clock today?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Before we adjourn—

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Yes?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just want to thank the government for taking our suggestions.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. In that case, we will recess until 2 o'clock.

The committee recessed from 0916 to 1400.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Timothy Bryan): Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to call the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to order. We are resuming discussion on pre-budget consultations. When we recessed, Mr. Downey had moved a motion, so I ask: Is there further debate on this motion? Mr. Roberts.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Yes. I'd like to move an amendment. I move that the motion be amended as follows:

That, in the second paragraph the word "Barrie" is replaced by the word "Peterborough"; and

That, in the seventh paragraph the number "eight" is replaced by the number "10" and the number "two" is replaced by the number "four".

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): A motion has been moved by Mr. Roberts. Is there any debate? Mr. Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: I would like to ask for a 20-minute recess to discuss this amendment among ourselves.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Is that okay for 20 minutes for the government side?

Interjections: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. We'll recess for 20 minutes. See you in 20 minutes.

The committee recessed from 1401 to 1422.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Good afternoon, everybody, again. An amendment to the motion has been moved by Mr. Roberts. Is there any debate?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: A darn good amendment.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): No further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: As far as it goes, we're willing to vote.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): You're willing to vote? Okay. Are members ready to vote? Shall the amendment to the motion carry? All those in favour, please raise your hand. All those opposed, please raise

your hand. The amendment to the motion is, accordingly, carried.

Is there any further debate? Mr. Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I move that the motion, as amended, be amended as follows:

In the second paragraph, delete everything after the word “in” and insert the words “Thunder Bay, Pikangikum, Timmins, Ottawa, Sarnia, Peterborough and Kitchener-Waterloo during the week of January 21, and on January 28 and 29, 2019; and”; and

In the third paragraph, delete the word “29” and replace it with “30”; and

In the fourth paragraph, delete the words “January 31” and replace with the words “February 1”; and

That the twentieth paragraph be deleted.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): An amendment to the amended motion has been moved by Mr. Mamakwa. Is there any debate on this? Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: I’ll just note, first, on the Thunder Bay piece that in the last 15 years, the hearings have been in Thunder Bay. It has been in other places in the north before. I don’t know if it has been in Dryden before.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: It has only once ever been there.

Mr. Doug Downey: Once in Dryden. To go back to Thunder Bay consistently, year after year after year—I suggest we need to move it around a bit.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: I would just add that I think it’s important that we get a broad subset of folks that we haven’t seen before. I think Dryden is really important. I just wanted that on the record.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate? Mr. Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Certainly for me, I think it would be a worthwhile trip for everyone around the table to see and visit a fly-in community. Certainly if there’s a charter, it will take the same amount of time to a day trip in the community. When we spoke in our inaugural meeting, individually each of you came to me and said, “I’d like to travel in your riding.” Here’s an opportunity, and I hope you support this motion.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate? Mr. Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: In response to the members opposite that Thunder Bay has been on many of these tours before, pre-budget consultation tours, I agree. But on the same point, to the best of my knowledge, Pikangikum or fly-in communities like Pikangikum are very rarely, if ever—I haven’t gotten all the research yet—visited by a pre-budget consultation committee, and certainly have never been done in a pre-consultation tour by this government, which frequently says it’s the government for the people.

In your economic statement, the government mentioned development in the Far North. If we, as a legislative body, are actually going to seriously look at development in the Far North for the benefit of all the people, I think it’s incumbent on this committee, in a pre-budget consultation, to go to a place that actually is part of Ontario, and it’s a

part of Ontario that very few of us, if any—I’ll put on the record that I’ve been to a fly-in community once and I was shocked at how different the spectrum of life is there than in other parts of this province. I think it’s something that this committee needs to see.

Another member from the government side said we need to see as broad a subset of people as possible. In Ontario I don’t think you can talk about seeing a broad subset of people unless—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: If you’re serious about seeing the broadest subset of people possible, then that cannot omit the fly-in First Nations of the north. It cannot. You cannot talk about developing northern Ontario, you cannot talk about developing the Ring of Fire—which I’m sure is going to come up in your budget; it came up in your fall economic statement—without the committee members seeing how those Ontarians live and seeing their views, because as far as development in northern Ontario, the views of the people who have lived there for eons need to be heard.

Mr. David Piccini: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Piccini?

Mr. David Piccini: Just to park that for a second and ask on the Thunder Bay portion versus Dryden: Can you just explain the rationale from Dryden to Thunder Bay, back to Thunder Bay where we’ve had it a number of times?

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Can you speak through the Chair, please?

Mr. Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: I think I’d let Mr. Mamakwa, just for logistics, explain that.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay, Mr. Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thunder Bay is more of the bigger central kind of hub for northwestern Ontario, and then there’s Sioux Lookout, which is a town that is also kind of like a hub for the fly-in communities. It would even be better if the hearings were in Sioux Lookout rather than Dryden, just because they’re only 90 kilometres apart. I think it would be so much easier if it’s Sioux Lookout than in Thunder Bay. Thunder Bay, if it’s a charter, it’s an hour flight. I think that’s the rationale.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: I would just like to reiterate the importance that we cannot stress enough that we have all—in central Ontario like me, and in the Far North—heard time and time again that this is a “government for the people” from the government. If it’s for the people, it certainly has to hear from the people who are going to be impacted most—who should benefit the most from the Ring of Fire, but who are certainly going to be impacted the most.

1430

The most important thing that we can stress here is, we need to go to a fly-in community in that part of the world. We’re suggesting Pikangikum so that people on this

committee can actually have a view of how people in the First Nations live and what services they truly need. We can talk about it all we want in the House, but until you see it—I think on our committee, there's only one person now who actually has the right to talk about it, and that's Mr. Mamakwa. I think the more information that we can disperse, that we all can give the government in our report—we need to go to Pikangikum.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate? Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would also just like to be on the record as saying that what we're talking about is not a partisan issue. We're talking about all of us representing Ontario. We're talking about Indigenous First Nations communities that have been sorely neglected. I don't think we can understand the kinds of amenities they're lacking. We're talking about infrastructure. We're talking about roads. We're talking about clean drinking water. I know Mr. Mamakwa was in the House speaking about a young woman who committed suicide. The conditions in which she was living prior to that were just unspeakable. It's shameful for all of us in Ontario to not understand first-hand.

To go there and respect the words that we put to this—there are a lot of words we talk about. We talk about consultations with our Indigenous communities. We talk about respect. We talk about consultation. I think this is an opportunity for us to have our actions match our words, and I for one would be completely disappointed if this committee didn't use the advantage that they have to show true commitment to the kinds of reconciliation that we pay lip service to.

We're talking about logistics—I think that's a lot of the discussions we're having about what's the most convenient way to facilitate this. But I think we need to establish whether or not there's a genuine will on the part of the government side to go to one of the remote, fly-in communities that we really owe it to ourselves and to our Indigenous communities to visit.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate? Mr. Downey.

Mr. Doug Downey: More clarification on the Thunder Bay-Dryden piece: What I heard was, we're going to Thunder Bay because it facilitates the fly-in community. But Dryden is the smallest designated city in Ontario. It is a unique place in itself. So is there something compelling about going back to Thunder Bay for an 11th time, outside of pure logistics?

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: At the risk of upsetting people in Thunder Bay, I think our issue is to get to Pikangikum. We're trying to facilitate. We are not trying to bog this committee down. We're trying to get the series of places that gets this committee, gets the people of the region—Thunder Bay is the regional centre. Having been on this committee for a few years, if you go to a city like Thunder Bay, you will get people from all across northern Ontario, because the way northern Ontario is set up, they're used to doing things in Thunder Bay. For a stepping-off point to

get to Pikangikum, Thunder Bay is the easiest, logistically. We're trying to make it work for people within driving distance, commuting distance to Thunder Bay and northern Ontario—that's pretty long. But it's not feasible for your average person in a fly-in community to come to a committee. That's why we are proposing the schedule we're proposing.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate? Mr. Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thunder Bay versus Dryden is not a big issue for me—but I think it's getting to a fly-in community. I can live with going to Dryden. But if you support visiting a fly-in community like Pikangikum, I really would appreciate that.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I came in because I was interested in this. As somebody who has represented the James Bay, I had Kashechewan and Peawanuck and Marten Falls and a number of other communities that used to be in my old riding.

I can just tell you, as a non-Aboriginal person who grew up in Timmins—and I'm going to say this straight. A lot of us who grew up in Timmins didn't have very good views or outlooks towards First Nations. We were pretty damn racist, some of us—and I include myself in that—because we grew up not knowing any better.

I think it has changed a lot in places like Timmins and I think it has changed a lot in places like Thunder Bay because we have been interacting more and more with First Nations people. If you go to Timmins or Thunder Bay today, there are a lot more people in from the Far North fly-in communities than we used to have before, and it has helped us to better understand.

But I will tell you what it did it to me: It was actually being there. Going to Kashechewan, going to Marten Falls, going to Peawanuck and all of the communities in between allowed me to better understand what some of the challenges are. I've got to tell you, after representing for 15 years, I can only scratch the surface when it comes to understanding. Somebody like Mr. Mamakwa can, because he grew up in it and understands intrinsically in his gut what those communities face on all kinds of levels. We have some communities where, unfortunately, the whole fentanyl thing is crippling the community.

I remember—and this is the reason I wanted to get up; I wanted to tell this story—we were having a housing crisis, as we always had in our communities, particularly in Attawapiskat, and this time we were trying to build another 25 houses. The federal government was not doing anything in order to move things forward, because it's a federal responsibility.

As the provincial member, I decided, "Well, I'll bring the media there." So I took the media and we went to visit homes in Attawapiskat. What the media saw created almost an international incident when it came to the reports they had coming out of Attawapiskat when they came back, because that's where they started realizing you have 20 to 25 people living in one house, not because of any other reason other than there's no other housing.

Where are you going to go? It's 30 to 40 below zero; you have to put your kids somewhere. Mum and dad may have a house and then two or three children may end up living there with their families.

You go into a bedroom, it's very clean—they're great people, the best people you'll ever meet. I can't get over the cleanliness in those communities when it comes to how people maintain their houses inside, and outside. When you went into the house, it was two beds in the bedroom, and there was no longer a closet; it was bunks—they're hot-bedding like you do on a submarine for people to be able to sleep. How does a child go to school the next day and study? That was the kind of question that the media was asking.

We saw heat by wood. There was heat by electricity, but who can afford it? A hydro bill to heat your house in Attawapiskat is a little bit more than Toronto; I'll just put it that way. I'll always remember—he's now reporting on the Hill. The Badger was there, and I'm trying to remember the reporter's name from Radio-Can. Anyway, we go into this one house and there's a wood stove where they had to keep people up at night on fire watch because the fire was coming out of the fire box in the back of the stove, so they literally had to have people up 24 hours a day to keep an eye on that stove.

So if we're making decisions here at Queen's Park about things that we do have control over—because we control health care on-reserve; we control daycare on-reserve; we control social assistance on-reserve. Those are all provincial services—airports. We're responsible for over 50% of what happens on reserve. How can we make decisions here, in support of my good friend Mr. Mamakwa, and make better decisions here if we don't at least spend a day in their shoes to see what goes on?

I really hope the government reconsiders. We're not trying to slow this place down. As they said, we'll live with Kenora. That was just a suggestion. We thought we would maybe see more people in Thunder Bay. The real issue for us here is, we need to get into Pikangikum. You have to see it to believe it.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate? Mr. Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: I'd like to move a 10-minute recess, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Is there agreement? Okay, we'll recess for 10 minutes.

The committee recessed from 1439 to 1449.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. We'll continue on to further debate to the amendment to the amended motion. Is there debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you. We've heard some from the government regarding Thunder Bay and Dryden, so I would like to move an amendment to our amendment.

I move the amendment be amended as follows:

In the second paragraph, delete the word "Thunder Bay" and replace it with the word "Dryden."

I have the paperwork.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Mr. Vanthof has moved an amendment to the amendment. Is there any debate on that? Mr. Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: I would like to move a 10-minute recess.

Mr. John Vanthof: Sure. Okay. Of course.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Okay. We'll proceed with a 10-minute recess.

The committee recessed from 1449 to 1458.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): When we recessed, Mr. Vanthof had moved an amendment to the amendment. Is there further debate? Mr. Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: Respectfully, Chair, I would like to make a change to the amendment. I had previously read into the record "in the second paragraph to delete the word 'Thunder Bay.'" It should be in the first paragraph. It was just kindly pointed out to me by the Clerk.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you. Is there further debate? Are members ready to vote? Okay. Shall the motion carry? Sorry. Shall the amendment to the amendment carry? All those in favour, please raise your hand.

Mr. John Vanthof: Could I have a recorded vote?

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Recorded vote.

Ayes

Mamakwa, Shaw, Vanthof.

Nays

Stan Cho, Downey, Piccini, Skelly.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): The amendment to the amendment is accordingly lost.

We will now proceed to debate on the amendment to the amended main motion. Is there further debate on that? Are members ready to vote?

Mr. John Vanthof: Chair, could you just read—just so we're sure which amendment everybody's voting on?

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): This is the amendment that was forwarded by Mr. Mamakwa.

Mr. John Vanthof: Okay. Thank you. Once again, a recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Recorded vote.

Ayes

Mamakwa, Shaw, Vanthof.

Nays

Stan Cho, Downey, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): The amendment to the main motion is lost.

We're back at the main motion, as amended. Is there any further debate? Mr. Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's very difficult—I'd like to put on the record—to vote. We want to visit all parts of Ontario. It hurts me not to be able to vote for the main motion because basically the government has chosen—we have understood—for the sake of a day, to exclude fly-in communities across this province at a time when successive governments, but this one in particular—I distinctly remember the Minister of Finance in the House saying that there was no more dilly-dallying, that this government was going to get to the Ring of Fire. This government is on the record as saying that, and yet, when it comes to actually taking it seriously and visiting a fly-in First Nation community, for the sake of a day—I am shocked.

One other thing I would like to put on the record: The members of the government graciously said that if we could just squeeze it in, they would be willing to pay for it themselves to go on the trip. The fact that the government believes that only people who can afford to pay for it themselves should be able to go—is this government of the gentry class?

The fact that the Ring of Fire is going to be one of the biggest economic engines in the province—we all know that—and the fact that the people who have lived there and taken care of that land for eons are being ignored by this government—wilfully. We have made amendments to try. The government brought up issues regarding this town or that town. We did our best. The message you are sending is: government for the people, but only for some people, some of the time, part of the time. That is the reason why I, personally, am going to vote against this motion: because you are excluding the people who have been on this land for thousands of years; the people whom we, as colonists, have very badly treated; and the people that, in my view—and I'd like to cede the floor to Mr. Mamakwa—have no plans in changing that.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate? Mr. Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Certainly, it's unfortunate that you voted against my motion to visit a fly-in community for this pre-budget consultation. When I heard you before, you came to me in person and said that you'd like to visit my riding. I gave you an opportunity, and you voted this motion down. I don't know what changed since our inaugural meeting where we spoke about that.

Being here as an Indigenous person, as a First Nations person, I've always said that this is a colonial system. This is a colonial government. I can see that. You're actually seeing it happen right now in front of your eyes, and you voted for it. Because we're on-reserve, because we're First Nations, we do not matter. That's the way the system is set up. What you just did reflects that very clearly. As my colleagues, I'm disappointed in all of you. So I just wanted to make those comments.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Ms. Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I also would like to have on the record how deeply, deeply disappointed I am. There are no logistics in the world that could prevent us from visiting a fly-in Indigenous community if the will was there. This is painful to be part of. I'm sorry to have to say this, but this shame you will wear. There is no reason that you could not have made this happen. I do appreciate that there was some effort, but if this was really in your hearts, you would have made this happen.

To watch the perpetuation—as my friend has said—of these colonial views that do not ever make an effort to include Indigenous people, First Nations, Inuit that have been treated so poorly for all these years by a government that plans to enrich themselves with the resources on their land, this is beyond shameful.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate? Mr. Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: Just for the record, Chair, the amendment which we proposed would not have made any time delay in report writing or any time delay in budget consultation. There was no intention on our part to delay anything. The reporting would have been done at exactly the same time. I'd just like that on the record: At no time did we try and delay it. We wanted everyone in the province to be included in this consultation.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate? Okay, are members—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: One more comment.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Sorry. Yes, Ms. Shaw?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I just would also like to put on the record how ironic, how telling of the history of our relationship with Indigenous Canadians, that we say one thing and then we do another.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Any further debate? Okay, in that case, are members ready to vote? Okay.

Mr. John Vanthof: On the record.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): On the record—sorry. Recorded vote?

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, please. Recorded vote, please.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Shall the main motion, as amended, carry?

Ayes

Stan Cho, Downey, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly.

Nays

Mamakwa, Shaw, Vanthof.

The Chair (Mr. Stephen Crawford): The main motion, as amended, carries.

Any further discussion? Okay. This meeting is adjourned. Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned at 1510.

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