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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 24 October 2001

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 24 octobre 2001

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alternative fuel sources**

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**Comité spécial des sources
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Travaux du comité

Chair: Doug Galt
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Doug Galt
Greffière : Tonia Grannum

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ALTERNATIVE FUEL SOURCES**

Wednesday 24 October 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**COMITÉ SPÉCIAL DES SOURCES
DE CARBURANTS DE REMPLACEMENT**

Mercredi 24 octobre 2001

The committee met at 1005 in room 228.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr Doug Galt): I call to order the select committee on alternative fuel sources. The first item we have is a report from the subcommittee on committee business. Would someone like to move that motion from the subcommittee?

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): Your subcommittee on committee business met on Tuesday, October 23, 2001, and unanimously recommends the following:

That Navigant Consulting Ltd be retained as consultant to the select committee on alternative fuel sources subject to the subcommittee negotiating the terms of the contract for presentation to the full committee for approval.

The Chair: Discussion? Do you want to make a comment, as part of the subcommittee?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Certainly. I should go on the record. The subcommittee interviewed three different firms that had bid, and we made a unanimous decision, as the motion states. Given the terms of reference and the short time frame, we considered this to be the best of the lot to do the work we need done for the month of November.

The Chair: Hearing no further discussion, those in favour? Those opposed? I declare that motion carried.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair: Should we look at some of these odds and ends and then go to the committee? We wanted to talk about the schedule. Has that been circulated to everyone? There is a proposed schedule in front of you, something I have discussed with the clerk and we also discussed at the last committee meeting. Does anyone have any concerns over the way the schedule has been laid out?

You'll notice on November 7 we'll sit down with the research consultant. Actually the one we have just approved will bring forward a tentative direction at that time that we can probably spend most of the two hours discussing. We have next Wednesday to confirm an interim report that we'll continue discussing this morning. We have four Wednesdays after constituency week to have hearings, looking at the various umbrella groups, and I

believe our clerk has some of those to be looked at at this time or a little later on.

We have taken the opportunity to suggest either the last week of December or the first week of February to look at committee travel, as a committee, to some sites in Canada, possibly California and whatever else there might be on return, and then starting roughly February 18 with public hearings. We do have a little complication there with the finance committee, as two of us sit on that committee, which might create some complications. We're getting our oar in the water first, and maybe they can work around us a bit or whatever.

Any comments on the schedule as laid out? This is of course subject to change as we move down the road, but just so that people would have some idea of where we're going.

The other comment I'll just quickly make is that I've been asked by a few people, "What's happening in early January? Can we make plans or not?" I see no problem in keeping the early part of January open. We might want to meet with the consultants maybe the third week of January or possibly when we're doing some of the travel in the last week. I'm not sure, but the probability is that we'll want to meet with them. Certainly the first two weeks of January are wide open.

Ms Churley: I was just wondering about the finance hearings and whether or not you're saying that we couldn't do it because of your other commitments, or will you be looking for a substitution for you on that committee?

1010

The Chair: To be up front, it's Mr O'Toole and I who sit on that committee, and in my understanding, select committees do take priority over standing committees. So I guess if we establish that those times are not available for the finance committee, then it's the whip's responsibility and/or the House leader's to make sure that substitutes are available.

Ms Churley: OK. Thanks.

The Chair: But I think by being up front, when they sit down as a subcommittee, which Mr Hardeman is on, and they can see when we're sitting and when we're not sitting, maybe there can be some flexibility with that committee.

Ms Churley: I just ask because, obviously, we have to be flexible in the schedule. But again, to the extent that I know which days we're sitting in advance, it helps me,

because I am constantly having to substitute people into other committee work that I should be doing, and it's a juggle every day to try to get to all these things. It would be helpful to know.

The Chair: We're trying to look ahead and get it laid out and stick to it as much as possible. Maybe we'll have, at our next meeting, somebody come back and say, "Something's wrong with this and we need to change." Unless it's really a conflict, let's try to stick to a proposed schedule. But I don't think it should be considered etched in stone that we can't make some modifications for the good of the various committee members.

So is there a motion to confirm this? At least it would be in the record.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I'll move the general outline of the scheduled hearings. There are two considerations I think we should keep in mind, one being the last Wednesdays in the spring of 2002, when Tonia says, "report writing," that's really report editorial correction, right? My question is, how can we be doing report writing one week before the report is supposed to be finalized?

The Chair: I think basically the clerk has just plugged in those Wednesdays. I think an awful lot of those Wednesdays will not be used. Once we've finished public hearings, I doubt if we're going to sit down on March 4 to start. We're going to want staff to be working on that, so probably March 4, maybe March 20, we wouldn't be in. We'd be into it from March 27 to April 10, that kind of thing.

Mr Hastings: We have to have this off for French translation about six weeks before, I would imagine.

Clerk of the Committee (Ms Tonia Grannum): Just about eight days for translation.

The Chair: The report is to be in by May. It doesn't say May 1 or May 31.

Clerk of the Committee: At the end of May.

The Chair: Certainly at the end of May.

Mr Hastings: My second consideration is that we should keep some flexible time for maybe one day of public hearings if we get any surprising information coming out of the consultant's report after you've pretty well concluded public hearings at the end of February. Is there any issue that needs to be re-examined in light of new information that may arise out of either consultants' reports or any of the people who made submissions up to the end of February?

The Chair: I think at any time we can call witnesses before us later on. I think the real question here might be: is two weeks reasonable—in other words, eight days—to meet with delegations when they see everything on the Web site of this interim report; also the consultants and the researchers on policy, and we have that on a Web site and they're coming forward to suggest recommendations? Are eight days adequate, or is it too much? At one point, we had in here three weeks, and that seemed to be a bit excessive, so we're suggesting right now two weeks to look at hearings.

Mr Hastings: I would think it's fairly realistic.

The Chair: Eight days?

Mr Hastings: Eight days, unless you get a larger number of people notifying us that they would like to make a submission live.

The Chair: We do recognize there's an awful lot of interest out there, but anyway, that's what we suggested.

OK, Mr Ouellette, we're just looking at the schedule you have in front of you. Any comments? Are you comfortable with what's being suggested?

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): Well, eight days, depending on where they come from. But are those eight days just here, or do we need to move to other locations in order to draw in other people?

The Chair: I expect we're travelling.

Mr Ouellette: We're travelling.

The Chair: That wasn't discussed, but—

Mr Ouellette: Is that just travelling within Ontario?

The Chair: I'm open.

Mr Ouellette: We're trying to get as much input as possible. We had quite a few people from west of Ontario who had difficulty making it here. Are there other places that would be closer to there, where if we want to stay in Ontario, we can go to Thunder Bay or Kenora to try and draw those people from Saskatchewan and Manitoba if there's important input we need to hear? The same for the Ottawa area as well. We did have some from those specific areas. That's something the committee should look at or discuss, how we want to approach that.

The Chair: Maybe we should consider in our week of travel, January 28, that maybe we'd spend time when we stop and invite specific delegations to present to us, possibly two, three, four, that kind of thing. If we're in Alberta or BC, we could at that time request—

Mr Ouellette: That's something that could be looked at, yes.

The Chair: We may tour the wind field site and then invite three or four delegations at that time.

Mr Ouellette: That sounds reasonable to me, but it's up to the committee.

The Chair: Further discussion? Hearing none, those in favour? Those opposed? Motion carried.

In connection with a communications plan, where we're at in discussions with the clerk, if everybody is comfortable, is that Sheldon Ens in the Ministry of the Environment—not minister's staff but ministry staff—will work with Tonia to write a communications plan.

Ms Churley: I'm glad you made that clear.

The Chair: I just wanted to clarify. As far as I know, everything is full steam ahead to do that. With the tabling of an interim report the first week in November, there is some urgency to get on with the plan. Hopefully at our next meeting, October 31, we can look at the plan and then be able to approve it and move ahead. Everybody comfortable? OK. I don't think we need a motion to that effect. It's just for information.

Ms Churley: Just for clarification, what's the name of the person again in the Ministry of the Environment?

The Chair: Sheldon Ens.

Ms Churley: Are you working directly with Mr Ens to determine the communications plan? What kind of input is the committee having into this?

The Chair: As I mentioned the other day—rightly or wrongly, but in my opinion—there's a lot of interest out there in this committee, but I'd like our activities to become the dinner conversation in a lot of family homes, that kind of interest.

Ms Churley: Well—

The Chair: I may be exaggerating it a bit, but nevertheless to create a fair amount of interest out there. We have had a couple of demonstrations and we have this interim report. We may have another interim report in February. Also we have four hearings set aside after constituency week. My thinking is, let's try and have some demonstrations on those four days.

Ms Churley: I understand that. So committee members who have ideas of demonstration projects we'd like the committee to consider should go through you to Mr Ens? I'm just trying to figure out—

The Chair: I think it should go through the clerk.

Ms Churley: Go to the clerk specifically?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms Churley: Because I'm keen to see that we do some energy conservation and efficiency programs. I don't think we even have to travel for that. There are some interesting things going on in the marketplace right now in those areas that just maybe for the record now, to the clerk, I would like to see as part of the demonstration projects that we take a look at.

The Chair: Whether it's fuel cell or windmills or whatever, sort of show and tell that will create some interest.

Ms Churley: But there are also very interesting technical processes. For instance, there are businesses out there who will go into a home or a small business with wind processors to give you an idea of how much air is escaping from your windows and doors. There's technology—simple technology, but technology—around that. I think we have to get out there and see what kinds of retrofits and those kinds of things are being done to conserve energy. I can talk to the clerk a little further about some ideas for a demonstration project in that area.

1020

The Chair: OK. Any committee member can feed in as to what some of these demonstrations might be, and we may want to do some more in the spring as well or in the winter when we're meeting. The two we had created a lot of interest with the press. We may not have gotten as much coverage as we'd hoped for. I think we had other interference there, but I think it's something that's very worthwhile working at, and we'll leave that to our clerk and to Mr Ens.

A package on conferences has also been circulated to you, and I wanted to bring to your attention three conferences that are in Ontario coming up in the near future. It's a shame to miss them. On page 3, you will find one in Ottawa, the Canadian Wind Energy Association. On page 5, there's one, Fuel Cell, which is at the Hotel

Sheraton on October 30, and on page 7, November 27 to 28, there's an annual Canadian Independent Power Conference and Trade Show: From Theory to Action. That's pages 3, 5 and 7 that the Canadian ones are on. That's IPPSO.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): This is related to a question I asked last week, and we weren't sure of the answer. Many of us have interns who are going to help us with this committee work. I asked the question last time: provided there's enough in the budget, can an intern be sent to a conference to report back, either to a committee member to report back to the committee, or the intern themselves as part of their professional development to report back to the committee? There was some uncertainty last week if that is possible or not.

Clerk of the Committee: They wouldn't come under our budget. That's the problem.

Mrs Bountrogianni: They wouldn't?

Clerk of the Committee: No, not the committee's budget.

Mrs Bountrogianni: OK. That's unfortunate.

The Chair: It's my understanding from the discussion before that if a plane or a bus was going to be chartered for the committee and there are empty seats, they could ride along.

Mrs Bountrogianni: That I understood, and I appreciate that.

The Chair: But when it comes to specific expenses, I guess the question would also be, is it in the power of the committee to vote for that or is a budget—

Clerk of the Committee: The budget is for members only, and staff that are attached to the committee.

The Chair: Sorry, guys.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Darn.

The Chair: She tried hard, though.

But on a more serious note, I think we need someone to go, whether it's an MPP or staff or somebody from a ministry, and bring back a report for us. This is happening right here.

It's also my understanding there has been quite an extensive study by the federal government on wind energy. That hasn't appeared in our interim report, and I don't remember anybody saying anything about it in our hearings. But my understanding is there's a fair-sized study going on, and maybe we need research to check into that.

Anybody want to go on a long-distance travel to Ottawa for any one of these meetings?

Mrs Bountrogianni: It's too short notice for me, Chair, the Ottawa ones.

The Chair: That's for next week. There is also the one in November.

Mrs Bountrogianni: My life won't be worth living if I miss Halloween with my kids.

The Chair: OK. There is of course the fact that we can get conference proceedings; no question. There is one on November 27 to 28—that's IPPSO—if anybody has a particular interest in the Canadian Independent

Power Conference and Trade Show: From Theory to Action. Probably that's a lot of the run-of-the-mill, or run-of-the-river—

Ms Churley: Was that Freudian slip?

The Chair: OK. So think about it. If anybody decides to go next week, I don't think there's a problem with the committee and travel, but there it is before you.

Is there anything else we should be covering, other than the report?

Mr Parsons: I may possibly be interested in the one in Ottawa on the 30th, but I need to see my schedule to know whether I'm available. I don't know whether we need permission or approval of the committee for Ottawa.

The Chair: It's more comfortable if there is. We can simply pass a motion. If you are able to go, you'd have clearance. Would you like to put that forward as a motion?

Mr Parsons: Yes. I move that the committee approve my travelling to Ottawa for the conference on the 30th. It's not in the motion, but there's about a 50-50 chance I can do it.

The Chair: Discussion? Those in favour? Those opposed? The motion carries.

Ms Churley: Mr Chair, I'll express an interest in going to the IPPSO conference in Richmond Hill on November 27 and 28, subject to juggling my schedule considerably. I don't know if I can, but I think it's important that somebody go from this committee. I'll report back as to whether I can.

The Chair: I was thinking that was Ottawa too.

Ms Churley: No, that's actually in Richmond Hill.

The Chair: I think we can afford that.

Interjection: Could you take the bus?

Ms Churley: I could even take the bus to show.

The Chair: Electric or hydrogen-powered?

Ms Churley: Maybe I'll just ride my bike.

The Chair: OK. Can we move on to looking at the report? What are the comments from the committee on the report—good, bad or indifferent?

Dr Bob Gardner: If I could quickly update the committee, Jerry's been working hard on the existing report, editing it and clarifying some of the policy questions. What we've also been doing and will do for you is have a separate, stand-alone executive summary at the front. We have been, as you instructed, recasting it as a discussion paper.

What today's discussion was intended to do was make sure you're comfortable with the policy questions that were set up. We didn't want to give you another piece of paper, because you've got so many today. So we'll hear today's discussion, quickly incorporate it in the interim report and get that out to you so you have a more or less final version for next week's discussion. Today is primarily for any comments you have on the direction or content of those policy questions.

Mr Hastings: One thing, when I looked over the material from the report—and I'm not sure we've encapsulated it in "Goals and Objectives"—is the whole

issue of energy security for Ontario or Canada. Given what has happened in the last couple of months and the very shaky situation that seems to be shaping up in the Middle East vis-à-vis petroleum—this is more so for the US, but there probably could be an overspill on us as an economy—I'm wondering if we should more clearly stipulate that the alternative fuels proposition, once the feasibility economically of same is researched, could be a very clear policy application for the development of energy security.

Right now, our economy is 95% or 98% petroleum based—gasoline or oil or their additives. There's not much in the way of alternative fuels. I'm wondering if we should have a specific, explicit goal dealing with energy security for Ontario. A critic could say, "Are you trying to insulate Ontario from the rest of the country?" Not at all; it's a global interdependency. It would just highlight this concept, particularly with the backdrop we have throughout the world, with the terrorism and the bio-terrorism impacts. It may be very timely.

1030

The Chair: It's an interesting comment you make on energy security. We would like to include the objectives we discussed last week, and I'm being told by research that your comments could be incorporated into that very easily, unless there are objections from any of the committee members. Your point is very well taken.

Mr Hastings: Does that mean we'd have a specific objective, or simply encapsulate it in one of the existing ones?

The Chair: Would you like a separate bullet point, or encapsulated?

Mr Hastings: I think it's of such significance, given how things seem somewhat out of US control, or everybody's. I think we should look at it. I don't want to be alarmist. The more news I hear, the more I start musing as to how vulnerable we really are in this whole area.

The Chair: OK. I don't see any objection to it at all. I think it's an excellent point.

Mr Ouellette: Security is one of the big issues on everybody's mind right now, although I think the key focus is to find alternative forms because of the dependency on fossil fuels. I don't think I'd want to see the researchers focus on a lot of security issues, because of the limited amount of time and research we have available—the individuals, the firm, we hire—but focus on where we need to be. Security is definitely an issue, but I think we'll have diverse forms as we open up new markets, so that in the event nuclear has to shut down we can look at wind power and have all the resources necessary to fall in place. Mr Hastings made a good point on security being key, but I think that as we find diverse forms of fuels, security will be less a demand by us. If we have to switch from fossil fuels, we can always go to wind or something else.

Mrs Bountrogianni: I'd like to support Mr Ouellette's statement.

The Chair: That it should be a consideration but shouldn't be a top priority? That's basically what I'm hearing.

Mrs Bountrogianni: I think we should stay focused. We have a large enough task as it is. As Mr Ouellette said, that goal will be accomplished by the fact that we will have alternatives to deal with a potential crisis.

Ms Churley: I agree with Mr Hastings that this is an important issue, but I support the contention that for us to get sidetracked on that in this committee, given our limited time frame and the complexities of the issues before us, it might take up too much of our time. But I do want to say he raises a good point.

I now have located the issue I want to discuss about the report. It relates to what Mr Hastings said, and that is energy conservation and efficiency. Pollution Probe said to this committee, and I think we all agreed—I've been pushing from day one, and we had conservation and energy efficiency added to the list of things we're looking at. I don't want to use the word "crisis," but there are real concerns about our energy sources in the near and far future. One of the key things we should and can be doing right now is bringing in energy conservation and efficiency programs. You'll recall the energy crisis of, I think, the 1970s—I don't have my dates right now.

The Chair: Yes, 1973-74.

Ms Churley: There was a real concentration at that time on conservation and efficiency, and it doesn't rely on bringing in new technologies. I come back to that issue. I think it should be at the forefront of our report. I know the committee didn't necessarily agree with me that we should be making short-term recommendations in this interim report; I believe I lost that battle. But I would like to see that more prominent in the interim report, particularly in the context of the issue Mr Hastings brought up. It's something that has been done in the past and it is, as Pollution Probe and others have said, the best alternative fuel source, something that can be done immediately as opposed to relying on a lot of technical reports and financial instruments, economic instruments and policy changes. It's something that's been done through the government before and through other levels of government and something that I say this committee should be pushing to get started immediately.

Mr Parsons: Just following up on Mr Hastings' comments, I agree it should be a minor part. But he did raise in my mind an interesting question that I don't have the answer to: where does our energy come from now? The oil we use in Ontario, where does it come from? How much from western Canada? How much from other countries? What other countries? How much electricity do we sell out of Ontario to other provinces? How much do we buy? How much do we sell to the States? How much do we buy from the States? Where does the coal come from?

The Chair: Would you like research to dig that up for you?

Mr Parsons: If they have a minute or two.

The Chair: Jerry?

Mr Jerry Richmond: I can give a general sense.

The Chair: Maybe we can hear a general sense and then get a detailed one in print.

Mr Richmond: With respect to electricity, my understanding is that Ontario is pretty near self-sufficient. We trade on a daily basis with some American states and with Quebec. I don't know whether any of you went up to the control centre; you'd see there are trades. Basically, in terms of electricity Ontario is self-sufficient, between OPG and the private generators. With respect to petroleum and natural gas, my understanding is that virtually all that comes from western Canada—Alberta and Saskatchewan—primarily via pipeline.

With respect to coal, OPG uses coal in its thermal stations and a significant amount of coal is also used by the steel plants in Sault Ste Marie and Hamilton. With respect to power generation, the coal comes from western Canada and across Lake Erie from Pennsylvania and Ohio. The coal for the steel mills is also imported from outside the province, because Ontario does not have any active coal mines.

That's my general sense. If you want specifics, we can certainly compile the figures.

Mr Parsons: I'd appreciate some more exact numbers. My question is, what happens if the US is not able to supply electricity in certain periods? I know we sell; I know we buy. I also understand about oil coming from out west, but it's my understanding that in the eastern part of the province, the Ottawa Valley area—I can remember when I worked in construction that the asphalt cement was different in that area because it was imported crude and had quite different characteristics from the asphalt cement in this area, which was western crude. I think the Ottawa Valley is fed its oil from offshore, and I'm curious as to how much.

The Chair: I don't think we need it super-detailed, but a reasonable—

Mr Parsons: Ballpark numbers on where our energy comes from.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Next week, the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology is before the estimates committee. In the information I've received is much of the grid capacity and the generation capacity and the trading and all those questions. It would be appropriate if we invited that ministry as witnesses. From my conversations with them, they have all those questions. In fact, they'll be part of the estimates process because of the market opening issue. They want to know the grid capacity, the generation capacity. In fact, one of the very interesting things is that during the summer, when we had our highest peak load, Ontario was a net importer from New York. The grids and their structure are also important, what grids we link up with naturally and have the same phased power. Quebec's phasing of power generation is different than in Ontario, yet we're completely harmonious with bordering US states in terms of how the grid works.

They are the ministry that should—I see they're not on the list. Drive Clean is on here—Environment—and we have the IMO group, which ultimately comes under that ministry. I think we should be adding them to the list.

That might give you a chance to—and if you have questions, it's a good opportunity through your representatives on the estimates committee. There are extremely important questions in terms of market opening, which is ultimately the question we're asking: what's the capacity and how is that capacity mixed today, from nuclear to fossil, and what are those assets worth?

1040

The Chair: Thank you, Mr O'Toole. You bring up a good point. We do need to look at the delegation list for those four days of hearings in late November, early December.

Maybe I can make a couple of comments. I've inquired of a critic and he's given me some divine guidance on our report, that I might comment here. They've indicated that we are trying to answer too much in our report. We have some 80 policy questions or issues at the end. I know last time we did ask to get major headings there. There's some question on how the committee is going to look once—we're trying to be all things to all people.

Two things came to my mind that might be helpful here. One is to indicate in the executive summary that this is raw data that we've gotten from hearings and we're not even pretending to scope it down, that we just want to keep it all with us. The other one that came to mind would be that maybe we need to take our public policy questions, those instruments, and group them under certain instruments rather than under each alternate fuel. In other words, net metering could be one, and group them all in under there; some of the tax incentives—and there'd be various tax incentives—and how that would apply to transportation, to electricity or to heating. You might use an instrument like education and the different ones under it; going a different route, which might make it a little more interesting in the report as to grouping of instruments. A thought.

The other one was the use of "green," particularly in the preamble, being a bit of a slang term. Should we be a little more specific on the fact that we are talking about alternate fuels/alternate energies, uses and sources?

Another one that's kind of interesting is the size and the amount of information we have under each major heading. As I understand, in writing this, it relates to what we were hearing at the hearings rather than necessarily its importance, and maybe we should point that out. So a few thoughts that came to my attention.

Any suggestions on how you'd like to play with those or take advantage of them?

Mr Ouellette: I believe things like that should be included. You're saying about the net metering to ensure that we put that in and include that as one of the things, but I also think that when we have the interim report, we should include leading questions as to—one of the things that I feel I'm gaining a lot of personal support for is the phasing out of MMB and MTBE, the mandatory phasing out of those components and the phasing in of ethanol as an oxidizing component. I think it should be listed in there as well so that—

The Chair: As a legislative instrument.

Mr Ouellette: Yes. We should be prodding and getting people ready, because all of a sudden the industry is going to react in a very negative way—"We haven't got the supply and the demand"—but it's going to help a lot of the rural communities that are dependent on raising corn and things like that. It will also bring on new industries for Ontario if those components are phased out. Not only do I think they need to be phased out because it is going to help industry, but the key reason is because it's good for the environment. One of the biggest things I found out that was very interesting in the hearings was that a lot of the two-stroke engines, particularly outboard motors, contribute about 25% of their fuel back into the environment. MTBE does not separate; it settles on the bottom. Those people are now contaminating the drinking water at cottages and lakes because that's where they get their drinking water or their processing water from in a lot of those situations.

I think the use of ethanol would be something we should include in that, just as a prodding, to try and get people ready for some of the recommendations, at least one of the ones I've made it clear that I intend to make.

The Chair: Maybe the committee might want to come out with, unless they're fuel-injected, outlawing two-stroke engines because of the amount of gasoline that's going out into the environment, or four-stroke. It is a big issue, whether it be leaf blowers or outboard motors.

Mr Ouellette: There are alternatives. If there are possibilities of tax incentives for four-stroke, because there are a lot of two-stroke engines out there in boats and outboard motors and so on. It would very difficult for a lot to be converted over in a short period of time once you outlaw it.

California is currently looking at outlawing them. The way I found that out, believe it or not, was through ice augers. Two-stroke powered ice augers—they're now using battery-operated ones to go ice fishing in California. They are getting ready for that market there because they're looking at that. It is very difficult to hit the chainsaws, which are two-stroke and all the other components, but they are a significant contributor to the problems we have in the environment right now. So making recommendations or giving incentives to lean away from a two-stroke would be something I would support as well.

The Chair: Did you have your hand up, or your glasses up?

Mr Hastings: I was listening to Ms Churley's comments about energy conservation or efficiency. While I appreciate her emphasis on that—she keeps bringing up this issue of energy conservation as primarily the sole means of reducing emissions, improving the environment and some of the other objectives you have in the interim report—I think we will fail as a committee if we do not keep as the top priority the economic potential of alternative fuels.

Energy conservation, if you look at most of the studies and the literature, in and of itself will not solve those objectives. You've got to look further. It seems to me the

clear emphasis in the interim report and the final report must be on the economic potential, the liberating potential, of those technologies, the one that Mr Ouellette is talking about. If we go down the road of energy conservation nearly exclusively, then we are going to end up having an enhanced regulatory regime on the existing petroleum-based technologies that are out there.

All you've got to do is point to your question that you were asking of the environment people, Mr Gilchrist's question about if we exempt it or change the tax regime on certain fuels. I think it was yours actually, Dr Galt; the question you asked about the emissions under Ontario's transportation sector. Gasoline and diesel off-road use, just in Ontario alone, according to Environment Canada: nearly 23% coming from petroleum-based engines, internal combustion. If you want to put the overwhelming emphasis on energy conservation as your number one priority here as an alternative fuel, then we are going to miss the boat on the economic potential and the potential air quality reductions in emissions from the use of other energy sources, in my estimation.

The Chair: Technically, it's not in the mandate, if you read the motion, but I don't disagree with what Ms Churley is trying to accomplish. It is more of a secondary priority or underlying priority. Anyway, I'll let her comment herself.

Ms Churley: Thank you for your effort to defend me here, Mr Chair.

The Chair: That's a rarity.

Ms Churley: I know.

The Chair: I'm teasing.

Ms Churley: My proposal certainly wasn't, and it never has been, to negate the serious work we're doing on alternative fuels and energy sources. It is of paramount importance that we do that work. But we all know that it's not going to come on stream for awhile. I keep raising this, as do others. Not only do we need to do the research which we are doing on all kinds of different and green energy sources and transportation, but we have to be recommending policy changes. Economic instruments need to be brought in. All of these things need to happen. We are doing some really good work on that and we should continue it, but it's not going to happen for a while.

The final report is not due until—what is it?—May 2002, probably into election mode then. Things are not going to happen for a while, and I'm hoping very much that our final report will lead to whoever is in government doing some serious work and bringing some of these new technologies on stream.

1050

In the meantime, as Mr Hastings himself pointed out, we may have some real problems in the near future with energy sources. It has been proven time and time again. We don't have to do the research; it has all been done before. It is something that we as a committee can recommend we do upfront now, that we start bringing in programs and recommending how some of that might be done, at all levels of government, to deal with the first

step. As you know and as I've pointed out before, Ontario is one of the biggest energy hogs in the world. We waste energy like crazy. We can start—the credibility of this committee, in my view—by saying, "Here's something we can get started on right now." Mr Hastings, that's my point. I certainly didn't mean to imply that we should ignore or put this as a top priority in terms of the things we're researching and demonstrating and recommending that the government move on. I think we have a duty and a role to suggest, let's not reinvent the wheel on this one; it's something we should and can be doing right now. That's all I'm proposing.

The Chair: In all fairness to both of you, I think our biggest enemy in trying to deal with this is that we're too enthusiastic and going too broad and we're having difficulties to scope in what's possible. Maybe during the November 7 meeting—the researchers are going out to look at policy—we'll be able to start scoping in a bit at that time. I'm not too uncomfortable with this interim report having a lot of information in it, but at least indicating in the executive summary why, rather than trying to scope it in at this point in time. Energy conservation is great thinking. I'm not sure how far we can go, with the mandate and the direction that's required.

Mr O'Toole: These are rather free-ranging conversations we have, which is great.

The Chair: Where would you like it to go, Mr O'Toole?

Mr O'Toole: Well, in response to the interim report specifically, I have no problems looking at energy conservation as it goes to net metering and all those kinds of issues, which encourages other sustainable forms of generation. That's an argument with respect to conservation.

But I really want to talk about what's missing from the summary, as I see it now. Coal generation is an important issue to deal with, coal-powered generation, fossil-powered. In that respect, it's my understanding that coal-fired generation plants are, in some jurisdictions, being built today. They are using newer technologies and cleaner coals. There's nothing in the report that I've seen. I would like to see something looking at jurisdictions like the United States, and I believe Australia is also moving forward with generation using coal. We shouldn't just presume it's gone. There are cleaner methodologies. We need to not just write it off as dismissive. Maybe you want to respond to that. I'd like to see that; that's one.

The other one is that there is a small section I've seen on the emissions credits, trading credits on the emissions reduction attempts. It's an important part of the equation. Who gets the credits for green power? Under the current emissions trading policy which is on the Environmental Bill of Rights right now—that regulation is coming out; it's posted now, I'm quite sure. That credit is slanted toward OPG. It's allowing them slowly to get credits, where some of the other green forms coming on stream aren't getting the credit for replacing, on the generation side, some of the space. There needs to be a bit more time spent on that.

It's very technical. I don't understand it. I just put to you that I have a question, a formal question I want to put on the record here to be responded to: will OPG be receiving emissions credits for divesting itself of such assets as coal-fired generation stations? Under Bill 35, there is a requirement for them to divest themselves of a monopoly position in generation. I hope we all understand that; that's part of what this is about. Will they get credits for those—which means money; credits are money—to augment the generation charge? It comes in as another form of revenue. They can sell those credits to other people, if you understand how that works. I just want to know if they're going to be receiving credits when they divest themselves of some of those less friendly assets.

The Chair: I think Mr Richmond wanted to respond to your comment, and you're also putting that question in for research.

Mr Richmond: The only thing I mentioned on some of the issues—for example, on clean coal technology and the additive issue that Mr Ouellette mentioned, all I can say is that my sense of it, from your first round of hearings, is that we did not hear any evidence or testimony on those issues. My suggestion would be that if you have these things you want analyzed, or even, Mr O'Toole, your concerns on emissions trading, a possibility may be, when you're considering your additional witnesses or supplementary hearings, to possibly address some of these issues.

Mr O'Toole: That's good. To come up with experts in those areas—I think you're right. I'd like to hear from them. The coal group, whoever they are—I'm not favouring them, but they should be given fair time to make their arguments. Whether we accept them or reject them is yet to be determined.

Mr Richmond: There certainly are states and provinces—Alberta, Saskatchewan, some of the Midwest states—where 80% to 90% of their generation is from thermal coal generation.

Mr O'Toole: Alberta's base load is coal. If I may, and I appreciate the time to just communicate here—we, it looks like from the schedule, are planning to go to Alberta. Their base load is coal. Most people think, because of all the natural gas—theirs is coal. In fact, they're building more coal generation as we speak. It's a big issue in Alberta, a huge issue. Let's hear from them.

Mr Ouellette: I just wanted to follow up on something Mr O'Toole mentioned. One of the difficulties is that there is no incentive for end users to use environmentally friendly alternatives. What that means is that if General Motors, which happens to be in my riding, buys energy from OPG, they go for the lowest price. There is no incentive for them to use environmentally friendly energy. I think what John has asked and what I would like to see, if he didn't, is that we look at the fact that end users may receive some credit on the emissions crediting to ensure that there is some incentive for them to use environmentally friendly fuels. Right now it may cost them more, but the credit system may benefit them in the

end, because right now the only benefactor from it is OPG.

The Chair: I think what we're kind of moving into is the kind of discussion we want on November 7 with our researchers and where we want to send them looking for information to be helpful.

Mr Ouellette: That's all I wanted to say.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Mr Chair, I was thinking along the same lines as you, that the purpose of today was to look at this report. It's due next week, so we can't make unreasonable requests of the research department for next week, but these should be recorded for discussion on November 7, for the final report. I could be wrong, but I envision the final report looking very different from this report. This would almost be an appendix, I would say, to the final report. Right now we're sort of up here and we're going to siphon down and down and down, but we don't want to lose anything.

But I think the purpose of today was to look at this. In a week, the final interim one is due, and we should keep that in mind. I certainly didn't come prepared with all of my questions for the researcher, so I'm not prepared as well as Mr O'Toole and Mr Ouellette for that. I came maybe overly focused on the task at hand, which was to look at the report, add anything more, take anything more. We've got some guidance from the Chair, from your assistant. I think that was taken under advisement by research. I personally don't really have anything else to add to the committee meeting today. I just wanted to refocus us on that.

1100

The Chair: In summary, I think I'm hearing you say the comments I made earlier—and research to look at—you're comfortable with, to make some of those modifications.

Just thinking ahead, I see the final report as some nice summaries about the priorities that we establish, that we have a little write-up about that. But the major part of it will be recommendations on what we can recommend on, and acknowledging the areas that we have not carried out the complete research on and that need more work to be carried out later on. There's just no way that we can get into, for example, the burning of peat for possible heating or electricity production in the north. That may not be something that—I'm using that as an example; we only had one presentation. I see Mr Ouellette's hand. I know he's concerned about northern Ontario. I was using that as a possible example.

Mr Ouellette: I'm scrambling all morning to try to make flight arrangements. That's where I've been. That's what all my staff are trying to do. Anyways, that's neither here nor there in regard to the committee.

I think it's important to have some trial balloons floated in the interim report, because a lot of the media have been calling myself, as I'm sure they're calling everybody else, saying, "What's going to happen with the interim report?" If we have trial balloons saying, "Well, we need to discuss issues such as..." and then list the issues—say, phasing out of MTBE and phasing in of

ethanol—then all of a sudden that industry is going to go, “Oh my God. Look at what they’re looking at.” Then we will see both sides of the issue come forward.

Just float a couple of balloons in the same way with the emissions credit; just a section that says we need to look at issues such as the one Mr O’Toole mentioned. That would be very easy to add to a report so that all of a sudden we are going to get some response, not only from the media, saying, “Explain this emissions credit process that you’re talking about here,” or “Explain what you mean by phasing out of MTBE” and those sorts of things, and anything that anybody else may bring forward. Mr Hastings mentioned the diesel component.

The Chair: I think there’s going to be a stepwise fashion here in this report, and I’m hoping the committee will—like, another at interim in February that will be on the policy issues. A lot of what you’re mentioning will come out in those policy issues. I think it’s a stepwise fashion: some will come now and will evolve into some more and more into a final.

Mr Ouellette: I still think we should have a couple of those trial balloons that—

The Chair: A little warning that it is coming.

Mr Ouellette: Yes, “Areas of Future Discussion,” and then list some of the ones we’ve mentioned. Does that sound like something that we are able to get in for—

Dr Gardner: At the moment, we have the set of policy questions that you have already. There are a good number of them. I don’t think they are quite what you want. You want to highlight two, three or four issues, and float them as trial balloons. We don’t have anything floating at the moment. The instructions that we have at the moment are that you wanted a fairly broad discussion paper: “Here’s what the committee heard. Here are the questions that we want further input on,” and that’s it. We can certainly include trial balloons when you’ve decided what those balloons are. We haven’t yet heard enough to go away and do that.

Mr Ouellette: I would have hoped that we’ve heard a few just this morning that could be included.

Dr Gardner: Yes.

The Chair: On page 35, the policy issues, bullet point number 3, is a bit of a trial balloon: “To what degree should OPG’s program to install scrubbers at its thermal stations be recognized or further promoted?” In other words, how do we clean up our coal plants? I’d see that as a trial balloon, as one that’s in here.

Mr Ouellette: I see about zero response from the press on that one, to be honest.

The Chair: Could be. But I’m just pointing out that there are some in here. That was one in particular I picked up on.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Could this be solved by using the existing headings—for example, public policy issues headings—asked or framed as a question?

Mr Ouellette: Just so long as we float a few of those balloons. It is important, because I know as the end result I will be making a recommendation to phase out MTBE.

I’ll make that very clear right now if I didn’t before. This is going to give some groups an opportunity to respond.

Mrs Bountrogianni: You may want to phrase it as a question in your recommendation: should we be investigating as a public policy issue?

The Chair: Are you sure some of these are not along the line you’re speaking of?

Mrs Bountrogianni: Your issue is not in here.

Mr Ouellette: No. The Vice-Chair says my issue is not there.

The Chair: We’ll maybe come back to it next week. It would be nice to tidy this up next week.

Mr Ouellette: Just areas of future discussion, if that can be mentioned.

Dr Gardner: What we can do, in response to the question raised by Mr Ouellette and Mr O’Toole, is draft a couple of potential trial balloons so you’ve got them in front of you, and then you can decide what you want to do. Again, the only caution I have is that it is easy for us to frame the various policy questions that have arisen in the hearings to date and in your own discussions. We would be getting a little ahead of ourselves to be doing too much on trial balloons, because you haven’t really had much discussion on that. We can knock off a few in draft and then you can react to them. So, you’ve heard a note of caution from me on that.

Mr Ouellette: From that, I gather we won’t see that in there.

Dr Gardner: We can. We can do whatever you want.

Mr Ouellette: I’m asking for the committee’s position on it.

Mr Hastings: What exactly is the question being posed, Jerry?

Mr Ouellette: The phasing out of MTBE and MMB as oxidizing agents.

Mr Hastings: What impacts would that have on air emissions and economic development?

Mr Ouellette: That would be some of the response we would expect to see. Then, listed as areas of future discussion would be issues such as phasing out MTBE and MMB as an oxidizing agent for fuels, which would then have the methanol and the ethanol people coming forward. The agricultural community, I would expect, would be strongly supportive of it, because then ethanol would have a large demand and corn production would increase. Not only that, but in Mr Cleary’s riding, I believe it is, they’re looking at putting a new ethanol plant in there. But there just isn’t the demand for it right now. So we would see industry coming online to fill that gap that Sunoco, as presented here, is already doing, by utilizing ethanol. We would hear that from them. That would be some of the spinoff we would get. It is a very high carcinogenic, MTBE and MMB. We would find an alternative that’s going to generate industry within Ontario and is going to help the environment as well.

The Chair: I think Mr Hardeman had his hand up, then Mr Hastings.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Just being a sub on the committee and not having been privy to all the

discussion that arrived at the draft report that's before us, I have a question more to Mr Ouellette than to the Chair. If one were to put that in the report, has the committee heard anything so far that would generate that curiosity? Has anybody come forward and said, "We think that's something that should be done"?

First of all, I support what you are suggesting would be the end result, but I question whether it would not be more appropriate not to have it in the report but to invite the appropriate witnesses to speak to it for the final report. It is, if not inappropriate, very dangerous to suggest that the committee is looking at that when in fact you have had absolutely no evidence to show that it needs looking at. If we need that evidence and we think we should look at it, then we should invite the appropriate people to come forward and speak to us so we can make a decision on it.

As a citizen looking at the initial report, I would have real concerns when they say they've already decided this is what they want to look at or they want to do, because they think it is going in the right direction, they've met with a number of people, but so far no one has made that suggestion. Where did we get that idea? Why do we have that idea different today than we did before we started preparing for this preliminary report? I would caution putting it in at this time.

1110

Mr Hastings: I guess we are engaged in a mind-stretching exercise. The question I'd put to Bob is, from all the questions you've put into the interim public policy discussion, are you satisfied, or do you think we've encapsulated Mr Ouellette's concern? I'd also link it back to Dr Galt's question and the way that, especially Mr Gilchrist—way back when we had the ministry hearings in August, he asked the question, what would be the economic impacts if you removed the fuel tax from diesel? If you look at the Ministry of Finance's response, it's pretty clear that we have significant gaps of knowledge here. We don't have any answers right now as to what their assumptions would be. I find it intriguing that the finance ministry provided us with an answer, which was just basically \$8 million, but I think Mr Gilchrist's question was, if you did certain things, what would happen? Maybe we didn't ask the question probingly enough.

That's what I think Mr Ouellette's trying to get to and that's what we should be seeking out to some extent in these questions. When you remove the sales tax on a certain type of fuel, there's a cost, \$8 million in that instance. What would happen, then, if you did a certain thing for solar or for wind in terms of vehicle transportation, or, for the off-road vehicles, particularly when you look the emissions of NO_x and VOCs for Ontario, what would happen if you removed or put an incentive in the other way?

What I think Mr Ouellette is trying to get at is, what would be the economic consequences or positive outcomes if you required the removal of these additives by a certain time frame, and what would it cost the

Ontario treasury to do so on the economic side? What would be an enhanced benefit if you did so on the health side? That's the sort of stuff I'm trying to get some answers for, so when we have our final report we can say to that consultant—I don't think Bob can do this—what happens when you take a certain model, if you do a certain thing, and say, "We'll recommend that by 2010 wind energy should be a 2% component of the Ontario economy"? What's the cost to the treasury? What are the benefits on the health side? We don't have that kind of economic modelling, which I hope this consultant can do a little of. I'm trying to link some of these questions.

The Chair: Maybe what we need is a section in this interim report of next steps, making some suggestions like this and also letting them know about the policy studies we're doing, and then in May there will be final recommendations, and within those next steps indicate, for example, some of the things that need to be reviewed and looked at, and will be. A lot of what I think you and Mr Ouellette are talking about will be coming out in the policy, and that's sort of our next major step.

I also hear what Mr Ouellette is saying. We need something in this report to grab the public's attention, and a bit of warning.

Mr Ouellette: It's designed to get the industry involved as well. You send that trial balloon so that all of a sudden the MTBE producers are saying, "Hey, wait a second. We're going to lose 500 jobs," but on the other side, are those 500 jobs going to be replaced? Those are the sort of trial balloons you send up, saying, what is the economic impact of phasing out the current MTBE and the MMB and the phasing in of perceived environmentally friendly? By simply stating that, all of a sudden these industries then become involved, and on both sides of the issue, and then we can hear those reports.

Mrs Bountrogianni: I want to go back to what Mr Hardeman said. Our job today is to look at this interim report. There's a certain procedure that this report was based on, and that was hearings, readings and so forth. In no way is this interim report going to stop us from looking at anything else. Mr Ouellette has this knowledge base and so he's had his own hearing, but we haven't heard it as a committee in order to promote it in the interim report, which is due in a week. We wouldn't be going to conferences if we had all the questions now. We don't have all the questions; we have the questions up to this interim report.

I didn't think of this politically, but Mr Hardeman is correct. I was thinking of it just procedurally, but politically, why would we put something in here that we haven't heard or haven't referenced or haven't sourced more formally as a committee? As a member of the public, I would wonder if we were sneaking things in, although I totally appreciate what Mr Ouellette is saying. I have my own biases as well of what we should look at, but I'm holding off until I get more scientific and financial information on the implications of the ideas that I have privately read about. I wouldn't bring them in this report, because I want to learn more about it. The

conference is formal, the conference proceedings are formal; I'll be bringing them in a report here.

Based on that, I'm assuming this isn't the end, that if we have other questions between now and May, we're not bound only by this. Am I assuming correctly? I just think procedurally, and now, after Mr Hardeman's comments, politically it would be wise to keep on the same procedure. Base this report on what we have heard formally, notwithstanding the wonderful knowledge base that some of us have just because we're engineers and science-based people.

The Chair: At this point in time, for all our information, we spoke to some extent about the report from the researchers on policy and then we looked at the recommendations for finalizing it. In this, I have no problem—I think I saw enough nods—that we might put in a little section on next steps that our researchers, writers, might bring back to the next meeting.

Mr Hastings: What I think Dr Bountrogianni is talking about I don't have a problem with. The questions in the interim report, the phraseology, what we've been trying to examine—the purpose should be to get people, when they look at this interim report, especially the presenters we had, to think about: “You were championing ethanol fuels, but how far have you looked in probing that? What are the big benefits of it for the economy of Ontario? What are the negatives?” I would hope that the questions would have a purpose and that in the next round of hearings, the people who come, and probably we'll get some responses back from the ones we've had, say, “Here are our best answers, to this point in time, to most of the questions posed, based on what we know.” We want to elevate the knowledge base here, not just of ourselves but of the public that reads this.

I think Bob has done a pretty good job in probing and trying to bring out all the questions from the presenters, but we want a round of hearings next time, I would hope, that allow people to come to grips with some of these questions and say, “Yes, we were wrong in our initial expression of doing something. We were championing our cause”—that's fine; I don't have a problem with that—“but on second, third and fifth thoughts, here are the consequences.” That's what this should be, that the questions have specific, deliberate purposes, and that's what I think Jerry is trying to pose. Maybe the misnomer of a trial balloon is not right, but he wants to have those things considered and they weren't maybe brought out to his satisfaction in the initial hearings, which is what you'd get because they were championing their particular cause.

The Chair: Further discussion? OK. We'll see what our writers can do, possibly some next steps and an executive summary at the beginning. A lot of what I think we're talking about is for down the road, but nevertheless, it's good discussion. What we do need is to grab the reader's attention, particularly in the executive summary.

The only other item is the additional invited witnesses and how we handle the four days of hearings in late

November and December. Our clerk has put before us a grouping of some help: ministries, Ontario government, building industry, umbrella groups, the MUSH sector, then after that it's quite odds and ends. I'm just wondering if this is going to be a tough one to wrestle with as a full committee. Would you like the subcommittee to have a look at this list and report back at the next meeting? Would that be helpful?

Mr Hastings: I have a couple of suggestions that we've missed, probably, from the umbrella groups. One of them is the Canadian Bankers Association, Ontario branch. They're not listed. That's probably under investment. Secondly, the Canadian Bar Association, Ontario branch; I believe they have a group dealing with energy law, so I think we should probably signal to them that we'd like to hear from them in terms of some issues, access to capital etc.

The Chair: I think the concentration we talked about was this umbrella group and some of the MUSH sector and the ministries. Maybe what we should do is just ask the subcommittee to sit down and try to package these so we can have either 20 minutes or a half hour each for those four days and see if we can get it into some sort of grouping so we have a thought for the day or a theme for the day.

Mr Hastings: Probably some of the questions posed by research would elicit groups we may not have thought about, that aren't listed on this next list here.

The Chair: I think we do need to zoom, zero in on it so we give adequate warning to the various groups that will be presenting. Is everybody comfortable with just having the subcommittee try to sort this out? I think it's going to be difficult to come up with four or six presenters per day.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Mr Chairman, I have a suggestion: if the larger committee has strong feelings about having certain of these groups, to relay it to their representative on the subcommittee.

The Chair: Please.

Is there anything we've missed this morning that we should have been covering that I haven't identified at this point in time?

Mrs Bountrogianni: No. I think we've covered everything and much more.

The Chair: More than I had originally planned.

Dr Gardner: Speaking of how much you've covered, what I'd like to propose is that we get the revised interim report, taking into account all the discussion we've had today, to you Monday morning. We had planned, actually, to have it for you before the weekend, then you've got it over the weekend, but you've had lots of great ideas that we want to incorporate in it at this stage. So we'll do that over the weekend, and we can get it to you Monday morning. Now, I know that's a little tight on your schedule to read it, but I think we'd be better to spend that time at this stage; then we'd get you a pretty complete thing to be looking at to wrap up on Wednesday.

The Chair: I fully agree with your comment. Some of the problem is to get it to the offices. PAs, being away

from the immediate precinct, sometimes don't get it until Tuesday or Wednesday. Could we make some arrangement whereby it's hand-delivered or there's a spot for them to pick it up?

Clerk of the Committee: They're all hand-delivered. When the report comes in, the messengers are called, and they actually walk over.

The Chair: OK, so there's no excuse. You'll have it Monday morning in your office. Please look for it. I know some things get in my file and I don't see them for a couple of days, so please look for it Monday morning and we'll go from there. Maybe what I could request is that the subcommittee meet either right after this meeting

or after the next meeting to look at this additional list of invited witnesses. Is there a preference when you'd like to do that?

Mr Ouellette: After next week.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Then it's Marilyn's job.

The Chair: And Jerry won't have to be subbed on at that time. OK, so plan, even if we don't adjourn until 12, that we do spend 10 or 15 minutes looking at what we're going to do for those last four days of hearings in November and December.

Hearing nothing more, I declare the committee adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1124.

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