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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

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des débats
(Hansard)**

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**Standing Committee on
Finance and Economic Affairs**

Plan to Build Ontario
Together Act, 2019

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Thursday 5 December 2019

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

Loi de 2019 sur le plan
pour bâtir l'Ontario ensemble

1^{re} session
42^e législature

Jeudi 5 décembre 2019

Chair: Amarjot Sandhu
Clerk: Julia Douglas

Président : Amarjot Sandhu
Greffière : Julia Douglas

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES**

Thursday 5 December 2019

Jeudi 5 décembre 2019

The committee met at 0900 in room 151.

**PLAN TO BUILD ONTARIO
TOGETHER ACT, 2019**

**LOI DE 2019 SUR LE PLAN
POUR BÂTIR L'ONTARIO ENSEMBLE**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 138, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Projet de loi 138, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Good morning, everyone. We're here to continue the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 138, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes.

Julia Hood from legislative counsel is here again to assist us with our work, should we have any questions for her.

Yesterday, we left off at schedule 32, section 1. We'll continue from there. When we adjourned, MPP Piccini had the floor. MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: No further comments.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes, I have a few. We're debating schedule 32? Is that correct?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Schedule 32, section 1.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: We're discussing the Provincial Day of Action on Litter, and there are a couple of things I wanted to say in response to MPP Piccini's comments yesterday. Really, there's nobody on this side of the House who doesn't agree that we need to pick up our litter, but I would suggest that—you did say this is symbolic, but we need more than just symbolic gestures when it comes to climate change. We had an opposition day motion saying that we wanted to declare a climate emergency in Ontario, and the government side voted that down. To me, that's surprising given that they're saying that reducing litter is a priority. We also had a private member's bill that wanted to introduce a ban on single-use plastics. You shot that down, as well. And we made suggestions around looking at more producer responsibility in terms of the kinds of plastics that end up on the streets, which you're asking people to pick up. So it would be hard to even call this a good first start. What we have to do in terms of addressing the climate emergency that we're facing goes way beyond a day of action on litter.

Very specifically, in the preamble—I'd just like to read into the record what the government is suggesting that we do on this provincial day of action: "All Ontarians are encouraged to pick up litter that they encounter in public places, including waterways." For example, a waterway in Hamilton is Chedoke Creek, and it turns out that we did have people picking up litter in waterways, as is suggested in this preamble. There's an organization called Stewards of Cootes Watershed, who spend volunteer time in that water, picking out litter from Chedoke Creek, which goes into Cootes Paradise, a protected, beautiful area of Hamilton. What these people in the water didn't know, because no level of government let them know, was that 24 billion litres of sewage was flowing through those waterways. They put themselves at significant health risk to pick up litter in waterways.

My concern would be that, while we're encouraging Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and folks to get in waterways and pick out litter, in waters that may have sewage in them, we don't have a system that alerts people to the dangers. In some regard, I feel that it is an irresponsible suggestion that people just pick up litter, including in waterways, when we have yet to have a system that gives timely notification to people that they may be in waterways that are contaminated. So that's something that I would say is missing from this short schedule. It puts people in harm's way without any kind of protection.

The other thing I would just like to make clear is that people have been picking up litter without any need for the government to take credit for it. We have Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, volunteer organizations, community associations that do park cleanups all the time. So this is already happening. We don't need to have the government encourage people to do this. But, more than anything, I would just like to say that this falls so dramatically short of what people are looking for when it comes to protecting our climate.

We had the Auditor General report yesterday saying that this government's climate policies are inadequate and that they're going to fall well short of your targets. When we're talking about picking up litter, it's like arranging deck chairs on the Titanic. We're talking about picking up litter, but we're ignoring the significant catastrophe that is facing us with climate change. The money that this government has spent—the Auditor General revealed that this government spent \$4 million on their anti-carbon-tax campaign. That's a lot of money that could have been spent to help pick up litter, if that's what you wanted to do.

I'd just suggest that while you're saying reducing litter is a priority, my suggestion is that you have your priorities wrong. What is really a priority is having an actual, credible climate change plan that will reassure people in the province of Ontario that rather than quoting climate change denial blogs, you actually put forward a climate change plan that really does take this seriously and really does provide the kind of hope and the kind of leadership that people are expecting from all governments around the world, certainly not just the province of Ontario.

Dragging our heels, when it comes to climate change, is over. We have to stop doing that. It would have been wonderful to have seen in this bill, rather than a provincial day of action on litter, something that was a substantive step forward to address climate change. While I think it's all admirable and all that we're going to have people walking around picking up litter in their communities, I still think that in the face of what we're facing, this is almost—I mean, it's ludicrous, is what I want to say, in the face of climate change. Good on you, but boy, oh boy, does this ever fall short.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? MPP Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: Just a very short point on the litter day: I think yesterday we reached a bit of a tipping point on Ontario's action, reaction or lack thereof regarding climate change. We both have our partisan sides, and people take that for what it is, but yesterday the Auditor General did say that the government's climate change plan was not based on sound evidence. That should be a clarion call.

In the press conference, I watched the Minister of the Environment say, "Well, it's an evolving plan." That was very damning. Regardless of our partisan stripe, we need to take this seriously, because we're dealing with climate change already. It's erratic. Our weather patterns are more erratic than they used to be. We have to deal with that and deal with how it could be changing the future.

It is a bit concerning, quite concerning, that the government comes out with things like a day of litter to trumpet their own horn. It's kind of like the day of workplace safety at the same time as workplace injuries are actually increasing; instead of looking at that, the government comes out with a day to act like they're doing something. I think we have to get over that. Specifically on climate change, we need to get over that. We need to actually sit down and come up with a real plan with real numbers that you can actually justify and identify.

The fact that you're taking a huge increase in electric cars in your climate change plan at the same time as you've ripped out charging stations in some public places—that's just a bit over the top. Let's start taking this seriously on behalf of the people we all represent.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I know that when we talk about schedule 32, on the provincial day of action on litter—my forefathers have been here thousands of years, and we are stewards of these lands, and I understand that, and sometimes governments do not listen to our people. When we

talk about litter, I know some communities in the north do their own cleanup days or cleanup weeks where they clean up the community.

0910

One of the things that I'll sometimes bring up in the House is regarding access to clean drinking water. I know one of the things this government does in response is they always throw in that jurisdictional card of whose responsibility it is, and they play with the lives and the health of the people up north. When I hear the government say that every Ontarian matters, I always kind of say in my head that you should always finish with, "Unless you're First Nations." Because that's essentially what you're saying when you don't respond.

I'm talking about water because I have this one community that has about 24 years of a boil-water advisory. To remedy that, they send in cases of bottled water. When you go to the community landfill, guess what you see? Plastic bottles all over. There's no mechanism in place to be able to send out or recycle the plastic that is sent up. This has been happening for 24 years. Just imagine about the environment.

Again, I think Ms. Shaw reiterated about how we need to go further than that. It's not just a cleanup day; it's not just action on litter. We've got to go beyond that. I don't think the government has moved far enough on climate change. This is real.

I was up in Bearskin Lake about three weeks ago. I did a quick trip, and it was kind of—you know, when you see how climate is changing up in the Far North, whereby you have a flood in the fall, that's so, so unusual. We're not being serious enough. The government is not being serious enough on that issue. Meegwetch.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? Are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Shall schedule 32, section 1, carry?

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

We'll move to schedule 32, section 2 now. Is there any debate? Are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

We'll move to schedule 32, section 3 now. Is there any debate? Are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

We'll now move to the schedule 32 preamble. Is there any debate? Are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? It's accordingly carried.

Is there any debate on schedule 32 as a whole? Are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? It's accordingly carried.

We'll move to schedule 33 now. I don't see any amendments to sections 1 and 2. I therefore propose that we bundle these sections. Is there an agreement? Agreed.

Is there any debate? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

Is there any debate on schedule 33 as a whole? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

We'll now move to schedule 34. There are no amendments to sections 1 to 5. I therefore propose that we bundle these sections. Is there an agreement? Agreed.

Is there any debate? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

Is there any debate on schedule 34? Are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? It's accordingly carried.

Mr. Dave Smith: Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): MPP Smith.

Mr. Dave Smith: Just for clarification, because there are two Mr. Smiths, shouldn't it be "Mr. Smith, Peterborough-Kawartha"?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Julia Douglas): It should be. My apologies. I will fix it for next time.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you.

We'll move to schedule 35 now. There are no amendments to sections 1 to 2. I therefore propose that we bundle these sections. Is there an agreement? Agreed.

Is there any debate? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

Is there any debate on schedule 35 as a whole? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? It's accordingly carried.

We'll now move to schedule 36. There are no amendments to sections 1 to 8. I therefore propose that we bundle these sections. Is there an agreement? Agreed.

Is there any debate? MPP Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: We're on 36, Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Schedule 36, yes. 0920

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes, I have some comments about schedule 36. This, combined with schedule 20, would appear to be the only two schedules that refer to anything to do with the finances of the province of Ontario. I've already questioned this in some regard—we've just had a supply bill motion, so it's interesting to see that the government is moving this forward.

But I would also like to make perfectly clear that there's nothing in either one of these schedules, schedules 36 or 20, that really—let's be clear: They do not reverse or undo some of the cuts that have happened previously. While there's some attempt to put this as a positive note for people that have suffered from the cuts and rollbacks in the province, if you look at schedule 20 and schedule 36, it's quite clear that these cuts are not being rolled back at all. The evidence is right there in schedule 36 and schedule 20.

I would point out, to anyone that really wants to understand outside of the messaging that the government has put

around this fall economic statement and this bill, that that's where the rubber meets the road, in those two schedules.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? MPP Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: Just as a comment, I guess: Interim supply, in my past years—I've been here since 2011. I certainly don't profess to be an expert on rules, but formerly, interim supply was an individual—there was much more emphasis put on it. It wasn't something you slipped into an omnibus bill; it was something we actually discussed in the House, and it was actually discussing financial matters. Interim supply was one of the few times you could bring up issues that were actually directly related to finance, whether it be in your riding, in your portfolio in the ministry, as a critic or the minister, as a speaker.

It's very disconcerting that a government that claims to be focused on accountability in finances and transparency in finances changes the way interim supply, which is basically how the government's bills are paid, is actually moved through the House. We were looking for quite a while for when the interim supply motion was going to come up. It never did, because it's included in an omnibus bill, basically, then, limiting debate on actual financial matters.

I'm not here to drag this out. We're in clause-by-clause. It's not my purpose. But I think, in this room, as far as elected people, I'm the senior person elected, in time, and have gone through this before. It has never been done like this since I've been here.

There was an election. You won the election. The one thing we all agreed on was that the previous government wasn't very good with finances. But even the previous Liberal government had a full debate on interim supply. I know this government thinks that everything that the Liberal government did was wrong. I'm going to quote someone who I often quote: "Even a broken clock is right twice a day." This is one where what you're claiming to represent yourself as, as much more transparent than the past government—slipping interim supply into a schedule in an omnibus bill and stopping full debate on how the finances are spent in the chamber is a big, big step backward. It's a huge step backward. You might not even know that because you've never been through the interim supply process before.

Interim supply was one of those ones where you weren't relegated to be specific to this part of the bill or that part of the bill. You could actually talk about something in Peterborough, about how money could be spent better in Peterborough. You could actually do that. You individual members could do that, and you're limiting that. That needs to be put in the record. Interim supply slipped into an omnibus—you're kidding yourselves if you think you're more transparent on how government money is spent. You're kidding yourselves and trying to kid the public.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Accordingly carried.

Is there any debate on schedule 36? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

We'll now move to schedule 37. There are no amendments to sections 1 to 21 of schedule 37. I therefore propose that we bundle these sections. Is there an agreement? Agreed. Is there any debate? MPP Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: This comment is not solely for this government; this comment is, I guess, on the way our system runs. But this is a very good example.

We are elected to represent our constituents and debate; on the government, to put forward their agenda and pass it; and on our side, to comment, criticize and hopefully make that legislation better. That's kind of how the system runs.

But in this one, as many bills, you're changing how the system is managed, but not really saying how, because that's going to be regulated later through the regulations. As legislators, we need to be worried about that, because it's the regulations that impact people. It's not just here, but if you look back in the history of the Legislature, each successive government puts more emphasis on the regulations and less on the legislation. That's much easier for the government, but all of us are losing the purpose of actually what legislators are for. We're to disagree at times and agree at times, but to actually approve legislation and say in the legislation, "Well, we'll let other people worry about that. We're just going to give them the power, but we're going to let other people worry about how it actually impacts the people or the province?"

That is one of the reasons why people are losing faith in their elected representatives, because some of the things that happen to them at the end aren't what they were told was going to happen to them. Quite frankly, this Supply Chain Management Act, once it is enacted, it's out of your control on how the people are actually impacted, because it's left to regulation. That's not the elected members who make up the regulations. I think that's something we all have to remember: Whenever you create all-new enabling legislation, it sounds great—you're going to do things much better—but there is no guarantee of that, because the meat and potatoes comes after, and we no longer, in many cases, look at the meat and potatoes.

That is hurting us all, and this is another—again, I've been here for a while, maybe too long, and you guys are going to try to help me with that, I know.

Laughter.

Mr. John Vanthof: I know how the game is played. I'm not here to help you, either.

But when you're going to change things, our province would run a lot better if successive governments hadn't moved away from actually running things through the

Legislature, because we all got elected for a reason: to represent our people. We are all intelligent and come from different walks of life. That's what makes this place strong. That's what makes our province strong. When you relegate everything to regulation, as opposed to in the Legislature, that weakens us all, just as a comment. Thank you.

0930

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? MPP Shaw?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much. I couldn't agree with my colleague MPP Vanthof's comments any more. I have my own opinions on that.

You are creating a super-agency. This seems to be a government that just loves huge bureaucracy. So you're creating a super-agency that will determine how this government procures services and spends money on behalf of the people of Ontario. This is a huge change, and yet you've buried it in an omnibus bill.

As my colleague has said, this is just enabling legislation. It's a government that just seems to want to grab more power for themselves. You've made changes to the standing orders giving yourselves more power in the Legislature. You're putting forward legislation that goes against everything that you say you are about, which is transparency and accountability. You have not given the people of Ontario an opportunity to weigh in on something that has such a major, substantial financial impact on our province.

You're not doing what you say, which is listening to the people of Ontario. You're actually shutting them out by giving yourselves the ability to pass legislation that gives you all the powers to make regulations behind, really, closed doors. There's no opportunity for people to weigh in on this.

At the end of the day, with a schedule of this magnitude, the devil is in the details, and there are no details in this. There are no measures here; there are no targets. We're talking about cost savings. We all want to save taxpayers' money. Well, we certainly do want to save taxpayers' money. But you have no measures here. There are no targets in this bill. You don't talk about—are we going to protect service level reductions? There's no discussion about that, just this big, broad enabling legislation giving the government the power to determine, at a later date, what they feel is best for the people of the province of Ontario. I don't think people like that kind of heavy-handed approach by a government. Let's be clear: You are creating a super-agency that's unaccountable to the people of the province of Ontario.

I would also say that, as has been the habit of this government, in this schedule, you're making sure that you are protecting yourselves by exempting yourselves through the crown liability. Really, you've given yourselves complete immunity from any actions that this bill will take. So now if people who may be doing business with the government, people who are receiving services from the government, are harmed in any way by the decisions of this super-agency that is yet to be determined, you've given yourselves complete inoculation against any accountability. People have no opportunity to seek any kind of remediation if they've been harmed, intentionally or otherwise, by your decisions. I believe, 100%, that it is not the

intention of the government to harm people. I believe that. But it's the unintended consequences that are what we want to protect against. My guess is that, by putting this huge provision that you're not liable by the changes in this, you might have in the back of your mind that something might go wrong in this. So we want to make sure that if something does go wrong, people can seek redress from their government.

I would actually say that's the only section in this whole schedule that has some detail, is making sure you're quite clear about how you're going to be protected by the law, how you're going to hide behind this clause and not give people the opportunity to seek redress. I don't see how that is, in any way, us looking after the people of the province of Ontario. There's no detail in this about who is going to be doing business with the government. With all due respect, I have to say there have been a lot of questions in the House, in the media, about the way this government does business with people. People have a lot of questions about who gets appointed, who gets to sit on boards, and who gets contracts. It hasn't always been straight up. There have been a lot of things that this government has done that haven't followed what most people would think would be fair, open and transparent with the ways people get access to do business with this government.

Make no mistake: We're talking about big bucks here, and these big bucks are taxpayer dollars. You've given yourself the ability to hire whoever you want, whatever service providers you want to do whatever you determine, with taxpayer dollars. If this is something that you believe will save, will streamline, will modernize—all the things that you talk about—service delivery, those are laudable goals. If that's what you want to do and you have figured this out and you're proud of this, put it in the legislation. People have a right to know.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. Is there any further debate? MPP Cho.

Mr. Stan Cho: It's a pleasure to be here this morning and to have a very productive debate on a very important bill. I would like to clear the air on some of the things I just heard from the opposition and for the benefit of my government colleagues, as well as the public, on what is actually happening here in schedule 37.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: That would be helpful.

Mr. Stan Cho: I will do that right now.

In my former role as the parliamentary assistant to the President of the Treasury Board, I considered myself very lucky as a rookie MPP that I got to see, at a deeper level than I think most rookie MPPs would, how government spending works. Let me tell you: It is complex.

The good news is that we have incredible public sector employees at all ministries, but at Treasury Board and at finance, who are intelligent, hard-working and really care about the direction that our government, our province, is headed in.

In that role as PA to the President of the Treasury Board, I was tasked with charring procurement reform, which is supply chain management, essentially. I got to learn exactly how this process works. I'll shed some light on that

process, but let me—MPP Shaw is correct in saying that this is big bucks. This is actually huge bucks. We have 21 line ministries here receiving funding in the government. We have 191 agencies, boards and commissions receiving transfer payments through those line ministries. We have big spending in government. Some \$64 billion, of course, goes to health care; \$30 billion goes to education; and \$17 billion goes towards community and social services. Unfortunately, after that, of course, is interest on our debt, but that's not what I'm going to talk about today.

On procurement spend, it's difficult to estimate because there's very little line of sight once those ministries give money to those 191 agencies, boards and commissions. There's very little line of sight on how that money is spent. The best estimates from the hard-working bureaucrats at Treasury Board is that we're thinking about \$29 billion being spent on procurement in government. That's every single year. So you're right in saying that it's big bucks. It's a very spicy meatball, and it's a meatball we have very little view of when it comes to how it's being spent.

For the benefit of the members—and some of you have heard this story, but let me tell you a story that will put some context on why we're introducing this schedule. As it stands now, let's say Mr. Doe is injured in Haliburton, and he's injured quite seriously. Haliburton EMS show up, and they realize, "Mr. Doe, you've very hurt. We're going to have to fly you out to Toronto General." Mr. Doe requires an intravenous drip, and so Haliburton EMS will apply that IV drip. When Ornge air ambulance arrives, Chair, they have to take out that perfectly good IV drip and put in a second one, not because Mr. Doe needs a new one or that IV is defective, but simply for the fact that Ornge air ambulance purchases from a different supplier than Haliburton EMS does. And guess what? When Mr. Doe arrives at Toronto General, Toronto General will have to replace that IV for a third time for the exact same reason. Now, if anyone has had an IV drip, I can tell you it sucks. It's painful, it's uncomfortable, and there's a risk of infection when you're changing it multiple times, not to mention this is triple the cost to the taxpayer because we've used three needles instead of one.

0940

So what are we talking about when we're looking at the supply chain sector? MPP Shaw, and through you, Chair, and to the opposition members, it's about better outcomes, as well. It's not just about those cost savings, because we don't want Mr. Doe to go through that risk of infection and discomfort unnecessarily. We don't want to spend that extra money on the taxpayer's back. These are precisely the challenges that we are trying to address.

Now, to your question—through you, Chair—about who is leading these discussions, I promise you it is not the politicians, as certainly we are not well equipped to understand the intricacies of how agencies, boards and commissions operate, or the various industries that these very important entities represent. It is the hard-working people, it is the bureaucrats, it is those in those agencies and boards and commissions that we are consulting with.

That's how we find out about stories like this one, when I'm talking about the IV drip example.

At Treasury Board, we had a steering committee full of bureaucrats with many decades of experience leading those very discussions, consulting with the agencies, boards and commissions and those who represent them. That's one example. I have many.

We know, for example, that currently, in many operating rooms, doctors—surgeons—are tripling up on plastic gloves. Now why on earth would they do that? Well, it's for the reason that these gloves happen to be of a terrible quality, but due to budget concerns, entities out there—agencies, boards and commissions—through no fault of their own, are purchasing at the cheapest, bottom price. That's not the best way of looking at how you spend government money. You have to look at life-cycle costs, because there's no reporting mechanism for these surgeons to tell us, "Hey, these gloves are no good. I have to use three of them just to have the quality that one would."

Now, imagine if we could communicate with those agencies, boards and commissions, and the people making those purchases out there, if we had a central body to say, "Hey, these types of things don't make sense." We also have to have two-way communication back from the ground level of the people actually using the taxpayer-funded materials. This is what has been missing, through you, Chair, for, frankly, the existence of government. Of that \$29 billion, we estimate that we can save, conservatively, \$1 billion a year. Mr. Chair, that is \$1 billion that can go to fund an increase in education or health costs. We all know that there is countless waste, that this money can be spent more efficiently.

Chair, through you, I understand that the opposition absolutely has a right to question the details of this and I'm happy to shed light on those details, but I'll tell you that this is a very important initiative that is long overdue. There are other jurisdictions that have done this recently that have saved huge amounts of money. I look to Auckland and New Jersey, for example, a very small government compared to ours, which saved \$1.6 billion just a few short years ago on just a \$36-billion spend, by centralizing their procurement entities.

Chair, I'm proud of the work that Treasury Board is continuing. I do miss being on that committee and chairing that committee because it's important work, but I know I left it in very good hands and I know that this work is going to continue. I'd like to assure the opposition that this is going to lead to not just cost savings, but perhaps more importantly, better outcomes for the hard-working people of Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? MPP Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you. Really, I do want to thank MPP Cho for that explanation. It was very helpful, very informative, and I agree with you. We share your goals in saving taxpayers' money. It is a big business, as we talked about. I mean, \$29 billion, as you said, is a huge amount of money. We also do want to have better outcomes for patients. I had the opportunity to work during

Y2K in a supply chain project, a year and a half of one supply chain project for one flick of the clock in the health care sector, so I know what you're talking about. Not only were some of the products substandard; a lot of times every practitioner wanted their own particular type of glove. So there was a lot of opportunity to save money and streamline purchasing. That's not really what I have the quarrel with; what I have a quarrel with is what you just described, that kind of detail. You talked about looking to save \$1 billion. That's the kind of information that needs to be shared not just with me—which I've very grateful for, the explanation of this—but needs to be shared more broadly.

Again, the goals of saving \$1 billion and having better outcomes for people: Who is going to track and how are you going to report on your progress towards those goals? You haven't set any of the those targets in this legislation.

I just think that while I'm in the privileged position of having heard this directly from you—and I appreciate that. I think that, again, your efforts to save taxpayers money and to achieve better outcomes are commendable. It's also our job as legislators—all of us—to do things in front of the people of the province, not to do things because you think you know all of the answers, and, "Trust us," you're going to get it right. I hope you get it right. But how many times have we seen what we're talking about? This super-agency, really, will come down to a huge IT project. This is what it's going to come down to. How often have we seen massive IT project undertakings fail? How often have we seen them go over budget? Think of Phoenix, for example.

These are the concerns that people have. These are the concerns that I have. I hope that nothing like this happens, but people deserve to be able to see the direction that you're going and some of the details, because I also agree with you that you have hard-working, knowledgeable bureaucrats. But there are other experts out there who can weigh in on this legislation to help make it better. That's the point of having legislation before the public eye: People come and say, "That's a great idea, but have you thought about this?" As a government that listens, you might say, "We consulted with our experts, our bureaucrats that know this, but we hadn't heard that before. Thank you for bringing that to us, because this will make that legislation better."

That's simply my point. Simply, my point is: You don't have all of the answers. Perhaps even our hard-working bureaucrats, who are experts in the system, might not have all of the answers. To make this information more broadly available not only is accountable and transparent; at the end of the day, there's a great likelihood that you will avoid unintended failures or consequences and you will make what you're trying to do here more successful. That's simply what I'm saying.

I don't understand why you would have not put this into legislation. I don't understand why you wouldn't have put this in a stand-alone bill. You're talking about \$29 billion. That's a huge amount of money, and it's a schedule in a huge omnibus bill. That's a big—what was the word you used? I forget what word you used—meatball.

Mr. Stan Cho: Yes, the spicy meatball.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you. It's not only spicy; it's a big meatball—\$29 billion worth—and you have it basically buried in an omnibus bill. If you had had this as a stand-alone schedule and had taken consultation from the public, you might actually have learned something. You might have had input that would help us get to these targets to save this money, to achieve better outcomes a lot faster.

I'm pleased that the government is trying to save taxpayers money and making things better, but at the same time, I'm significantly disappointed to see, from a government that talks about openness and transparency, something that's a matter of \$29 billion of taxpayer dollars in a schedule of basically three or four pages, most of which is taken up by you giving yourselves indemnity. I think most people would think that it would only be fair that they deserve a chance to have a more robust discussion about this and to see some of the details of what you're moving forward. Really, that's what people expect us to do.

0950

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? MPP Cho?

Mr. Stan Cho: I'm going to be very brief. I would like to address MPP Shaw's concerns, through you, and then I will conclude my opinion on this.

What the member opposite is saying about these discussions being private and in secret is just untrue. I have spoken in the House to it. The President of the Treasury Board has spoken to those very issues that you brought up. We've spoken to the transparency of the procurement process and the challenges with the process as it stands.

I didn't bring this up earlier, but as it stands now, the process of bidding on a government contract is confusing, lengthy and full of red tape. It actually has built into there barriers for small and medium-size enterprises, or new vendors, to even compete.

I'll give you an example of a nonsensical rule that exists right now, where in some fields to do with the medical industry, a company must be located within 75 kilometres of a particular jurisdiction. Why would that be, when you're manufacturing medical supplies? That's absolutely not necessary. You're excluding so many potential—not just better cost alternatives, but perhaps better outcome alternatives. Those are the barriers we're talking to, and we're being completely transparent, completely open with the process.

Some things are difficult to include into the legislation, right? We can't put \$29 billion into the legislation because we're not sure if that's the right number. It could be more because, again, we don't have that direct line of sight to how an agency is spending their money. That's an argument perhaps we should have another day because that is taxpayer money. Perhaps we should have a better line of sight on how that money is being spent; it's not the topic for today, though. But the fact is that money is not being spent in the most efficient way.

It's not just about bulk purchasing. It's not just about the fact that an agency on one side of the street could be buying 20 sofas, for example, and an agency on the other side of the street could be buying 30 sofas from the same

place, but there is no negotiating in the bulk purchase—because I’m sure the furniture supplier would give you a much better deal if you negotiated 50 instead of 20 at a time, right? It’s not just about that. It’s not just about the bulk savings as well.

These are the types of details that are difficult to include into the legislation. While I was at Treasury Board, I had literally hundreds of meetings with experts, not just from the agencies, boards and commissions, but the doctors, the bureaucrats, the people who have seen on the ground level how this spending is wasteful and leading to not-as-effective outcomes.

To the member opposite, through you, Chair: These are the reasons it’s not in legislation. That’s why we have to be a little more broad, perhaps, than even we could be, but these are the details that are being discussed as we speak. Perhaps you missed the President of the Treasury Board’s speeches in the House and you need clarification. To the member opposite, I would be happy to meet with you one-on-one to give you those updates, as far as I know; of course, I’m in a new ministry now. But this is the point of government: to have these open discussions. I invite you to contact me any time to continue that discussion, because we really do have the best interests of the hard-working Ontarian in mind. I know that we may disagree at times, but I believe the members opposite do as well.

Thank you for the time on this, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? MPP Shaw?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Again, I thank MPP Cho. I just would like to say I think you and I both have the wrong understanding of “brief comments.”

Mr. Stan Cho: Fine, you got me.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: But mine are going to be brief, I’m pretty sure.

I do thank you for this explanation. It’s helpful, and I will take you up on the offer for you to provide further detail.

You know, in the Legislature, I appreciate when the Treasury Board president gets up and—but those are high-level comments. I appreciate the information you provided here, and I will take you up on your offer to provide more detail as this unfolds. That’s what I’m here to do: to make sure that I’m accountable to my constituents and get as much information out to them as well. That is something that is a generous offer, and you’ll be hearing from me. How’s that?

Mr. Stan Cho: Great. That was brief.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Shall schedule 37, sections 1 to 21, inclusive, carry?

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

There’s a schedule to schedule 37 attached, so we’ll go to that now. Is there any debate on the schedule to schedule 37? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

Is there any debate on schedule 37 as a whole? Are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Accordingly carried.

We’ll move to schedule 38 now. There are no amendments to sections 1 to 3 of schedule 38. I therefore propose that we bundle these sections. Is there an agreement? Agreed. Is there any debate? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Accordingly carried.

Is there any debate on schedule 38? Are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Carried.

We’ll move to schedule 39 now. There are no amendments to sections 1 to 6 of schedule 39. I therefore propose that we bundle these sections. Is there an agreement? Agreed. Is there any debate? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Accordingly carried.

Is there any debate on schedule 39? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Accordingly carried.

We'll move to schedule 40 now. There are no amendments to sections 1 to 2 of schedule 40. I therefore propose that we bundle these sections. Is there an agreement? Agreed. Is there any debate? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Accordingly carried.

Is there any debate on schedule 40? Are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Recorded vote.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Jinx!

Ms. Donna Skelly: I was filling in for Sandy.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I appreciate it, though.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Shall schedule 40 carry?

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Accordingly carried.

Earlier we stood down sections. Now we go to section 1. Is there any debate on section 1? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Carried.

Section 2: commencement. Is there any debate on that? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Carried.

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We'll move to section 3: short title. Is there any debate on that? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? It is accordingly carried.

We'll now move to the title of the bill. Is there any debate on that? No debate on the title of the bill? Are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Skelly, Dave Smith.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

We now move to Bill 138, as amended. Is there any debate on that? MPP Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Okay, well, I would just like to say that if there was ever a bill that was a living example of what an omnibus bill is and why people don't like omnibus bills, it is this bill. I mean, just the schedule that we discussed regarding the changes to the supply chain, as MPP Cho has so helpfully explained, is something that impacts \$29 billion of taxpayers' money in a large omnibus bill.

The schedules that make changes to the Planning Act: Municipalities all across Ontario said, "Don't do this." They said that what you're doing with this bill is increasing red tape, which is something that I think the government—they have a minister to reduce red tape. When 444 municipalities say, "Don't do this because you're increasing red tape," you would think that the government would want to listen. That's a real disappointment, I would say, with this bill as it stands.

I talked at length about this schedule here, schedule 30, which is making chilling, chilling changes to the way people's personal health information is being used by this government. I mean, these are changes that have such a huge impact in people's daily lives, and I would hazard a guess that these are happening unbeknownst to these people, below the radar, because something of that nature—that alone should be a stand-alone bill, not, again, a schedule buried into this large, large omnibus bill that has been time-allocated and rushed through the House. If you think that that's not the case, I mean, you have all of your amendments—24 amendments—that you put forward to amend your own legislation because you didn't get it right the first time.

The changes to the Planning Act—Bill 108 just happened, and now again you're making changes to the Planning Act. So I will repeat: What is the rush? What's that expression, that there seems to never be time to plan, but there's always time to fix mistakes? This is what we have here. This is evidence of what we have here.

I would say one of the biggest disappointments for our side, for the New Democrats—and for young people across the province and young people across this country, I would say—is the failure of this government to take climate change seriously. Putting forward a litter day is just a signal to everyone that this government does not take this seriously, that this isn't a priority. This isn't something that the government is taking seriously, moving forward

on. I think that this is such a lost opportunity on the part of the government to show action, to reverse course.

We had the Auditor General's report that basically slammed the government's action on climate change. You're not going to meet your targets. Even your action on electric vehicles is a failure for the province. There is something that we should be looking at, rather than spending time asking the people—I mean, it's laughable, asking the people of the province of Ontario to pick garbage out of waterways.

Finally, why did you not travel this bill? You travelled Bill 132, which was your red tape reduction bill, and it was kind of like a dog-and-pony show for this red tape reduction, but you didn't travel a bill that impacts the dissemination and use of people's personal information. You didn't travel a bill that impacts \$29 billion of spending on the part of the government. You didn't give people across the province of Ontario a chance to weigh in on this. People had five and a half hours to come to Toronto, if they are lucky enough to be able to get to Toronto, to give the government advice on how this bill could be made better. That's your job. That's absolutely your job.

The two schedules that I think are a positive in this bill are acknowledging and recognizing some of the cultural heritage in our province. That's great. I really do look forward to helping to celebrate with fellow Ontarians Hellenic Heritage Month and Egyptian Heritage Month. Those are two bright spots in basically a pretty grim bill. While we supported the schedules for Hellenic and Egyptian heritage recognition, we won't be supporting this bill. Just schedule 30, on how you are using and not protecting people's health information—that alone is reason enough to not support this bill.

Even though this is being put forward as a finance bill, we know that there's very little in here that has to do with finance, except for the two supply schedules. Honestly, again, we need to be perfectly clear that none of the changes in this legislation undo the damage of the cuts that this government has enacted in this province.

I really feel like it was a lost opportunity on the part of the government to make sure that people were listened to and that you made changes that reflected the people of Ontario's priorities. You had an opportunity to re-establish your brand, to re-establish what people consider this government to be, which is what you say you're going to be—that your words match your actions. I hope, in the future, that when you have these huge bills with schedules that have such significant impact—a potential, actually, to cause harm to the people of the province—that you take the time and get it right the first time.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: I just wanted to quickly comment on the environment piece, because it's an area that's really important to me and close to my heart. I think what I've seen from this government over the past year and is reflected in this bill is that there are many things that a government can do to combat climate change that don't solely

revolve around a punitive tax on the poor and the middle class.

I've been proud to be part of a government that does take substantive action to reduce litter. As the member opposite alluded to, you're darned right it involves individuals and municipalities, because it's going to take an entire country to reduce emissions. Ensuring that municipalities and that everybody in Ontario takes equity in that is important.

I think we're seeing a movement from hyperbole, a movement from electric car rebates for the wealthy and a carbon tax that has been driven down the throats by a very select few that disproportionately go after folks in rural Ontario, single parents, low- and middle-income families. We're seeing a government that is now putting targets to things: targets on heavy-duty diesel commercial trucks; targets on fuel renewable content. And to the member opposite's comment about consulting: On renewable content, the Ministry of the Environment launched consultations on February 12 and it closed on March 19. I'm sure if I look into the results, we'd see comments from the member opposite and hopefully members of her constituency.

1010

This is tangible action that we're taking to reduce our emissions in Ontario. I'm really proud to be part of a government that's setting these targets. When we speak to most climatologists and scientists on it, they talk about taking actual targeted action, and we're doing that. We know we can do more, and I think it's going to involve feedback from everyone. I really do hope that we can collectively move beyond the polarization, a debate that far too often demonizes those who talk about things beyond a carbon tax. I think this is a non-partisan issue that we can all find common ground on. Combatting climate change, setting targets: That's what this minister is doing.

I just had to throw that in there. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Just briefly on the name itself, when we say "together," Ontario is the only province in the numbered treaties that is a signatory to Treaty 9. No other province has ever signed that. I know sometimes—not sometimes, but I think most times, all the time—we're treated as stakeholders, whereby we should be partners. I know when I ask questions in the House, there is no response to my requests.

So I have an issue with the name itself when we say "together." Sometimes things are said in public or in the House that are good unless you're First Nations. That's the only way I can see it. I know there's no policy, no legislation in place, whereby you cannot fund for a water treatment centre in a community. The only thing that's in place is the Indian Act. That's the only reason that you guys don't try to fund it. When we talk about equity, when we talk about equality for all Ontarians, with this government it does not exist. I know it. I see it. I see it when you guys talk. I see it when the ministers respond. I know there are certain issues, crisis issues, that we work on. Certainly, we respond. Those are things that we can work on together. Obviously, I see it. But when we want to make change in

our communities—not only that. In the north, in my riding specifically, we have a 20-bed facility, a long-term-care facility. Our people wait four and a half years to get a spot. That’s unacceptable. That’s what I mean. I think sometimes the north is forgotten within the system. We are forgotten. We are people too, and you guys have to understand that. Sometimes it’s not enough just to meet with some of the leaders and the tribal councils or the political territory organizations, the regional government. It’s good to meet with them, but how do we get the province to be involved within the communities? I think that’s real action.

When we say “together,” I just don’t agree with it, because we’re not included. We’re excluded as First Nations people. This is Ontario. I just wanted to make a general comment.

When we talk about clean water, it’s something that we can work towards.

I think, for me, being here as an Indigenous person, I know this is a colonial system. I used to say that it’s a broken system, but it’s not broken; it’s actually working exactly in the way it’s designed to, which is to take away the rights of our people and the resources in the lands that are up there. We can say that about education. You can say that about infrastructure.

I just wanted to say that. I know we’re running out of time. I’ll—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Sorry. I apologize to cut you off. Looking at the time on the clock, we have to recess this committee until 2 p.m., when we’ll continue from where we left off.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): It’s 10:15, and time allocation only allows us until 10:15, so we have to come back at 2 p.m.

It’s recessed until 2. Thank you.

The committee recessed from 1015 to 1400.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Good afternoon and welcome back. This morning, we left off debate on whether Bill 138, as amended, would carry. When we adjourned, MPP Mamakwa had the floor. Do you have anything further to add?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I know that I spoke about some of the policy direction, the direction where government moves towards with Indigenous issues. I think that’s what I was speaking about. I know that I spoke about the treaty, specifically Treaty 9, that Ontario is the only province that is signatory to that, of the numbered treaties that exist across Canada. Based on that, based on some of the schedules, I know with some of the issues that we face as First Nation communities, any on-reserve issues that we face in the communities are not taken in fact by this government, by the PC government.

I also understand this machinery of government has never been very friendly to our people. There is a big bureaucracy that’s here with respect to that. It’s really critical to move in a new direction with Indigenous peoples. I say that because I know one of the things—back

in March 2019, we got together to pass second reading on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. To this day, I haven’t seen it go to committee.

It kind of reflects where this government stands on that issue. For me, this is not a two-year, three-year thing. We’re looking at 20, 30, 40, 50 years down the road on how we’re going to implement UNDRIP in the province of Ontario. Certainly, I’m beginning to see this government, across the table, the MPPs—it’s not a priority. I understand as individuals, as human beings, we are here for our people, we are here for the people we represent and for what is best for Ontario. But I know there is a mechanism in the background that works beside these things, and I don’t think that process—that system is not ready for that.

I think it’s really interesting, and not only that; it’s imperative that you change that trajectory of thinking of this bureaucracy that’s there behind you. As an MPP, as a fellow colleague, I would like to make those comments. Start thinking about that. I know, whatever that machinery back there, it is imperative that we—I don’t know how to say that. As first peoples, as Indigenous peoples, we had a very loose immigration policy, so to speak, hundreds and thousands of years ago. I think you need to treat us as such. I just wanted to make those comments. Meegwetch.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Any further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Recorded vote, please.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Shall Bill 138, as amended, carry?

Ayes

Bailey, Stan Cho, Piccini, Roberts, Dave Smith.

Nays

Shaw, Mamakwa, Vanthof.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): It’s accordingly carried.

Shall I report the bill, as amended, to the House? Is there any debate? Are the members ready to vote?

Shall I report the bill, as amended, to the House? All those in favour?

Mr. David Piccini: It’s not a recorded vote?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): No.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: We’ve got you trained.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): All those opposed? Carried.

This concludes our consideration of Bill 138. There is no further business. This committee stands adjourned until Thursday, November 12, at 9 a.m.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Julia Douglas): December 12.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Sorry, Thursday, December 12, at 9 a.m. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 1406.

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