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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 15 May 2002

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 15 mai 2002

**Select committee on
alternative fuel sources**

**Comité spécial des sources
de carburants de remplacement**

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 15 May 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Mercredi 15 mai 2002

The committee met at 1237 in room 228, following a closed session.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Mr Doug Galt): The first question I have is, shall the final report be adopted?

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): As amended.

The Chair: The amendments have already been happening and there's nothing that was there to start with. Of course, the subcommittee will be making the final changes and that will be tomorrow afternoon.

Mr Gilchrist: Do we need a motion to that effect?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): As amended and ultimately approved.

Mr Gilchrist: Yes. I would be happy to move that the subcommittee have the final authority tomorrow to amend any last-minute changes and, on behalf of the committee, approve the final draft of the report.

The Chair: Those in favour? Motion carried.

Shall the report be translated and printed? Agreed.

Shall I present the report to the House and move the adoption of its recommendations? Agreed.

Pursuant to standing order 32(d), shall the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to this report?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): What?

The Chair: I shall repeat it. Pursuant to standing order 32(d), shall the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to this report? Agreed.

I think we need a time frame.

Ms Churley: Do we have a deadline for this?

Mr Gilchrist: It's in the standing orders.

The Chair: OK. Just for the information of committee members, all presenters will automatically receive a hard copy of the report. Of course it will be on the Web site.

Have we agreed on a cover?

Mr Bradley: We like the one with the leaves on it.

Mr Gilchrist: We like photomontage, that being a bit more descriptive and evoking the range of technologies.

Ms Churley: I want to know who put the little picture of the smokestacks there, which was covered up.

Clerk of the Committee (Ms Tonia Grannum): That was Mr Gilchrist's suggestion, showing the progression.

Ms Churley: Oh, I get it. OK.

Clerk of the Committee: It doesn't really fit, so we're going to replace it.

The Chair: With a cornfield and with a solar panel.

Mr Bradley: Mr Parsons persuaded me that the one with the leaves on the front was the best, by far.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): As a maple syrup producer, I like that one. Actually, I think the other cover is more informative in the broad sense of the committee.

Mr Jerry Richmond: Let me just say that I'd like to thank everyone for the work over the last 10 months. We've certainly learned a lot. I thank the indulgence and co-operation of all the members. It's been a pleasurable experience. So thank you all.

Mr Gilchrist: Let me put on the record, I'm sure on behalf of all of my colleagues on both sides of the House, how impressed we've been with the work done by Jerry and Jennifer and everyone else in your department, and of course the work Tonia has done in terms of bringing us to the point we're at today with what will hopefully be groundbreaking recommendations, a world-class report and a bold challenge to all of our colleagues, to industry and to the general public on how we move from the status quo to the cleanest air and the most aggressive clean technologies agenda anywhere in the world.

I'm confident that we've done the horse-trading and the deliberating necessary to prepare such a report. Now it moves from our capable hands into those of the wider audience that will be receiving the report in a couple of weeks. I'm sure the all-party support the committee has received in this room bodes well for its adoption and translation into law. I think we can be very proud of the fact that while it won't have benefits in this election cycle or perhaps even the next one, 20 or 50 years from now the work that we've done in this committee will bear significant fruit here in the province and, hopefully, maybe to some extent shame other jurisdictions to follow our lead.

The Chair: Would you like to make a motion of congratulations to staff?

Mr Gilchrist: Absolutely. I think it would be quite appropriate to move that.

The Chair: Do we have a seconder over here?

Ms Churley: I second it.

The Chair: All in favour?

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I'd like to make it unanimous.

The Chair: Me too. I'd like to make some comments. Ms Churley?

Ms Churley: Yes. First of all, as the only representative from the New Democratic caucus in this committee, I want to thank the committee for its indulgence from time to time. It has been at times difficult to be here all of the time and to go on all of the trips that took place—I shouldn't use the word "trip," should I?—the explorations that the committee went on. I want it on the record that I regret that I wasn't able to accompany you on those trips, because I think they were important.

There was a news report that suggested that it might not be so. I certainly made comments that perhaps the Legislative Assembly committee travelling was not necessary, and I still believe that, but I made a point of clarifying to the reporter that I thought the work of this committee was very important and that generally the research travelling that happened was important work. I wanted that on the record.

Finally, I'd like to thank the committee for its indulgence in the areas particularly around coal-fired generation and energy from waste. I want it on the record that I have expressed concern and problems with those two areas in respect to this committee, and I want to thank all of the members of the committee for their indulgence and for working with me to accommodate those concerns and find wording that we can all live with.

Thanks to everybody. A very important committee and very important work. It's been a pleasure to serve on this committee.

Mr Bradley: The first comment I would make in my brief remarks would be my belief in the select committee process. I think it's far superior to a standing committee. It has a special focus. I have detected throughout this process a checking of the partisan hats at the door. We've had our fun in some of our exchanges, but by and large we've been able to leave our partisan hats outside of the committee door, whether it's when we're doing investigative work outside of the committee chamber here or in the committee itself. I think that's a great advantage in terms of policy recommendations—I can't say policy-making.

Second, I appreciate all members of the committee accommodating the angst of one another. I had many concerns about some of the initial recommendations, some initial commentary. That was overcome through compromise, through discussion and through the genius of the staff, who were able to translate into words on paper that which we were trying to suggest as members of the committee.

I think it's been a useful process. My hope would be that all governments who have the recommendations at hand will give them serious consideration and implement them. I say that because this is going to be over a number of years. Second—Doug, as Chair you'll appreciate this—people in other jurisdictions are going to benefit immensely from the work this committee has done. I think there will be requests from other provinces and other jurisdictions for this report and we have an opportunity to set a trend in many areas.

I was pleased to be able to be part of this committee. We all have a thousand and one commitments as MPPs to try to fulfill while we're doing this work, and it's through the auspices of the legislative research that we're able to bring it all together. Some day I would be prepared to recommend an increase in the budget of legislative research, but probably not for this committee today.

The Chair: Thanks very much to each of the parties making your comments. As Chair, a very special thank you to staff. This has been very technical, with areas difficult to understand for a lot of the committee members who have a real interest in it. For researchers heading off into an area that's not their area of specialty, they've got an understanding on it, pulled it together, packaged it for us, repackaged it and repackaged it. To the committee members, thank you for your co-operation. I'm thrilled that I didn't have to call a vote on any of the recommendations, that we were able to work out our differences and arrive at a consensus. I believe it's going to give an awful lot of power to the report, the fact that we have a unanimously agreed-to report. With the give and take in this room—we've heard all kinds of comments about what the report may or may not do. I have my fingers crossed and hope that it will do quite a bit for the environment in Ontario.

Thanks to all the committee members for your willingness to give and take. I know I was frustrated on a few occasions with attendance and people not being with us. All of you had your reasons at the time, but certainly the end result has been excellent. I'm thrilled with the fact that we have a unanimously agreed-to report that we arrived at a consensus on.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): May I briefly add my commentary as well, Mr Chairman? I'd like to congratulate you and the staff for the excellent job that has been conducted here. I'd second Mr Bradley's remarks about the usefulness and applicability of the select committee arrangement for special subjects. I believe this particular subject matter of alternative fuels will be a legislative defining moment in the life of this government and successive governments. It's going to have a tremendous impact on the future lives of people in Ontario. I'm very happy to have been a small part of producing such a useful and learning exercise.

The Chair: Thanks very much. As I call for adjournment, just a comment that this select committee, by the way, as some members may not be aware, has been a long-time dream of Mr Gilchrist. He has lobbied a long time, a considerable time, I believe, to have such a committee look at alternate fuels. To Mr Gilchrist, thank you for your concerns in this area. I guess as a committee member I'd centre out the efforts you've put in, and the recommendations you've brought forward have been exemplary. Thank you for your genuine concern about our environment and about our fuels.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: With that, committee adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1248.

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON ALTERNATIVE FUEL SOURCES

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Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland PC)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente

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Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain L)

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines L)

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth ND)

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland PC)

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East / -Est PC)

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North / -Nord PC)

Mr John O'Toole (Durham PC)

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa PC)

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings L)

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Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough PC)

Clerk / Greffière

Ms Tonia Grannum

Staff / Personnel

Mr Jerry Richmond and Ms Jennifer McKay,
research officers, Research and Information Services