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**Official Report
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Wednesday 6 June 2012

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Mercredi 6 juin 2012

**Standing Committee on
the Legislative Assembly**

Standing orders review

**Comité permanent de
l'Assemblée législative**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLYCOMITÉ PERMANENT DE
L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Wednesday 6 June 2012

Mercredi 6 juin 2012

The committee met at 1307 in room 228.

STANDING ORDERS REVIEW

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We'll call the meeting to order. Is everyone okay with that? Welcome, everybody, on this beautiful day, to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Clerk, I'll ask you to—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Chair, I had one complaint. I thought we were supposed to get this before Tuesday so I could bring it up with my caucus.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Everybody got it.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No, I didn't get this.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): It was emailed out.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I got this by email.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): That was before. We can check to make sure everything is all right, but it was emailed out to members in advance.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We made copies for all our caucus members yesterday, so—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Well, I didn't—

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): I'll look into it and make sure.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No, it's okay. I just want to say that we will not be able to finalize—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We're going to have a little bit of discussion on that, some of the comments that we heard back and some of you folks—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: And I wouldn't have been able to bring it up at caucus yesterday anyway because they recessed early to go to the Speaker's thing.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Mr. Clark.

Mr. Steve Clark: Can I just ask a question? I was looking at committee Hansard, not from last week's meeting but from two weeks ago, and there was a reference made to a report that I thought we would have at the last meeting regarding a procedure for proclamations. I don't recall seeing that document last week.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): I know we do have a paper on it—and I'll have to check whether it was distributed—on proclamations, sort of how they work. There was an item in the works with options for proclamations and, I guess, things for the committee to consider to see one way or the other how they wanted to deal with it. So I have seen something of

that nature; the question is whether or not it has been distributed to the members yet. But I should have an answer for you on that shortly.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay, so, Mr. Clerk, how would you like me to proceed from this point on as far as the information we did receive, because obviously some of the folks haven't seen it.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): The intent was for members of the committee to talk about the draft options on the weekly schedule that went out, any input they might have had from colleagues and such. Now, seeing them visually set up, that would be the initial discussion. Also handed out was options on committee work that we could move into after we talk about the weekly schedule.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): If I could, Steve, do you want to make a few comments? We did receive the three options. Would you like to make a comment from our caucus's perspective? We only talked about it for a couple of moments, but I thought it would be a good idea to—

Mr. Steve Clark: No, I think it is too, Chair. We did take it to our caucus yesterday, the documents that we had for the draft options. Surprisingly, there were a number of members who, both during the meeting and after, expressed questions on why did we change originally. Obviously, we have a number of new members in caucus, so there was a question on why we changed from the original afternoon question period model to the way we are today. Even afterward, there were some that I think—and I think some of the questions would be answered if we handed out the tab that we were given last week. I think it's tab 30, giving the pre-1986 schedule—pre-1986-89. I think some of that information would have been beneficial for our members. But that was some of the feedback.

The other feedback, Chair, to the members of the committee, we talked about some of those consensus items, things like the Speaker having the approval for a member who couldn't vote from their seat, and rather than asking for unanimous consent, have that procedure. The other item that we talked about briefly was the opportunity on an opposition day for that final closure, similar to a private member's bill, and I think we had general acceptance of that proposal as well. So that's just a brief update.

I did get other members asking me questions throughout the day after our procedure, because I was on House

duty. So there was a lot of discussion off-line with some ideas, and I assume that I'll continue to get suggestions from our members over the next week.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I think one of the things I could also maybe add is that we did stress the fact—this is what I really agree with what Clerk Deller was mentioning. By not having routine proceedings along with question period I think we've lost a certain interest in Parliament because it stretches it out too far, and then there are times when there are statements or a tribute to a former member or ministers' statements. I think that, quite often, we don't have nearly the attendance in the House that we would like to see. That's why I personally liked what Mr. Bisson had put forward: having the three private members' bills on separate days and then having question period each day at 11 o'clock, with petitions etc. ahead of it. I liked that. I thought it would draw more interest in it. Some people may not be that interested in it, but I thought Ms. Deller made some good comments and good points on that.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Chair, if I could just add, Mr. Clark mentioned why we changed the last schedule. It was as a result of Lisa's request to be family-friendly. We used to meet until nine o'clock at night, I believe it was, and we would start in the afternoon. So, that's when we moved it to nine o'clock in the morning, finishing at six, so that we would be family-friendly. And just trying to piecemeal a schedule, that's how it ended up.

If I could just add, Chair, I don't have a problem with taking Mr. Bisson's option back to my caucus. It actually covers the debate hours that we have today, and that it stays in the future. The only question I would ask for some clarification on, and that Gilles may be able to provide us with, is: How would Thursday afternoons work? Because I know in the past a lot of the members in my caucus that have to stay on Thursday afternoons are people who are living within 50 clicks of Toronto—they've always had to stay. I really have difficulty figuring out how we would work out Thursday afternoons in a similar fashion in terms of our caucus, because it's just that the members we have to keep here—it may be problematic.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, and I think, depending on your House duty calendar with your own caucus members—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Yes, so of the three that you put in front of us, I would say that the only one I find that may be a possibility, and the one I'd rather take to my own caucus and discuss it at their next meeting, would be draft option number 2, because number 3, to me—the public is going to be confused there. You're changing routine proceedings in different places. You're changing oral questions to different places. I see that nobody is going to like that.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I think I agree with you on that one.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: So number 3, to me, is out of the question.

Number 2, you lose debate hours, so we would have to extend the House schedule to make up for it.

Mr. Grant Crack: Number 2 or number 1? Number 1.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Number 1 is eliminated, in my mind.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Why is number 1 eliminated? Just so I'm clear.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Number 1 has two hours less for orders of the day.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): I just want to point out there is time after private members' business or—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But again, we go back to the problem we have today.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): Okay. I'm just saying, there is additional time there.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: If we call orders of the day and we need some northern members or out-of-town members here, we've got to keep them, and you're keeping them for the last hour or two of Thursday.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Jeff had a comment, first, and then we'll go back to Gilles and Steve. Jeff?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Garfield, I just want to say, because of yesterday's schedule and the unveiling of the portrait, it was certainly Bas's and my intent to have a broad discussion yesterday. We just had kind of a preliminary go at this. In some discussions with my colleagues, certainly draft option 1—and, Mr. Chair, it goes back to something that you talked about just a minute ago. The framework presented, I think, would grab the attention more of the viewing public. As you know, you have presented private members' bills that have certain traction in your riding, so if you look at dealing with private members' bills on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, there's a certain continuity to go to routine proceedings and then to oral questions and then to deferred votes. To me, this is a very workable, standard schedule on a day-to-day basis, and—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You're talking about option 2 here?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Option 2. That's right.

Interjection: You said option 1.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'm sorry, option 2. I think it would allow, knowing people who would look it up on websites, the parliamentary calendar, to provide a certain degree of engagement on the issue.

But just while I've got the floor, all members would have received the Canadian Parliamentary Review for summer 2012. There's some particularly good reading, and it's appropriate to what we're discussing. On page 9 there's "Prime Minister's Questions in the United Kingdom," and there's another great article further about "Re-examining the Estimates and Supply Process" by Kevin Page, who is the budget officer for the Canadian Parliament. I recommend these two articles for members to take a look at, because I think it's very germane to what we're talking about right now.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. Gilles and then Steve.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just a very quick question on option 1. My question is: The block that is 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday morning is great. I take it it's for caucus? Is that the purpose?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): I believe when Ms. MacLeod put it forward, that was the intention.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And when would cabinet meet in that spot?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): I'm not sure.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay. That answers my question.

Again, I just want to be clear for the record, just to Mr. Balkissoon, I made a proposal last week just based on a conversation. I have not caucused any of this; it's a blue-skying kind of thing, just so you guys know.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: That's why we're saying. It may be workable.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Steve?

Mr. Steve Clark: Thanks, Chair. I think there's a couple of points. I want to just comment on Mr. Leal, the member for Peterborough, and his discussion about the article on Prime Minister's question time. The one thing that is interesting about the UK model is the fact that the Prime Minister has a set day and that other ministers have set times where they would receive questions, which, again based on our model, would assist the particular ministers in not having to be prepared for every question period and not being briefed; that there would be a particular time where they could come and discuss their particular ministry, and the focus would be that ministry. I'm glad that he did bring that up, because I think that is a model, outside of the day, that would be very interesting to discuss from a cabinet perspective and also from an opposition perspective. You would still need to schedule some framework to deal with an emergent item, something that was of urgency that the House should deem to be part of question period. I do like that model, in terms of a discussion point.

In terms of draft option 1—this was the option that I was playing around with during question period today, between having to withdraw comments and coming to order. If you flip the orders of the day to the afternoon on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, it does give you an opportunity during the morning to have your caucus and your cabinet meeting.

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I still want to bring up a point that I believe was from Ms. MacLeod last week—the federal model, where they meet till 6:45. I wouldn't totally throw out the option to gain that extra 45 minutes on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, which may, depending on how it's scheduled, be able to provide what Mr. Bisson was speaking about, and that's not having an overly extended day on Thursday for some members from the north. So there is still an opportunity to modify draft option 1 to make—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Or Ottawa or Windsor.

Mr. Steve Clark: Absolutely, or Windsor, or Brockville—to have your cabinet and your caucus meetings in

the morning on a Monday and Tuesday and have your orders of the day from 4 o'clock to 6:45 Monday, Tuesday and, for even that aspect, Wednesday. Then if you still wanted to have more orders of the day on Thursday morning, that was possible.

Again, I don't want to totally throw out draft option 1, but I do think there could be some modifications made to it to address some of the comments from our caucus.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): What I'm clear on is, Monday, you'd take the orders of the day section currently from 9 till 12—

Mr. Steve Clark: And flip it from 4 to 6:45.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): — and put that to 4 to 6:45.

Mr. Steve Clark: And do the same thing on Tuesday.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): And the same thing on Tuesday.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But can I ask a question? We got rid of—

Mr. Steve Clark: Listen, I just did this through question period today. I haven't fleshed it all out here; it's just some scratches.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No, no. I'm saying we got rid of the Monday morning issue of having to be here at 9 because members were complaining that they had to come on Sunday night and give up their Sunday dinner with their family. You have to eliminate Monday morning. Otherwise, you'll make a lot of members unhappy.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): He did.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): He flipped it to the afternoon.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But what's in the afternoon on Monday?

Mr. Steve Clark: Orders of the day, 4 to 6:45.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): After private members' business that finishes at 4 o'clock.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But again, if you put orders of the day in the morning—

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): No, he's taken it from the morning and moving it to the afternoon.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm saying flip it to the afternoon, from 4 p.m. to 6:45.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But what's in the afternoon now, the brown colour?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Nothing.

Mr. Steve Clark: Nothing.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But then there's something wrong here, because you're just looking at eight hours a week for orders of the day.

Interjection: No.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: If I count up all the blue, it's only eight hours: two, four, six, eight.

Interjections.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Oh, you're going to 12? Okay, but this is three and you're making it two. Do you want to work later?

Mr. Steve Clark: No, all I'm saying is—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: We'll get back with the ladies that were arguing for a shorter day. That's all I'm saying. We went through this the last time, which was only two years ago.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm just making a suggestion. I'm not saying that I'm going to have accolades all around. I'm just throwing out another option.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We're not going to decide on this option today, because you haven't even caucused it yet. You'll have to go back and get the feeling of the caucus. What Steve was trying to say was that if this was his option, he could reverse those days.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But Chair, it would make more sense if we all had a general agreement on one or two, but to take three to my caucus? I'd have a six-hour meeting, because everybody will have their own ideas.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Just take one to your caucus, then.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Well, that's what I'm saying. The only one in my mind that might be workable to take to my caucus and get their comments back to here is Mr. Bisson's suggestion. But let everybody else jump in.

Mr. Steve Clark: Decisions don't have to be unanimous. I'm just throwing out another suggestion.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Jeff, you had a question?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thanks, Garfield. Steve, if you could clarify something for me. That would push caucus to late Tuesday afternoon for everybody? Caucuses of all three parties would meet on late Tuesday afternoon in that brown space, and then cabinet would be meeting—

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm saying they could do it Tuesday morning. You could flip Monday and Tuesday to be identical, from 4 to 6:45 on Monday and Tuesday.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): See, we actually need another option here, because Steve's putting in one method, but what he's saying is another option to that.

Mr. Steve Clark: I just realized that one wasn't acceptable, and I was trying to have an option for question period in the morning for caucuses to look at and one for question period in the afternoon for caucuses to look at; and to be able to flip an afternoon caucus and cabinet meeting to a morning caucus and cabinet meeting.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Perfect. Thanks for clarifying that for me.

Mr. Steve Clark: And the expert appears.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): We can actually do that and send it out so everyone can visually take a look at what you're proposing.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Thanks, Trevor. We need you badly here right now.

Mr. Steve Clark: The more I talk, the more confused people get.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: When you do that, Trevor, can you at least—rather than leave it grey and not saying anything on it, tell us what it is and when is caucus and when is cabinet, because—

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): I don't know when you'd have caucus. I'll show you—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No, no, but you've got to give the time slot.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): I'll say it's "free time," and then you can decide what might fit in there.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Make it free time.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Okay, that's right. Because I was looking at this grey area and I'm going, "What is it?" I'm trying to say, "Okay, well, I could put this here."

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): That's when you don't have to be in—when the Speaker's not in the seat.

Trevor's just offered something else, to redo this one again, another option, and then to email it back out to you folks so you can caucus it again.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: So we agree number 3 is out. Is that what you're saying?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): It's up to the committee.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I think number 3 is going to be very confusing to the public.

Mr. Steve Clark: I think if we are going to present a couple of options, there should be some consistency day over day, or as much as possible. You can't have four different days.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): Okay. We're going to have a revised one—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: A new revised one.

Mr. Steve Clark: And I'd like to meet with the Clerk to discuss options, because I want to make sure that there is adequate time for caucuses and for private members' business.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): As it stands now, what we're looking at preliminarily is taking the orders of the day Mondays and Tuesdays on option 1 and dropping it down behind private members' business, with some adjustment.

Mr. Steve Clark: Yes, and again, Chair, I want to take an opportunity to meet with the Clerk at some point before the final schedule is given to caucus—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): And you can set that up when you're doing—okay. Is everyone okay with that? Are you clear on that? Gilles, is there a chance you can have these options caucused?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Can I point out an error on number one? If you look from 9 to 11, you have three slots, which is 9 to 10, 10 to 11 and 11 to 12.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, three hours.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: So it's 9 to 12. But when you look at the bottom of the page, it says 4 to 5, 5 to 6 and then 6 to nothing. It gives the impression that, when you look at the grey colour, it's a three-hour time slot; it's really not. It's a two-hour. This is misleading when you just look at colours, also.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Oh, yes. You know what? It actually should be 6 to 7 there. That would be 7 o'clock.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Exactly. That's why I originally said there were not enough hours.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, you're right. It's only a two-hour. That's actually—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: From 4 to 5, 5 to 6.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes. That's if you wanted to go as far as 6:45 at night. That's what he's saying.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Put it in, because people are going to ask. If they don't see that—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Well, you spotted it.

Mr. Jonah Schein: So are you proposing that we're going to go till 7?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm not.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): No.

Interjections.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Jonah, I'm just trying to clarify what it is I'm taking to my caucus.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Grant wants to ask a question. Sorry, Grant has a question first.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to indicate that it's great that we're looking at the different options here, but also the status quo should remain an option as well.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes. You might as well do one for the status quo.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): I think we have that in one of the previous drafts.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We may do all this for nothing.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Send them out as a package. Send them as a package.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, Gilles.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I don't want to point out the obvious, but there is one problem with all three schedules, including draft option 2. Currently, routine proceedings is 90 minutes, so this has to be redrafted, because you can't take 30 minutes out of routine proceedings.

1330

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Which we did discuss when Trevor was putting together the various options that were floated around. If you take a look at the record, routine proceedings rarely takes 90 minutes. When it does, it's the occasions when the Speaker says, "I'm now required to end routine proceedings and move to orders of the day because the time has expired;" that's when you know that you've hit the 90-minute mark. You know yourself that that rarely ever happens.

But it is something to consider because if you add up all of the maximum time for everything in routine proceedings, an hour is not going to be enough. It's just that we rarely go the maximum time.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just curious: On average, we've been taking how long?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): I think on average it's just under an hour.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You see, my concern is, let's say I'm a mischievous government—I was waiting for you guys to bite on that one.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I think it's longer when you have ministerial statements.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's my point. You could end up with a whole bunch of ministerial statements, and you have no petitions.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Or some other statement for a particular occasion; it'll go beyond the hour.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes. So that's the thing in all of this. It's a bit of the fly in the ointment. I do agree with Mr. Crack, who says we should put the original current schedule in there as well so that—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But I think when you brought up your point last week, you did make it clear that it should go to 12:30, not 12.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes. But I want—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: You did say that. I remember you saying that.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes. And to be clear, as well, this is just me blue-skying at this point. I haven't gone back to my caucus; I've not gone back to my leader. All of that stuff has got to be pretty—we've all got to go back and figure that out. But clearly, I think there's a sense that we probably can do something that's more workable.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Steve.

Mr. Steve Clark: Just with the discussion that took place at our caucus, can we add the 1997 to 2009, as well? So we present four, just so—from our perspective, when we go back to our caucus, they're going to ask me anyway. So I'll present 1997 to 2009, post-2009, and then the two options that come out of this committee.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Which went to 9 o'clock at night.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Sometimes. Only when there were night sittings, yes.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It was quite a lot. I'm sorry, but I was a new member, and I'll tell you, it was painful.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): That's what they do to new members; they put them on night sittings.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: The worst part is you started putting on the weight.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, Steve?

Mr. Steve Clark: The other issue, as the Clerk has said, is that if we do come to consensus, it could be on a provisional basis. We could try an option for a short period of time, or we could try two options for a short period of time. It's whatever we end up coming forward and presenting. That still exists as well, that we can ask for a couple of options over a specific period of time on a trial.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): So I guess what my concern is here, fellas, is next week will be our last in the session—our last committee meeting.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Not necessarily.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): No, no. Hold on. I'm going to the next four days, though, and then I'm going on to what—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: This committee could meet on the 20th. It could.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Not in the afternoon.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: If we go on beyond 12.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay, but we still have—besides that, though, we still have the programming—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: You're being mischievous.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Guys, can I finish for a second, please? We've got to start doing something, and we've got to come up with—if you can at least take it to caucus and get some ideas on the options, at least. We do have the opportunity over the summer months, which we've got to determine, for an additional four days of meetings. Can we discuss that at that point?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): The next meeting?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): No, no. During the summer meetings that are under the programming motion, these can be discussed at that?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. So it would be nice, the next time we meet, after next week—because we're not expecting a final decision next week—that we come up with a consensus some time over those four meetings, because we will be meeting at least four times during the summer, according to the programming motion that was approved. Am I not right on that?

Interjection: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And more if we agree.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Pardon?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We can also meet beyond the four days if the subcommittee decides to meet by unanimous consent.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, beyond four. Anything else right now on the options?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Can you just recap what we will get on this, so I have a clear understanding? Are we going to get the current model?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): You're going to get a copy of the 1997 to 2009; you're going to get a copy of the current model; Mr. Bisson's option 2 with a 90-minute routine proceedings; and Mr. Clark, after talking with him, will go over an option there with 90 minutes, and you'll get all four of them that you can discuss with your caucuses.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: And you'll fix that timing problem?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): I'm going to remove it completely.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, Jeff?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Trevor, when this all gets put together, in terms of packages, can we get some packages that we can take to our respective caucuses?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): Generally we email them out to everybody.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Well, it might be helpful, because I'll probably be making the presentation. Mr. Balkissoon will be away next Tuesday, and I'm just one step beyond Jim Bradley, so it's kind of handy to have some copies that I can get.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Can we get it back tomorrow?

Mr. Jeff Leal: And if there's a PowerPoint to do on the screens in our caucus room, it would be helpful too.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We made copies for everyone in our office. That's how we've done it. Yes, Gilles?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm not bringing this back to caucus next week.

Mr. Jeff Leal: But I can take it to—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You can do it if you want, but don't expect me to come back next week with decisions, because I'm trying to—

Mr. Jeff Leal: I wasn't anticipating that. I just want to get the discussion going.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, and that's fair. What I'm interested in doing is that once we start to hone in on what we're kind of looking at doing, that's the point when I want to go back to caucus, because this is shifting ground as we move, right?

Mr. Jeff Leal: That's why I want to start the discussion. It is shifting ground.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): So we're not expecting a decision next Wednesday, but we would like you to start caucusing it.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Can I just add one thing that you might consider when you're discussing the schedules? When we had night sittings, the night sittings were decided by motion. In other words, the government House leader could bring forward a motion that the House sit on one or four nights in any given week. We averaged out sitting two nights a week. What we replaced it with in 2009 was definite morning sittings. You might also consider, if you're going to maintain the same schedule, saying at the least that those morning meeting times could be treated the same way as the night sittings previously were. In other words, if they're required, then there's a motion for the House to meet at 9 a.m. And if—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I don't think my House leader would like that.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): It's just something to consider. It's just treating the morning sittings the exact same way that night sittings used to be dealt with, because the motion—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I would say, from the last review of the schedule, that my House leader will not be happy with that.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Won't be happy with what?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: The Clerk is suggesting that the morning sittings receive the same treatment as evening sittings prior to 2009, where it was done by notice.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): What happened, Gilles, was that night sittings used to require a motion. So if the House was to sit at night, the

government House leader would bring in a non-debatable, non-amendable motion at motions to sit one night or four nights for any given period of time. When they replaced the night sittings with the morning sittings—we averaged out sitting two nights a week and replaced them with, effectively, originally four and now three mornings a week, definite. In other words, they're built into the schedule. We have to meet unless the government stands up and says, "We have no business," which is something a government is reluctant to do, too, which I understand. All I'm suggesting is that one of the things you might consider is that those morning meetings be treated the same way as night sittings used to be. In other words, you can sit in the morning as required on motion.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Why would we want to do that, out of curiosity?

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The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Well, what happened was that we ended up with more hours in 2009.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay, I hear you.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Chair, if I could just comment, to be honest with you, the schedule we have today, I think we tried to accommodate a lot of the out-of-town members, the Toronto and GTA members. It gave us, as the GTA members, the opportunity to accept events in our ridings, so we could get back to them. The previous schedule, where you weren't sure which night you'll be here and which night you won't be here, left the Toronto members with no option but to say no to a lot of things. But then we were also stuck on Thursdays voting on stuff we didn't want to vote on. So it was a trade-off.

Personally, if I go back to my House leader to do what the Clerk is suggesting, I'll have a fight on my hands because I think the majority of members like the fixed schedule from 9 to 6. To accommodate what was being requested by most of the members in all caucuses, that they wanted the place to be family friendly and be more accommodating, the fixed schedule is way better.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Well, we'll have to weigh that out with everyone's caucus decisions. We may not change anything in the end here.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But it would be an exercise well worth going through.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Absolutely. So if we can try to get some time on your caucus agenda for that between the next two weeks' meetings, so we can get back to it in our meetings in the summer.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Well, it doesn't make sense me getting it done; Gilles has already said he won't.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): He's not coming with a final decision, just an opportunity to debate it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Our process is a bit different; that's what I'm trying to signal. You need to bring a recommendation and then from there is a discussion. I don't want to have a general discussion about rules in caucus; we'll be there for the next 15 days.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We're going to move on now, committee, to tab 31. Did anyone have any

chance to review the comments on the committees, tab 31?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: If I'd brought my book with me, I'd be doing better.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): It's underneath the yellow—

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Steve?

Mr. Steve Clark: I just wanted to comment on the last page first, the parliamentary officers committee. I want to thank the Clerk for providing it. I think it was an issue that I had brought forward in our brainstorming session at the start of this. I think it's very important that we do, as part of this committee's deliberations, engage the officers in that committee system. I think it's pretty important that we read that section and find some framework that makes sure the officers fit into our system, and it is lacking in the system right now.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. Have any members of the committee had a chance to go over this and make any comments on it? Yes, Jeff and then Gilles.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Steve, could you just take a moment to elaborate on your previous comment there, please?

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, I was a new member of this committee. I joined it after the state legislators conference. One of the things that I was surprised by once I started looking at it, and that I also consulted former member Sterling on, was to have some framework where, although they are separate officers of the Legislature—the fact that they should have a committee that reviews their operation and is a conduit to their reports that come forward. The Clerk, as part of this review, wanted to provide an overview once we got to committees, so that's why that section is here.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Joe Dickson): Any other comments at all? Grant, did you have a comment?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Grant has a question, so I'll let him ask it first.

Mr. Grant Crack: Great to see you in the chair, Mr. Dickson.

Just maybe to the Clerk, some clarification on the third paragraph, last line: "[T]his is especially so with the so-called policy field committees." I didn't really understand that.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Where are we—

Mr. Grant Crack: The last line in the third paragraph, first page. I was confused as to what "so-called" means.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The phrase "so-called?"

Mr. Grant Crack: Yes; what does that mean?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Because it's a term that's loosely used—it's not a term that's officially attached to those committees; we refer to them as policy field committees. That's all it means.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But if we could stick to the same paragraph, because I read it too and I'm just

looking for a comment. I'm struggling with why we're tackling committees, because as I say and I remind my colleagues, we're in government today, but tomorrow it could be somebody else and it could be one of the other two parties etc. We should all be very concerned about this.

In my opinion—and I could be wrong—the main thrust of committees is really to move government business. We're here to deal with government business on behalf of the public, because the government has been put in place by the public. If it is to discuss opportunities for the other members or the other parties in terms of bringing some business forward, to me we have those opportunities today. I'm still not convinced of what it is we're doing here.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Joe Dickson): Mr. Bisson.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I'm going to take the bait, something I should never do. The job of the committee is not just to pass government business; that's not what it's all about. The job of the committee is to give all committee members the ability to look at and to scrutinize bills that come before their committees, be it a government bill or an opposition bill, number one.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Yes, that's what I meant.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Number two, as well, is that committees have certain abilities to be able to, on their own discretion, hold hearings and have meetings about reviewing agencies, for example, doing what we now call standing order 126, which is a review of a particular matter, as we're doing on general government. Committees are really a creation of the House to allow members to have some ability to be able to do their job as legislators, to scrutinize what's going on as far as bills and as far as reviewing policy areas of interest to committee members. That's the purpose of committees.

It's my view—and it may not be yours, and I accept that—that a robust committee system is not only good for the opposition, it's actually quite good for the government no matter who's on the government side. The difficulty we get into now is that governments write bills—and I've been a member of a government. I was a back-bencher, so I understand how it works. You sometimes get frustrated, even on the government side, because you're having to carry a government bill that, quite frankly, you may want to have a little bit more discussion on. You may want to go back to your caucus and have a discussion about amending etc. It's very difficult to do that if the powers of the committee are somewhat constrained. The best bills I've seen come through this House are when the committees have been non-partisan and actually looked at the issue.

For example, one of the things that I would like to be able to do is what we used to call the white papers. A good example of that was the mental health reforms, addictions and mental health. The government said, "There's a problem. How do we face this problem? How do we respond to it?" And they charged a committee with looking at the issue in depth. The committee did some bloody excellent work—pardon the language—with

really strong recommendations that were supported by all parties, and it allowed the government then to cherry-pick out of those recommendations what it is it may want to do as a response to that particular issue.

The reason—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm almost done—why I think it's important that we look at making some changes to committee is to allow that robust committee structure—because we actually have a pretty good committee structure in Ontario, compared to other places. It's not throwing out the baby with the bathwater. But we could do a couple of tweaks that would actually allow the committees to do some work, that allow us to look at things in a way that allows us to move forward with doing some of the things that I talked about.

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Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Okay, I hear you, but I look at the standing orders; those opportunities exist today. Unless you can deconstruct the standing order and tell me what is the problem—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Here's the problem: We used to have standing order 111, I think it was, which is now 126. I forget what it was—123?

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes. So standing order 126 used to be standing order 123, and it said that any member during the session can ask for an item to be reviewed at a committee, and it would happen. That was just the right of the member, under 123, essentially.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): I think it was any member of the subcommittee.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, any member of the subcommittee, but the point is, each caucus got an opportunity to say, "You know what? I want to look at mental health and addictions."

A good example was Dianne Poole, when we were in government, who wanted to look at daycare policy at a time that the government had decided to move completely in the non-profit direction. Dianne Poole of the Liberals said, "No, we need to have a mixed system." So she was allowed as a member, under standing order 123, to bring to committee a discussion and hearings on why it should be a mixed system and not just a not-for-profit system. I think that was a legitimate thing for her to do.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: What's the barrier today?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We changed the standing orders so that you need a two-thirds majority now, under 126, to make that happen. So I would argue that you need to give some limited ability for members, be it of the opposition or government, to do things independent of what is a government order.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: So you want to change 126 back to the old 123.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's one thing. The other thing is when the committees meet. For example, estimates never really gets through its estimates. I think the estimates committee, properly done, actually can do some

very good work and assist in providing scrutiny in how we spend money in ministries and how we develop—not develop policies, but how the policies are working. We very seldom get through all of our estimates. Why? Because we have limited time. Should we change the standing orders to say that there is a better ability for committees to be able to meet during the intersession to deal with actually doing the estimates of the government, or the same with any other matter? I would argue at the call of the Chair, and you'll probably argue, as the government, something different than that, but I think somewhere in between there's got to be a way so that committees have the proper amount of time to do the work that they should be doing. So there's a number of issues like that which I think are important from the perspective of recognizing the importance of what we have to do in this place.

The last part is, and which has always been my big bugaboo—I'll raise it under committees because that is where it would happen—this whole idea of delegating our authority as legislators to the executive council is absolutely nuts. Essentially, every time we draft legislation, we give the executive the chance to change anything they want without ever having to come back to the Legislature. An example is, I decide to make a piece of legislation as a New Democrat that says, "The wall is green," and all of a sudden the Tories or Liberals come to power and say, "By regulation and without any debate, I'm going to take the wall, rip it apart and make it something else."

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Let me ask you a truly honest question: Do you think whatever we as a committee here make as a suggestion will go any place—for that last issue that you raised.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I think what it does is two things. One is to raise the discussion and debate, because these matters only get resolved when they become part of the debate and discussion of this place. But I think there are things that we're going to be able to agree on as three parties that make some sense. Maybe all of what I want won't be agreed to by all parties, but I think some of what we're talking about can be.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But I think the stuff that you're talking about, the executive council—the powers and regulations or whatever—probably would be better negotiated between the three House leaders and the leaders of the parties, saying that we're taking the government in the wrong direction. I think us guys here at committee—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, no, no. It's the job of the Legislative Assembly committee to look at the rules and the functioning of the House. My argument would be, we are delegating our authority as legislators to an unelected group of people, and I think that's dangerous. The minute that we allow people to make decisions and recommendations that can be enacted by an order in council, I think it's a bit of a slippery slope, to be blunt.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Steve, you had a comment too.

Mr. Steve Clark: I just wanted to talk about what Gilles said regarding—and the report on the Standing

Committee on Estimates was excellent, showing the fact that we've had so much time that wasn't allotted. I think we should spend some time on that whole estimates process, maybe not this session or this meeting time, but at some other point, just to deal with that.

Gilles makes a very good point about the committee's ability to discuss an issue. I think we should try, under this process, to strengthen the individual member on the committee. I think someone at this table, maybe it was Gilles or maybe it was the Clerk, talked about having people on these committees with a little more expertise. I think it would be important to try to free up that opportunity so that committees could discuss, as they could under previous standing order 123, something without that two-thirds requirement at the subcommittee.

I hear what Mr. Bisson said on the other aspect, and I remember being on general government with Mr. Hillier, talking about items like forest tenure and the Far North Act and the fact that those pieces of legislation, which I felt were very controversial in the north—we as members delegated the authority for our report once, for example, those models for forest tenure were finished so that it wouldn't come back to a committee; it would go back to the minister. So we as individual members never had that opportunity to have that debate on whether that original bill was appropriate or if, moving forward, we should change it.

I do understand Mr. Bisson's point. I do think that if there is some way we as a committee can recommend to help strengthen our own powers as individual MPPs, it would be great. I think that would be a very fruitful discussion to have.

But in terms of this report, there are some things, like estimates, that I think we should discuss and debate and decide whether we should devote time outside of the normal sitting time when the Legislature is here to deal with those types of issues. I think you'd get general acceptance from the three parties.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, Jeff.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Just on estimates, I think the point was made maybe a couple of weeks ago about whether the minister of the day should come at the end of the estimates, after all the legwork has been done. You have committee members who have a very detailed knowledge of the particular ministry that's being examined, and then the minister comes in, as I said, at the end, at a latter part of the process in order to have a much broader discussion. It seems to me—this is no disrespect to anybody. I've subbed a couple of times in estimates, and it really is—with the minister there and the minister defers to the deputy minister or the assistant deputy minister, it may be a better process to have all that work done first, and then the minister of the day comes in towards the end of the process. That's just my observation.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Gilles?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I hear what you're saying as far as the minister's presentation, but certainly I would want the minister to be present during the estimates, right? It stands to reason. I remember a good story by Alan Pope,

a former Minister of Natural Resources. He was always proud to tell me this story. I think he was one of the first ministers—I don't know if he was the first minister, but he had a habit of carrying his entire estimates, being there, essentially answering for what his ministry was doing, and he only referred to his staff if he needed to know something. There are some ministers who have done that since. I think we should leave them the option.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Members of the committee, on tab 31 and committees, would you like us to walk through it, or do you want to look at the options?

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Pardon?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: What do you want to walk through?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): No, no—the clerk is willing to do it.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): There are options throughout this document, the committees. Is there a need for any clarification on some of the options? Would you like some explanation on rationale?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: If I could just throw something out that we should probably talk about, because this is something Steve raised—and I think he came to the previous committee when I was Chair. He wants access to more technology and whatever to help us. That sort of goes hand in hand with committee work also, which was web streaming etc. The thing is, in here, we talk about technology, and we want to look at enhancing it, but we're also saying we should encourage more travel, so it doesn't—where do you strike the balance so that you can manage that process well and the taxpayer gets value for his dollar? That's an issue I think we need to sit and talk about. I just throw that out.

1400

Mr. Steve Clark: I agree. Chair, through you, I think it is valuable for us to have a discussion about technology and committees. I think it's something that we're sadly lacking compared to other Legislatures and groups like, for example, the Senate. Their committees are far more—while I don't expect that we would spend the money that the Senate spends to have translation and technology all over, I think there is a discussion that we should have with broadcast services about what we do need to have to provide technology in this building. Then, moving forward, as a second component, if there are hearings on the road, while it may not be appropriate to stream them live, we should at some point have a policy on archiving some of those committees.

I go to other legislative sites and see a wide variety of archived committees, and I guess I just have to question why they seem to have the bandwidth and we don't. Some of those other Legislatures that do provide that option online still have carriage by satellite companies. So, again, it's a question for us. We seem to be lacking in both cases. I think we have to make up for it somewhere. If we can do it online and have a streaming committee, as much as possible, that should be just for simple access. That's what we should do.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): And you're talking about video conferencing and all that sort of thing—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Video conference and teleconference—

Mr. Steve Clark: I found out, as part of the—was it the forest tenure, Gilles? You were on that at the time. Room 151 has all the technology today. Every committee—if we could schedule committees to meet in that room, those hearings could be streamed live. So if we've got the technology in one room, first of all, why aren't we using it? Secondly—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But my concern, too, is that—if we commit to spend the money, and everybody agrees, then the reason to travel would be less, and we'd be saving taxpayers' money. The other thing that is added in this particular option to—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Sorry, I didn't hear you. Say that last part again.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: If technology is available that we could engage the broader community more often, then the reason for travelling, to me, should be reduced.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay, Gilles?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Let me just add the second point—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I'll let him finish up here, and then it will go to you, Gilles.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: The second point—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): All right, point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I vehemently disagree with that.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: That's why we're here. The other thing, Chair, is that in reading parts of this—I will repeat what I said in the past: We're talking about giving committees more work, but we're not talking about reducing the House schedule to accommodate the time. We need to have a serious discussion. If yes, people want more committee work, then we'll have to figure out how to reduce the House schedule to accommodate it. This one has an option about committees meeting the week before the rest week, but it doesn't say where you make up the debate times.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. So just to summarize what you're saying here, you're saying you want to do more travelling?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No, I'm saying—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You want to have more committee time and utilize—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No. Somebody is recommending more committee time here as an option. To me, the only way you're going to accommodate it is that you have to reduce the House schedule. I'm hearing my colleagues also saying they don't want to reduce their House schedule. If you look at this option, which is at the bottom of the second page, to accommodate travel but still have question period makes no sense. How could members travel and you have question period at the same time?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. Point well taken. Go ahead.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Can I just clarify something with respect to these documents that we're providing you with? The intent, as we talked about in one of those early meetings, was that—the committee was asking for some help to kind of just focus the discussions. These are not intended to be recommendations. They are options for you to consider and points of discussion. There really are no recommendations here; there are just some options. Most of what is in here we gleaned from the previous discussions of the committee and put them down. It doesn't mean that we're saying this is what you should do or this is the verbiage.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I don't disagree with you. What I'm saying is, for us to discuss any issue, it comes right back to the schedule. You have to put a schedule to accompany it before it will make any sense for a debate.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I think we're doing something fairly unique this summer. The programming motion, I think, allows the committees to do quite a bit of extra work over the summer months. So this isn't really impacting anything to do with the House calendar.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But if you read this, it stops at the constituency week.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: When I read that without a schedule—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): So what we're saying here is, you disagree with that, and that's a key point you're making.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I don't disagree with it until I see the House schedule accommodating this request, because you either have to extend the House schedule or you reduce the number of hours of debate, and it's not there.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): So I guess the question is, which would you rather have happen?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No, I just want something to take back to my colleagues so I know what it is we're—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. How do the members feel about this?

Mr. Steve Clark: What's that?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It's the option on the bottom of page 2, you know—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On the bottom of page 2?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Yes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The one that says that the meetings scheduled in the House should be adjusted so that greater—that one?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Yes. But the last sentence on that page says that this would provide an excellent opportunity for committees to travel. You can't travel if you're here.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I agree that the committees should not be travelling when the House sits. I think we agree on that.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Right. So if you want to travel and there's another place—somewhere I read it—that we could do committee work the week before constituency week, if you're going to do that, then you've got to extend the House schedule.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I think, to repeat what the Clerk is saying, these are just recommendations. I think we can all sort of get our heads around these recommendations, and there may be something in one recommendation where it's an idea that morphs into something else, and we get whatever.

I think there are a couple of constants. I agree with Mr. Balkissoon there should not be committee travel at a time when the House sits. That's kind of what I've always operated under. I don't know how others feel.

I think where we may agree or disagree is that we need to look at the ability of committees to have a little bit more flexibility on their own, to sit when the House is not in session.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I've made note that that's your interest. All I'm saying is, this other one to increase committee work, you've got to look at it with the schedule. You can't look at it on its own.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Are there any other thoughts on the committee, these options here, and this report?

Mr. Steve Clark: I guess it's just a question to the other members, if they have an opinion: Do you agree with having a dedicated committee for the House—for the officers?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Sorry?

Mr. Steve Clark: That was the last page. I haven't heard anybody say yea or nay, other than me, on the parliamentary officers committee. Right now, we only have two of them that even have a remote relationship with the committees. I guess I'm just asking, does anyone feel that the other officers should be integrated into a committee system, like I do?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I kind of read that and I think—you know, I sort of agree, but the situation here is that we need to look at it in terms of the other standing committees and do we have the membership to put on there. And the meeting times, again, with the schedule.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. Gilles, did you have a comment?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes. Boy, there are so many things happening at the same time. Death to BlackBerrys.

There was something really important I wanted to say and I forgot what it is. What was your last point, Mr. Balkissoon? It was on that.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: The issue was the seven officers, that there are only two—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, yes, yes.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: There are only two that report to committee now—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, yes. That's why I put up my hand.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I mean, to add the others.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But you can call parliamentary officers before committee now. The Ombudsman can be called—

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The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Only the Ombudsman. Under the standing orders, the Ombudsman has a reporting relationship with this committee.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But my point is, we don't even do that where we have the authority, which raises the question: Why don't we?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Doesn't the Chief Electoral Officer bring his report here too?

Interjection.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I thought he did.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, no, The only ones we can call, as far as I know, are the Ombudsman and the Auditor, because he has a relationship with public accounts, right?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The elections officer—you're thinking about when this committee was considering amendments to the Election Act.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: So that was directed by the Legislature?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The Chief Election Officer was here as a witness for those hearings.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's an interesting idea, that we give some committee the ability to call any of these officers before committee where we have a need to do so. I don't think it hurts to do that. I just muse and ask the question. When I first got elected here, the Ombudsman used to appear regularly. That was actually an Ombudsman committee

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Because we had an Ombudsman committee.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's right. That's what it was.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): I think that's the point. This—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Roberta—

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Jamieson.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Jamieson; that's right.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): This committee has other priorities.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And this is the issue, maybe, right? My point is, when we had the Ombudsman committee, Roberta Jamieson, then the Ombudsman, used to be constantly before the committee. There was actually a good relationship between the Legislature and the Ombudsman on a number of issues. The government, being us, was never thrilled about what she was doing, but it worked fairly well. Maybe the lesson to be learned here is, you do need to have a committee that only does that, because if you have other stuff before it, it tends to get lost in the shuffle and you lose the habit of doing so. And as you get new members in the House, nobody knows you can do it, so you don't do it.

Mr. Steve Clark: My point is, why two and not seven?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's a good point.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I don't have a problem whether it's two or seven, but again, I go back to a little bit of history. When this used to happen, you had a shorter House schedule. I love all these ideas that you're talking about, but to accommodate that in our work schedule is difficult. Are we seriously about looking at the House schedule, because I know some members have said, "No, the House schedule remains the way it is." If the House schedule remains the way it is, we cannot accommodate this workload.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): But you're talking about the whole calendar.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Yes. If everybody's willing to debate the whole calendar and reduce it to add all of these functions, I don't have a problem debating that and taking it back to my caucus. Because that's the only way it'll make sense.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): So what is the feeling on that? Down to the right length of time, or what would you—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Sorry, what did you say, Bas? I'm sorry, I was trying to figure something out.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I don't have a problem one way or the another about dealing with this parliamentary officers' committee. But when you had what you had way back when, you had a shorter schedule—the whole calendar.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Not really. No, it wasn't a shorter—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It had to be. You can't accommodate all of this—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Sure we did.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I can't see it working. To be honest with you, you'll have to—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But it did. We do it with public accounts. The auditor is constantly at public accounts. It's part of the culture of the Legislature.

Normally—and all kidding aside—public accounts is probably the model of the relationship that could be established between a parliamentary officer and the Legislature, because it has been generally a pretty non-partisan committee. This Ornge thing is a little bit different, but, man, even the government in a majority was doing things under us—the Tories and you—to allow the committee to do what it had to do in public accounts. It was the same with the Ombudsman.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: But my point is, if you bring these other officers into a committee, you'll have to have the time in the calendar for the committees to meet, do its business with these officers and report back to the House.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But only if the members decide to call that officer to the committee.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: No, I think Steve is looking that they should be coming to the committee maybe three or four times a year for updates or whatever.

Mr. Steve Clark: I haven't decided on what the frequency is, but I think we need to have the framework where they can appear.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The other thing is that agency reviews is another good example.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: That's the other one that's in here.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm just saying that we used to, as a matter of course, do agency reviews far more than we do now. We only started now again because we're in a minority Parliament. But again, it's very good work that a committee can do to take a look at an agency and ask some really basic questions about what they're doing, reporting back to the House on how they can do it better.

So I don't see it as there's not enough time, if we do these things, to deal with government business. The government business will always be done, even in a minority Parliament.

The reality is that part of the function of a Legislature is not just to deal with legislation but to also deal with the running of this place and its parliamentary officers and the agencies of the government. It's what we've always done.

Interjections.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I see it being difficult, but until I see it—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We used to do it.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Steve, you've got a question?

Mr. Steve Clark: No, I agree. We need to talk about this.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Gilles?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Can I just hearken back to a point that the Clerk made maybe four meetings ago? The problem we're having now is—and I hate to do it this way, but we're having a discussion with people who grew up in different cultures. I don't mean that in a cultural "I'm French, and you're East"—I'm sorry; I don't know. I've never asked.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm a little bit of everything.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay. I don't know if you're East Indian or—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm from the Caribbean.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Trinidadian?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Caribbean.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's how bad I am.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: We like to party a lot.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My point is, I came to this place when there was a congeniality between members—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Right.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —and we didn't debate everything in the House. When I came here, there was no time allocation, and any member could stand up in the House and talk on a bill until the cows came home. Very seldom did that happen, but it happened from time to time. I remember Mr. Bradley doing it when I was here—

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Mr. Kormos.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Kormos—my God, he did it overnight one night. But it was not a tool that was used very often by the opposition. My point is, there was a time when the House operated very differently because of the culture of the way the House worked.

Part of the problem we're having with this conversation—and I don't mean this in an old-guy-versus-young-guy way—is that all of you have come to this House at a time when it has been quite different. You've come to this House when everything has been under time allocation. You've never seen anything but time allocation, which means to say that our committees all run differently.

Back in the day, prior to the introduction of time allocation by some guy by the name of Bob Rae, I think his name was, the House used to have the ultimate ability to conduct its own business. The opposition could hold anything up as long as they wanted, but seldom did it, because the House leaders would then sit down and say—"All right," said the government, "I'm really interested in these three bills this fall. That's the only bloody thing I want passed at second reading, and I want to know we're going to get some committee work done this spring and in the winter." The opposition would say, "Okay, and in exchange for that, I want X, Y or Z. I want an agency review on the ONR. I want the whatever, whatever, whatever." What happened is that the House leaders and the members worked in a much more congenial way of moving that agenda through the House.

The bottling up of committees didn't exist when we didn't have time allocation because we worked it all out. Now the problem is, everything gets time-allocated, except in a minority Parliament, and now it's like, well, how are you ever going to make all this work?

We didn't send half of this stuff to committee. We often used committee of the whole. We'd take a bill—I remember there was an agricultural bill; I forget which one it was. There was a whole bunch of bills we used to send to committee of the whole when I first got here. They never went to committee, because they didn't need to. A House leader would say, "Well, you know what? There are no stakeholders interested in talking to it. The only thing we need to do is a couple of amendments." So we'd send it into COW, we'd do the amendments, and we'd send it into third reading. Half of the time, we didn't even have a debate at third reading.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Most of the time.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Most of the time. We never used to have debates at third reading. My point is, the time allocation thing has really mucked up how this place works. I guess that's the difference here. It's all Bob Rae's fault.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Hold on. But also, a place functions based—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Then it was Michael Harris, and after that it was you guys—did even worse.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: A place functions based on personalities and a culture. I can't see you putting it in

writing in a standing order, and you will force the cultural change or the behavioural change.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, you do, and I'll tell you why—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I honestly don't believe it will work.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —because you're now living it. Remember, this House has decided, by unanimous consent last week, to figure out how we're going to order the business of this House for this spring. How was that done? It was done because the House leaders had to sit down and work out an agreement, because we're in a minority Parliament.

It sets, in my view, what's possibly going to happen this fall. The government can't get everything it wants. They can't time-allocate, because I'm never going to let you time-allocate anything, as an opposition member. Put that on the record. So guess what? We're going to have to sit down, and we're going to have to say, "What are we going to do for the first four weeks we come back this fall?" Well, maybe we have another unanimous consent motion and we agree, in the opposition, that we don't want to debate this, we don't want to debate that, we don't need this in committee, maybe we want that in committee. That's how the House should operate.

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If anything, as you go through this minority Parliament, I think you're going to start having faith that members can actually make this place work. The best thing we can do, out of this committee, would be to get rid of time allocation. If you did that, I can guarantee you this place will change and the government will get business through the House far more than they do now. Ask the Clerk. We used to get more business done outside of time allocation—without—than we do now.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Well, we're moving right along here.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to hear the Clerk on this. I really want to hear the Clerk.

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, no, seriously. I want the Clerk to comment on this, please.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): I'm not sure I want to wade into this.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Please do, Clerk. Come on. I'm goading you.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Any more comments on the tab 31 reports or any more explanation needed or ideas around it? Or do you want to come back with more suggestions on it? These are kind of healthy conversations, yet we're not getting a lot of recommendations coming back. Yes, Jonah.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What's going to happen, in my view, is that we're all going to go away before our four-day meeting this summer and we're going to read this stuff and have some internal discussions, and we'll come back and start talking about what we can agree on. And you know what? That's the process. I think what we're trying to do in these sessions is flesh out what some of

the ideas are, hear each other out without making any line-in-the-sand kinds of decisions and move on from there.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Jonah had the floor.

Mr. Jonah Schein: In all seriousness, I'm actually curious to hear if people have feelings about what Gilles just said, because I do feel frustrated by time allocations in the House. It seems ineffective. I don't want to put you on the spot, but I am curious to hear some thoughts about it. And, other people, if you have thoughts about this, either pro or con, I would like to know.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Look, I'm not a big fan of time allocation, and I never have been.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Hold it, Clerk. We'll just wait till Jeff is available here.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I am listening.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. Clerk?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): But there are two sides to the House, and both sides have to act responsibly; otherwise, the House is driven to using something like time allocation. What has happened over time is that there have been—the role of the opposition is to oppose; the role of the opposition is not to obstruct. Over time what has happened is that there have been occasions when the opposition has obstructed, and then the government has reacted, usually by changing the rules to make it easier for them to get their legislative agenda through. Each time that has happened, the response of the opposition has been ratcheted up a little bit until now you get a set of rules that are so restrictive—you're right—that it doesn't allow for the back bench, the private members, to have what I would consider maximum influence in the House, or maximum ability.

The House, in my mind, did work better before we time-allocated everything; Mr. Bisson is exactly right. We rarely spent any time at all debating third reading, because it was intended to be only the opportunity to cross the t's and dot the i's and that was it. When time limits on speeches came into being, it was Mr. Bradley who said, very vocally, "You will never see another day when we pass three, four or five third readings of bills. It won't happen again, because now that you've imposed time limits on speeches, we will use the maximum time limit." That's what has happened. We sometimes have quite lengthy debates on third reading after a bill has already been approved in principle by the House and gone out to committee for public hearings and clause by clause.

I absolutely agree: I think the place worked better without time allocation. I don't know how you build something in the rules or how you roll back the clock. I'm not sure you can get that back. I think there are two things at play. One is a sort of cultural shift. You have to have a House that has got the intestinal fortitude to give it a try and have both sides act responsibly. But I'm not sure if we haven't gone so far down the road of allocating time that it's very difficult or impossible to roll it back.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay, Steve and then Gilles.

Mr. Steve Clark: Again, for what it's worth, I've only lived under time allocation over the last couple of years since I've been a member, and I only know from folklore from some of my predecessors how it operated before that. But I guess the only comment I would have is similar to what I said earlier: If we are going to change it, even on a provisional basis, it will be now, because if we don't do it now when there's a minority, it's just not going to happen. I don't know if the political will is there. Personally, I don't have a problem trying it on a trial basis, but I just don't—this is the time to talk about it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just quickly, I agree with Steve: The best time to do it is in a time of minority Parliament. But the other point is I'd just go back to what I said earlier. We're starting to live what it's like not to have time allocation, so I think we start to show by example that in fact this Legislature can work, as it did in the last week, where we decided as parties to move forward on a bundle of items that satisfied the government and satisfied the opposition, and we moved forward. I think we're going to see more of that this fall. As we start to see essentially sort of block programming motions—four weeks, three weeks, whatever the sessions are in between breaks—I think members will start to recognize that, in fact, there is a good check and balance in that system and it can work.

I would say this as well to members. I always remember—what was his name? The member from Haliburton who is now the mines guy—

Interjection: Chris Hodgson.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —Chris Hodgson. He got elected in a by-election and came in on committee on the Sustainable Forest Development Act. I was on that committee that travelled across the north, looking at how we can change our forestry system. He was quite effective at asking the right questions, lining up the right presenters and making life difficult for the government. But I'll tell you what he did: Because there was no time allocation, it put us in a position as a government that if we wanted to get that bill through, we had to amend our ways somewhat. And we actually took some of his ideas and incorporated them into the bill, and you know what? It was good stuff. At the end, the government ended up with a better bill that essentially passed the sniff test with the stakeholders so that everybody now was heralding it as, "Don't change it now. God, it works because we made it work through this process."

I guess that's the point. This Legislature should work like—the opposition doesn't have all the ideas and neither does the government. We need to find a way that we take the best from each and then we move forward to do what's right for the people.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Deborah, can I ask one quick question to you on time allocation? Did the federal Parliament have it before Ontario?

Mr. Jeff Leal: In 1956, right? That was the famous debate on closure on the pipeline debate, right?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):

Let me be clear: We, in this House, used a form of time allocation before there was a rule that provided for it. What the rule did was say that there's a limited debate on a time allocation motion. I think—Peter might correct me if I'm wrong—Dr. Bette Stephenson was maybe the first person to actually move time allocation in this House, but it was a fully debatable motion, so it kind of defeated the purpose, because you could move a time allocation motion, but then it could be debated forever.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Jeff, yes?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Deb, as opposed to closure, which was the famous C.D. Howe thing I said—we're stopping debate in 48 hours and this bill is going to be passed in 48 hours and that's it, right?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Right.

Mr. Jeff Leal: And that's closure.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But you have to call the question under closure, and the Speaker has to make the determination if enough debate has been done. Even that was not allowed very often, because in the times that I've seen closure tried to be invoked by Speaker Warner, by the government, and Speaker Warner was there and others, Speakers were hard-pressed to say after five hours or even 10 hours that there had been enough debate. It was very difficult for the government to invoke closure, which forced them to negotiate with the opposition.

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Mr. Harris with the naming of the lakes: Remember that one? He came into the Legislature during introduction of bills, I think it was, and back then, there was no limit on routine proceedings. He started naming lake and river after lake and river as a way of getting the government to move to do hearings on the budget bill—to travel it, if I remember correctly. Was that the issue? It was travelling the budget bill, if I remember correctly. We didn't want to do it—hell, that's the last thing we wanted to do—but it did give a legitimate argument: Where there were some people in Ontario who were opposed to that budget who wanted to have it travel, it gave them the opportunity to be able to do it. Unfortunately, it triggered the rule changes.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):

That's kind of what I'm talking about. There was a time when the time-honoured, traditional way for the opposition to oppose was to filibuster, to speak at length. What happened was that there were a number of filibusters that finally led to time limits being imposed on speeches, so that was no longer an option. Then came petitions. There was no time limit on petitions. The Speaker would call for petitions—and I think it was the NDP that started reading petitions all day long. So at 6 o'clock, the House adjourned, and the government hadn't gotten to orders of the day. The reaction to that was to change the rules to impose a time limit on petitions.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Calling the members in on bells.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Yes, calling the members in on bells. Then we had a time

limit on bells. The lakes and rivers bill that took all day to introduce led to time limits on introduction of bills.

This is what I was talking about before, where each time the hole in the dike gets closed, one opens up elsewhere, and then there's a need to have to change the rules to prevent that from happening again.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: To the government members, once you're—

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay—
Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, I want the floor; I just—
Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We're just trying to straighten out a time for a possible subcommittee meeting next Tuesday morning. That's what this is about.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay, that's fine. I wasn't making—I'm just waiting for it to finish, that's all.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Gilles has the floor here.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: With all that delay, again, my brain isn't good enough to remember what I wanted to say, but I'll try the best I can.

The point is, the Clerk is right. The opposition went from opposing to obstruction. As a result of the obstruction, governments of different ilk—Peterson, Rae, Harris, then Mr. McGuinty—closed those obstructions, and now we're left with very little.

What we did learn in this last session is that the government had something it wanted: It wanted a budget bill. So they were forced to come to the opposition and say, "What do you want in exchange?" It actually worked, because we in the opposition didn't ask for a hell of a lot. What did you end up giving up? A few days of committees in the summer and changing of BOIE, which we can all agree on. I think it was really healthy, what happened through that process; that it showed that in fact this place can run without limits on debates, without time allocation. Maybe some of the things, like the constant ringing of bells, that we used to be able to do before and limiting the amount of time for you to introduce a bill—maybe those things are in order today.

But I think time allocation is a really big problem, and if we can show that we can make this work in a minority Parliament, a majority government can make it work as well, because then it becomes a case where you only do those things that are really important, and you do them well.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Go ahead, Deb.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): He's going to hate me for this, but my friend and colleague sitting next to me has an idea that he's had for a number of years, which is that if we roll back the clock to 1981 and use those standing orders, just for a week, just to see how it works, that might be beneficial in terms of trying to restore a little bit of the—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Essentially, that's what we have now in a funny kind of way, right?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Except we still have the time limits on the—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, we still have time limits on speeches and all that. I hear what you're saying.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I'll tell you, I think most members of the House are quite pleased with your programming motion, how it worked out. I give the House leaders a lot of credit for that.

Guys, we're moving on here. Right now, we have to deal with the reviews from your caucuses next week as they come back. I'm hoping also that we can talk next week, and probably, if it's all right with members of the of the committee, if we have a subcommittee meeting to lay out sort of a calendar for the summer of our dates and what we might expect. If Jeff can go, we can do it Tuesday morning, if that's possible.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Jeff will sit in for me.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes. Okay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He's harder than you, Bas. I don't know.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): And then, of course, followed by next week at 1 o'clock for the regular meeting.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: So 9:30 Tuesday morning, subcommittee meeting.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes. Steve?

Mr. Steve Clark: You're going to speak to Ms. MacLeod about her attendance at subcommittee.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes.

Mr. Steve Clark: Can I ask one other question? The issue that I brought up at the very first about the proclamations: Is it possible for Mr. Balkissoon to have that just to get feedback from his caucus? I would love to have it as well.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I don't think we had a major problem, but I'll get Jeff to give you an answer.

Mr. Steve Clark: I haven't seen a report, or at least I don't believe I have the report, so I'd like to see it and at least be able to circulate it to a few people to get their feedback.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: The proclamation doesn't have to go through the whole process, right? I don't think we had much. That is a sort of a motherhood thing.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Are you satisfied with that for the process for next week? Because I'm trying to make some headway here.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Trevor, where does the subcommittee meet?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Just in the lobby, or we can meet here.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Opposition lobby? That's fine.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): All your offices will be contacted with the information.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I just want to get it into my schedule.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Trevor Day): Most likely the opposition lobby, but—

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Is there anything else anybody wanted to bring up at today's meeting? So we're expecting a little bit of feedback on the review of that.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'll be making a presentation next Tuesday.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. And then we'll also talk about the summer programming.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Yes. And then Wednesday, when we have our regularly scheduled meeting, I can give you a bit of an update on our initial discussion at caucus on Tuesday. How's that?

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes.

One of the things we mentioned, just very briefly at lunch today, is that some of the committees might end up being in town together; for example, in Ottawa or something like that. There are some other committees that are going to travel. So we might be able to do that.

Mr. Steve Clark: The issue that came up was the ARA. For example, the ARA is meeting in Ottawa—

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: What's ARA?

Mr. Steve Clark: The aggregates review.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Aggregate Resources Act.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Maybe we can tie a couple of meetings to the same day or something like that.

Mr. Steve Clark: They're going to be in Ottawa anyway.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I think there's already a date that's been established that they're going to be in Ottawa. I was told what it was by my staffer a little while ago.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We'll try to get those details for next week to see if we can—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: So if I have to be there on Tuesday and committee can be there on Monday, we don't have to pay me twice.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It all depends on all our schedules.

The Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes. It's not easy. We better not get another committee involved in this.

With that, committee members, I think we'll call it a day. I think we've had a fairly good discussion. I'm not sure how many recommendations have come out of it. But with that, we'll adjourn today's meeting. We'll see you next Wednesday at 1 o'clock.

The committee adjourned at 1439.

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente

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

Mr. Bas Balkissoon (Scarborough–Rouge River L)

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James ND)

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre L)

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Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord PC)

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Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton PC)

Mr. Jonah Schein (Davenport ND)

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Mr. Grant Crack (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell L)

Mr. Vic Dhillon (Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest L)

Mr. Joe Dickson (Ajax–Pickering L)

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes

Ms. Deborah Deller, Clerk of the Assembly

Clerk / Greffier

Mr. Trevor Day

Staff / Personnel

Mr. Peter Sibenik, procedural clerk,
Journals and Procedural Research Branch