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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

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**Standing Committee
on Procedure
and House Affairs**

Television broadcast system

**Comité permanent
de la procédure
et des affaires de la Chambre**

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Thursday 3 November 2022

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Jeudi 3 novembre 2022

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Présidente : Jennifer K. French
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE
ON PROCEDURE
AND HOUSE AFFAIRS**

**LE COMITÉ PERMANENT
DE LA PROCÉDURE
ET DES AFFAIRES DE LA CHAMBRE**

Thursday 3 November 2022

Jeudi 3 novembre 2022

The committee met at 1302 in room 151.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Good afternoon, everyone. The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs will now come to order.

405456 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2022

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill Pr2, An Act to revive 405456 Ontario Limited.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): First on our agenda today, we have the consideration of Bill Pr2, An Act to revive 405456 Ontario Limited.

I would like to ask the MPP sponsor to introduce herself.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good afternoon. Thank you for having me at your friendly committee. I'm Mary-Margaret McMahon, MPP from beautiful Beaches–East York.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. I will ask the applicant to please introduce himself.

Mr. Jack Rotsztain: Thank you for hearing me today. My name is Jack Rotsztain. I'm the lawyer for the numbered company 405456 Ontario Limited. The company was dissolved a number of years ago. Unfortunately, there wasn't a detailed search of financial records, and the company still owned a real estate property at 2102 Queen Street East. The company now wants to sell this property, and because the company was voluntarily dissolved we have to get the revival of this company to happen, and that happens by bill. That's why I'm here.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you, MPP McMahon, do you have any comments to offer?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I would just say I support this idea, this motion and the bill.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Rotsztain, are there any other comments that you would like to make for the committee beyond what you have just said?

Mr. Jack Rotsztain: No, not really, unless there are questions.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Are there any other interested parties with us here today in attendance? I don't see any.

Are there any comments from the government? MPP Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'm just a little bit curious about how it was missed that there was this amount of property in possession of the corporation.

Mr. Jack Rotsztain: All I can say is, it happens. I don't know why it was missed. The financial statements would have indicated an asset. They didn't look at the financial statements. The lawyers don't look at the financial statements. It's normally done by the administrative end of the company, and it looks like that was missed.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It looks like it was last fall that the corporation was dissolved. Do you know when it was realized that this error was made?

Mr. Jack Rotsztain: It was realized when I received an email from the client saying they wanted to list the property for sale. I told them the company was dissolved and they couldn't do that until the company was revived.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Was there any particular reason why the corporation was dissolved?

Mr. Jack Rotsztain: In many cases, if a company isn't doing anything, then there's no reason to keep it active. That was why it was dissolved.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Are there any other questions from the government? No?

Are there any questions or comments from the other committee members for the applicant? MPP West.

Mr. Jamie West: MPP Oosterhoff asked most of the questions I would have. I was just curious about the property. We have the address, but is it a building, a house?

Mr. Jack Rotsztain: I believe it's an apartment building.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: There was a coffee shop down below, so there's retail down below, on a prime corner in the heart of the Beach on Queen Street.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Any further questions or comments from committee members? MPP Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I was wondering if you could provide some additional information about the owner of the company. It seems they're affiliated with the Sherman family.

Mr. Jack Rotsztain: I'm sorry; I can't hear you.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I was wondering if you could provide a little bit of information about the owner of Sherfam. Their subsidiaries are—

Mr. Jack Rotsztain: Sherfam Inc. is a company owned by the estate of Barry Sherman. I'm not the corporate solicitor for Sherfam Inc. At some point before his death, it was owned by Dr. Sherman, I believe.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Is there a reason why the owners of Sherfam and this company are not here?

Mr. Jack Rotsztain: We've done revivals before and we never invited the clients to come to the presentation, so if nobody's here, it would probably be because I didn't invite them to join. There's no other reason for them not to be here—unless there were questions to be asked of them.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): MPP Hsu.

Mr. Ted Hsu: When a tenant pays rent, what happens when there's no company that owns the building?

Mr. Jack Rotsztain: What happens is that, unless the bank is notified, the account still stays open because the bank wouldn't get information that the company was dissolved.

Mr. Ted Hsu: So in this case the bank doesn't know that—

Mr. Jack Rotsztain: I would imagine the bank does not know.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Are there any further questions? In that case, are the members ready to vote?

Section 1 of Bill Pr2, An Act to revive 405456 Ontario Limited: Are there any questions or comments? Shall section 1, then, carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? Section 1 is carried.

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Section 2 of the bill: Are there any questions or comments? Shall section 2 carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? Section 2 is carried.

Section 3: Are there any questions or comments? In that case, shall section 3 carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? Section 3 is carried.

Are there any questions or comments on the preamble? In that case, shall the preamble carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? The preamble carries.

The bill title: Are there any questions or comments? Shall the title carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? The title carries.

The bill as a whole: Any final questions or comments? Shall the bill carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? I declare the bill carried.

Any comments about reporting the bill to the House? Shall I report the bill to the House? Okay. In that case, I will do that. That is carried.

Thank you very much for your presentation and for joining our committee today.

TELEVISION BROADCAST SYSTEM

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Members, our next item of business is discussion on the television broadcast system of the Legislative Assembly.

At our last meeting—which included a field trip; I thank all members for their enthusiasm and participation—this committee received presentations from Todd Decker, the Clerk of the Assembly, and Michael Donofrio, director of broadcast and recording service, as well as that awesome tour of the assembly's broadcast facilities. The committee indicated an interest in having Mr. Donofrio return to continue the conversation that began at that meeting.

Mr. Donofrio, thank you for making the time to return to committee today. I would offer you a chance to make opening comments if you wish. Following that, the committee will get into questions and responses.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Thank you very much for having me back.

My opening comments were really just going to be follow-up on a couple of questions that were asked last time.

I was asked about people being able to monitor the floor audio, or the audio without any interpretation, because some members who speak French would like to monitor themselves speaking French rather than having the English translation. So we did look into it a little bit further and we've been able, on the Parlance app, to add to the closed captioning channel. Whether you are on your French or English phone where you get either English or French audio, if you click on the CC button, now not only will you get closed captions, but you will get the floor sound, so you will hear whatever the person is speaking and you will not hear the translation. Currently, we have that enabled for the House feed, the Amethyst committee room feed as well as the media studio feed. We are still going to enable committee room 1 and committee room 2 soon. We just need to purchase some encoders to allow that to happen. But right now, if you were to go on any of those three feeds that I just talked about on the Parlance app and go on to the CC, you will get floor sound, so you will not hear any translation at all. So we were able to address that.

The other thing that we were asked was about viewer-ship numbers. I had mentioned that we were unable to get television numbers because we don't subscribe to any of the ratings. But then I was asked about digital numbers. So I was able to grab digital numbers dating back to January of this year. That's when we started collecting the Parlance numbers that I can quickly just go through here. I also have handouts of the same thing if you want to follow along that way too. It should be fairly quick.

So the key numbers to look at here are the numbers along the left-hand side. The chart that you see in the middle is really only our website. But the numbers on the left-hand side are the key numbers.

In January of this year, when the House was not meeting any days at all but there were 10 committee meetings—you can see how the video views break down there. There were a little under 6,000 video views—2,644 were through YouTube, Parlance was actually a close second at 2,176, and our website was just a little under 1,000. Again, the House wasn't sitting during this time, but a couple of committee meetings were, and there was the occasional media press conference, as well, that would happen there.

In February, the House would have started to sit partway through February, so you can see that there were four House meetings that month, along with 12 committee meetings, and the video views did go up accordingly, with a little under 15,000 video views—again, the YouTube numbers are the highest at a little under 8,000; Parlance comes in a close second, getting close to 6,000; and our website, again, a little under 1,000. Keep in mind that

Parlance was fairly new at this time; it hadn't been around a lot, and I would say the only advertising for it is on our own channel and website, so a lot of it is word of mouth.

In March, you can see the numbers went up. The House was in full session there. We had 15 meetings. There were 22 committees. And so we had over 30,000 views there—YouTube, again, really big at almost 20,000, Parlance getting close to 10,000, and our website at about 1,500.

In April: nine House meetings and 21 committees, so about 20,000 views there as well—again, YouTube leading the pack, Parlance coming in second, and our website there as well.

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We're going to start getting into, as of May, then getting into June and July, the House winding down and then going into an election, so our numbers will start to get smaller. Again, there were no House meetings and committees were wrapping up—there were about eight meetings—so you can see our numbers are down accordingly. Then, in June and July they really go down, because we were in the midst of an election, really not showing much other than the Women Should Vote documentary going on, and a couple of other things like that. There wasn't a lot for people to watch in those months.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): In the lower right, with all of the downloads—that's each month?

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Yes, each month.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): On the last one—even though there was very little going on, it was the highest Parlance download that I noticed.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: In May, maybe? The Parlance downloads—you can see here that when there is not much going on, they were smaller. The Parlance downloads there are at 37.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Then in June there were—

Mr. Michael Donofrio: In June it was 94, but you'll see that once we get to August, August is a good number because everything was really going, and you can see Parlance is really starting to take hold here. You can see Parlance almost got as much as YouTube here, well over 11,000—just under YouTube. You can see there were 307 downloads that month as well. This is the last month we had, and you can see Parlance views growing as more people are downloading and knowing it.

One of the things to note with these numbers with YouTube—obviously, YouTube is a well-known thing. People choose YouTube for all kinds of things, but YouTube is primarily archived stuff. It's primarily a selection of question periods that have already happened so people can go back and watch them later, or members' statements that have already happened that people can go back and watch later.

Parlance is all live that day, or repeat later on that night. As I mentioned last time, one of the phases that we want to do next is to introduce more on-demand stuff on the Parlance app, as well, so that people can go back and watch previous question periods or members' statements

or other things—committee meetings—that have happened, so that it's more than just live. I think that will also start to increase numbers there.

So this is a small section of what the video numbers are like on some of the digital platforms. I know that there was interest last week, so I thought that I would bring that here today.

Those are really the things I wanted to bring up in my opening statements. Then, if there were questions that you had or other things that I could talk about, I do have a few other things—but I figured I'd open it up after this to see if there was anything.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Judging by some of the committee members right now, you might be having a few more Parlance downloads. If there are advances made to the app, I know that we as a committee would be glad to know that, so that we could tell our friends and do our best to share that way to access the Legislature.

Are there questions from the committee members, things that we had discussed before the field trip? Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Is there a way to push Parlance more on some of the TV stations and things like that, just to advertise it more?

Mr. Michael Donofrio: That, to me, could be something that this committee could do if they thought it was advantageous. That's where I think Parlance has its issue right now—it's more word-of-mouth. We are promoting it like crazy on our own internal channel and on our website, but if you're not watching us already, you probably don't know about this app.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: This is perhaps a ministry question, but I was thinking of an organization like TVO or our civics curriculums or something like that would be promoting this.

I was just thinking that it's a fantastic tool. It's very well done. It's a clean app. It's an efficient app. I think it would be fantastic if we could get that into more people's hands and do more to promote that. I don't think it would be expensive to do if we could do it through some existing channels.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Yes, I agree with that. When you look at these numbers in August, I think it's incredible that we are that close to YouTube and there has been no promotion for the app at all. The app is very word-of-mouth—or you happen to watch us already on our broadcast channel and so you see we've got an app. So I think it has done quite well under those constraints. I can't imagine what might happen if it was promoted in some way, how it might take off at that point.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): MPP Hsu.

Mr. Ted Hsu: I just had a quick question about something I think we were discussing earlier. It was about the clipping tool. I was wondering if there was an updated timeline for that.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: We're still in a phase right now where we are internally working out the bugs. We have found a bit of a bug right now that is so infrequent,

but it could mess things up. When we are ingesting, sometimes, some of our video, we get some dropped frames every once in a while, which could then lead, if you wanted a dub, to you having a dub that would skip a little bit. The company is working diligently on it. We've actually had a few days now where it hasn't happened, so we're crossing our fingers that it's now fixed, but we're doing some more testing on that.

We've trained some of our own internal people to become trainers to help train the system, so our next step is going to be—as a matter of fact, not next week but a week from now, I'm training a few people from the Archives of Ontario, who are being instrumental in getting all of our videotape, going back to 1986, to us so that we can digitize them into the system. Part of the deal we made with them is, they're technically still responsible for all of our tapes going back to 1986, under legislation, so we're giving them access to the system so that they can search for all of that material once it's digitized. So we will be training a few of them a week from next week. We will be training our helpdesk people so that they can help with stuff. We will be training our House documents people. And as soon as we've got that in place, where we know that it can be supported, that's when we plan to do the pilot project with some of the members and the video departments. I'm hopeful that it's not too far away. I want to make sure that it's a clean system so that people who are beta-testing aren't getting frustrated by things we could have addressed ahead of time. I will definitely keep the committee up to date when we know we're ready to do that aspect of it.

Just so you know, part of that project—and I think I mentioned it a little bit during my last visit—is ingesting all of our archive that is at the Archives of Ontario, plus we had a bunch of files that were here as well. That project is well under way. We've actually already ingested over 10,000 video files into the system. Some of these files go back as early now as 1990. We have just received our second batch of 500 tapes from the Archives of Ontario, so 500 of them are already ingested, and we're now about to start working on the other 500. There are about 11,000 tapes, however, at the Archives of Ontario, so that part of the project is going to take us several years before the entire archive is in. But that project is ongoing, and that stuff is going well. It's in the system, and it's there.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): And the archives do go as far back as—

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Right now, it's a bit sporadic, because when we get them sent to us from the archives, they're not always sending us them in chronological order. So we have a certain number of House files from 1990 that are in, some from 1994.

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There is a certain timeline where we started with files that were in the 2000 range that we have all that in. We're trying to get them to start sending it to us in chronological order, from the oldest onwards, so starting with our 1986 stuff, because those are the tapes that are deteriorating

quicker than anything else—so the quicker we can get those in, and then moving that way forward.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Are there any other questions or comments from committee members while we have Mr. Donofrio here? Mr. West.

MPP Jamie West: I was just curious if there were—in terms of general feedback from members or from your staff, in terms of what they would like to see or what would make things easier for members or our staff or the staff who work for you, in terms of getting clips or looking for stuff or anything like that. As MPPs, one mistake we make a lot is, we forget to ask people who do the work what works best or what would make their life easier.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: The one thing about the way we end up getting dubs for the members is, it's done by our regular staff who are doing the live programming. So we have to prioritize a time frame of when those can be done and prioritize who gets stuff at one time. In other words, we'll get requests for dubs from members, but we'll also get them from other people from the Legislative Assembly, we'll get them from the public, we'll get them from media. Members get first priority—we do those dubs first and those off first—then Legislative Assembly and media, and then the public would get them after that. Depending on the amount—because sometimes there may be people who are requesting a lot in one shot—that could mean delaying something that's getting out to other people.

So we're hopeful that with the media asset management tool, once we start putting it in place, depending on the adoption by members—because we know some members and their staff will be more comfortable with technology than others. But if we get a good adoption of members and member staff who are able to send it to themselves, that can take some of that load off of our people and then probably make the others who are relying on us get them a little quicker.

MPP Jamie West: I want to thank your staff, because I'm often emailing BRS, and sometimes I forget what time I spoke. In general, I try to jot it down—but sometimes I'll be like, “in the afternoon,” and as much description as possible, and they're always very, very accommodating. I appreciate it.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Absolutely. That's what we want to be able to do—get you your stuff as quickly as we can. And we're here to help in any way we can.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Are there any further comments or questions from the committee?

Well, in that case, thank you very much again, both for joining us here today, Mr. Donofrio, but also for leading us around the building into nooks and crannies and answering all of our questions. And to your team who accompanied us on the tour, thank you. You guys were very patient and very knowledgeable. We appreciated that, as a committee.

Is there any further business?

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Just to finish up a little bit on the question there—I also wanted to thank the committee, or the previous committee. When you were talking about

anything we can do to improve those things—when we came in front of the committee last time, a few years ago, we came with a bunch of things that we could do to improve the system. At that time, there were a lot of things that we could do to improve the broadcast system. With the committee’s help, we were able to get a go-ahead to do all that stuff, which is why we are at the place we are now, where all of the legislative business is being televised and

screened and available for anybody to view. So I believe that we’re in a really good place, but it was also thanks to the members allowing us to improve it and helping us in that regard. So thank you all, as well, for being so interested in what it is that we do and helping us out too.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): If there is no further business, then this committee is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1335.

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