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Wednesday 10 December 2003

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Mercredi 10 décembre 2003

**Standing committee on
finance and economic affairs**

Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003

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

Loi de 2003 sur la gestion
responsable des finances

Chair: Pat Hoy
Clerk: Katch Koch

Président : Pat Hoy
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

Wednesday 10 December 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Mercredi 10 décembre 2003

The committee met at 1009 in room 151.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LA GESTION
RESPONSABLE DES FINANCES

Consideration of Bill 2, An Act respecting fiscal responsibility / Projet de loi 2, Loi concernant la gestion responsable des finances.

The Chair (Mr Pat Hoy): The standing committee on finance and economic affairs will come to order. Good morning, committee members. We're here today for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 2, An Act respecting fiscal responsibility.

Section 1: Are there any comments, questions or amendments to section 1?

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): With respect to Bill 2, An Act respecting fiscal responsibility, which has also been described as the largest tax hike day in the history of Ontario bill—

Interjection: The mother—

Mr Barrett: The mother bill?

Interjection: —of all tax hikes.

Mr Barrett: Over the years, with the eight years of economic growth that we've seen in Ontario, the evidence is clear that cutting taxes creates a stronger economy and that tax cuts do create jobs. The formula—it's pretty simple stuff, really—is very basic: Cutting taxes gives people and businesses, the corporations, the small businesses where people are working, more dollars to spend in their home communities, in their hometown, more dollars to invest. It increases their bottom line, and it has proven to lure more business to Ontario, creating jobs and strengthening the economy.

In contrast, and as we see in Bill 2 and in several sections of this legislation, tax increases, on the other hand, take money out of people's pockets. That's very clear. It leaves them less money to spend. It decreases the bottom line for business, resulting in fewer jobs and, hence, a weakening of the economy. It is a cycle, and it's a cycle that this government seems keen on forcing on the province of Ontario once again as we see this government continue down the trail of broken promises.

As results bear out, since the previous government, the PC government, started implementing the tax cuts that we see eliminated today in these deliberations, government revenues increased by over \$16 billion a year. The

previous government, the PC government, understood that a strong economy is the foundation of a strong Ontario. Again, all the services that we cherish most, those services in the health care field, the education field, safe communities, the preservation and protection of our natural environment, are all built on the resources of economic strength. For some reason, that clear reality seems lost in the deliberations here today with respect to Bill 2 and the tax grab that we have before us.

We do have a number of amendments. We're debating a bill that is reversing direction of tax policy, the tax policy that has seen the recent, unprecedented growth in the province's economy. We're here debating a bill night after night—I personally saw the television commercials during the election with Mr McGuinty saying over and over again, "I will not cut your taxes, but I will not raise them either."

Apart from several amendments we are putting forward with respect to the reversal of the tax reduction schedule, I know there's another very important amendment with respect to the retroactivity in the equity in education tax rebate, and we will also be focusing on that today as well.

The Chair: Are there any other comments or questions?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): This is in regard to this first amendment, right?

The Chair: No, to section 1; there's no amendment.

Mr Colle: We're unequivocal in our commitment to reversing the reckless Tory tax cuts, given the fact that the government previous to us has left such a catastrophic situation in our health care system, our education system. Now we find out that the hydroelectricity infrastructure is in an incredible mess and reconfirms the fact that we can't afford to give away tax cuts, especially to corporations, and we're following through with our commitment.

The Chair: Any further comments? Seeing none, shall section 1 carry?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Recorded vote.

The Chair: Mr O'Toole has asked for a recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Prue, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole.

The Chair: Section 1 is carried.

We move to section 2. Any comments, questions or amendments to section 2?

Mr O'Toole: We have to be on the record on every single clause. As Mr Barrett has indicated, we want to be very clear that this bill is an attempt at an omnibus tax increase in a number of ways. I am very concerned, as was expressed by all presenters, in every presentation in this sham of a public hearing on this bill that has been time-allocated. It's stifling the will of the people we spoke to yesterday. Many of them addressed—I think we would have to look at the presentations from a number of very reputable people yesterday who indicated—Mr Mintz is just one of many who has made it very clear that this is a regime of tax increases.

We'll be asking for recorded votes on every section. As you know, Mr Chair, we have a number of amendments, which will precipitate some debate, hopefully, from all three parties, to have a real context of open dialogue on an important sign or signal to the taxpayers of Ontario, from individuals to small business—that's less than five employees, as we heard from Judith Andrew of the CFIB—right through to larger industries that really were only represented to the extent that they had resigned themselves if there was a new government, and the consequences we'll be seeing in their tax bills.

In that respect, this is another clause that really—it's a 14% multiplier of the ratio of the number of days of taxation yearly. It's right back to 2003. It's unfortunate.

The Chair: Any other comments?

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): I just want to ensure that we have it on the record that the CFIB were here yesterday and were very supportive of our moves here.

The Chair: Any other comments? Seeing none, shall section 2 carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

The Chair: A recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Prue, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole.

The Chair: Section 2 is carried.

Section 3, any comments, questions or amendments?

Mr O'Toole: I hope everyone has received the package of amendments, specifically starting with amendment number 1 on section 3. I will read it into the record.

I move that clause 41(1.1)(g) of the Corporations Tax Act, as set out in subsection 3(1) of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

“(g) 6 per cent, in respect of a taxation year that ends after December 31, 2003, and before January 1, 2005;

“(h) 5.5 per cent, in respect of a taxation year that ends after December 31, 2004, and before January 1, 2006; and

“(h.1) 4 per cent, in respect of a taxation year that ends after December 31, 2005.”

1020

This just tries to replace this amendment, which is taking taxes from 4%, which was in our budget, to 6%. That's just to put on the record, for those members opposite who realize, this is a small business tax increase basically from what was scheduled as 4%, now to 6%. As long as you understand—you may not have read this bill, because if you read the bill, you'd have to have all the previous legislation it's amending. Until you've done that, you really haven't done your homework. You've been briefed. I understand Mr Colle might have read it or been briefed on it.

But we're upset—it would be on the record by Mr Wilkinson that this was approved by the CFIB, that they were somehow supportive of this. I'd like to go on the record that if small business was really notified of what you're doing here, they would have been completely upset. In fact, they just feel powerless, such an overwhelming majority, that we have to voice the concerns of small business. We heard very clearly that 80% of all the new jobs are basically small business. These are the people who are being hit with property tax increases, they're being hit with corporate tax increases, and I'm afraid in the future they're probably going to harmonize the PST-GST, which is a further tax increase on items that aren't taxed today.

But that's your regime: tax and spend. We understand that. So I move that amendment.

The Chair: Any other comment?

Mr Wilkinson: I am a small business man, and it is the small business sector that creates most of the jobs. Small business people know that you do not live beyond your means and you do not run up your credit card with borrowed money to try to paper over a problem that you have, a systemic and structural deficit in your business. You don't sell off the silverware and you don't sell off your revenue streams. Therefore, this bill needs to be supported because we have to get our fiscal house in order in this province. We are running a fiscal, structural deficit, we are running a public safety deficit, and we're running a public infrastructure deficit. We represent the public.

I would urge my fellow members that we do not look at this amendment favourably, but instead do what we were elected to do, which is to restore fiscal probity to this province.

The Chair: Any other comment?

Mr David Oraziotti (Sault Ste Marie): I find it odd that the member opposite would suggest that the members here are not aware of exactly what we're doing. We're very clear on what we're doing. We committed to the people of Ontario to do this during the campaign.

These were scheduled tax cuts that were supposed to come into effect. They are not coming into effect because the people of Ontario have chosen better health care, better education in this province and a stable economy. That's what we're going to give them when we pass this.

The Chair: Any other comment? Seeing none, shall the motion carry?

Mr O'Toole: You've got to vote on the amendment and then we vote on the motion.

The Chair: Shall the amendment carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Barrett, O'Toole.

Nays

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

The Chair: The amendment is defeated.

Shall section 3 carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole.

The Chair: Section 3 has been carried.

Section 4: Any comments, questions or amendments?

Mr Barrett has an amendment.

Mr Barrett: I'll read the amendment into the record.

I move that clause 41.1(3)(f) of the Corporations Tax Act, as set out in subsection 4(3) of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

“(f) 4.667 per cent multiplied by the ratio of the number of days in the taxation year that are after December 31, 2002 and before January 1, 2004 to the total number of days in the taxation year;

“(g) 4 per cent multiplied by the ratio of the number of days in the taxation year that are after December 31, 2003 and before January 1, 2005 to the total number of days in the taxation year;

“(h) 3.667 per cent multiplied by the ratio of the number of days in the taxation year that are after December 31, 2004 and before January 1, 2006 to the total number of days in the taxation year; and

“(h.1) 2.667 per cent multiplied by the ratio of the number of days in the taxation year that are after December 31, 2005 to the total number of days in the taxation year.”

Again, there was mention made of the presentation by the CFIB, the presentation by Ms Andrew. This legis-

lation is cause for concern for the future and the continued growth of small business. We are a party that likes to see small business grow into large business. We're concerned that with legislation like this we're going to see large business develop into small business. That's not the direction we want to see in the province of Ontario.

There's no secret, and this was said in previous deliberations, that small business is the backbone of our economy, and the lion's share of new jobs created in the province of Ontario comes from small, independent business people. We're concerned that Bill 2, in a sense, is imposing higher tax rates on small business. It's imposing higher tax rates on the customers of these small businesses and on consumers in general in the province of Ontario. We've seen a trend develop already, and in fact job figures for the month of November indicated that 6,600 jobs left the province of Ontario in contrast to a job creation across the Dominion of Canada of 60,000.

The Chair: Any further comment?

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I'm not so sure that it's a comment; perhaps a question of the mover or perhaps someone—the legislative researcher is not here, but what is the net effect of this motion? How much is this going to cost the treasury? I need to know, before I can support this, what the net effect is. I mean, all the numbers are reduced, so how much is this in dollars?

Mr Barrett: I think a general answer: Maybe there is legislative research. This is not seen as a cost to the treasury. Tax reductions like this create jobs.

Mr Prue: I don't buy into that. How much is the cost to the treasurer?

Mr Barrett: Do you want an answer from someone else?

Mr Prue: No, I want to know the cost in dollars to the treasury.

Mr Barrett: Over what time period?

Mr Prue: This year.

The Chair: I would ask Mr Colle if there is anyone from the ministry here who could answer.

Mr Colle: First of all, I would ask the mover of the motion if they have information. Have they costed it out? How much is it?

Mr O'Toole: We would say, and again, this is very preliminary, that the—I have some numbers here. I just want to find out that our charts are somewhat accurate.

We believe that the total impact of this bill on corporate income tax through 2004 is \$2 billion. It's actually an increase.

Mr Prue: We're voting on this subsection. So I want to know what this actual subsection is going to cost the treasury.

Mr O'Toole: If I may, if you read the section in which the amendment has been moved, we're really saying that we had initially scheduled a small business tax rate of 2.667%, multiplied by a ratio of the number of days of the tax year, so it's a fairly complicated thing of arriving at these number of tax days.

1030

What you're proposing is a tax of 4.667%. All we're doing with this amendment, really, is mending your

schedule of moving it to 4.667%. Our position was 2.667%. It's an increase in tax. If you want to translate that into a loss to the treasurer of Ontario, we have always made the argument that small business creates jobs. If you leave them with the money, they expand their business and create more employment. It is yet to be seen if there is a relationship between tax policy and economic growth. Ultimately, it's a larger debate. I'm sure ministry officials could probably come up with some number similar to the number they used in the equity in education tax credit. We heard great disparity in the cost, from \$30 million to the treasury number of \$165 million. You're voting, clearly, from the questions or issues that have been raised by Mr Prue, and not a single question by the Liberals, who are just voting like a group of sheep.

Ms Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): Bah.

Mr O'Toole: Bah, exactly. I'd expect this would probably carry. Mr Barrett and I are just the lone wolves here amongst a pack of sheep.

Mr Colle: Wolves is right.

Mr O'Toole: Well, we're not wolves. We're just keeping an eye on the economy.

Interjections.

Mr O'Toole: Wolves in sheep's clothing.

Ms Marsales: Mr Chairman, the sound—I am particularly sensitive to this high pitch and its giving me a headache.

Interjection.

Mr Prue: My friends here from the Conservative Party may not be able to answer it. It is very complex. I want to make sure that I am voting correctly on these issues. To my mind, I need to know the dollar cost. I need to know what these are going to cost or save in each of the motions before I can properly affix my vote.

The Chair: What I could do is ask Mr Colle if he can have someone—

Mr Colle: If I could just answer Mr Prue, in fact, they are claiming that this isn't even a cost on the treasury. At this point in time, given the time constraints, if we were to go through their motions and, dollar for dollar, try to do that in a comprehensive way, I think it would be very, very difficult. As you know, we've said from the onset that all these are cost impacts, because a tax cut is a drain on the treasury. A cumulative effect is the billions of dollars we're hoping to save. My advice is that they don't have it costed out, and for us to try to do this at this time would be very difficult to tell you that this is a fixed amount of dollars, given what it takes to break this down in dollar amounts.

Mr Prue: But is there nobody on staff who could globalize and say this is \$10 million, \$20 million or in the range of \$50 million? That's all I'm looking for.

Mr Colle: I think at this juncture, that's difficult to do.

Mr Prue: All right. Thank you.

Mr O'Toole: Just one more small piece of information that may be relevant. We won't have to repeat this on every amendment, but I think in the earlier discussions on the nature of this [*inaudible*]. All I can say for the record, and the record does speak for itself, is

that we had 225 reductions in tax on a variety of personal, small business, corporate and business, as well as institutional tax credits. That resulted in an increase of about \$16 billion in revenue. If you took where we started in 1995, much worse conditions than what you're in, we were in an \$11.5-billion deficit. It was different. You have a deficit of some sort. Some of it is just a human deficit, looking at the caucus, but that human deficit—

Interjection.

Mr O'Toole: I didn't think you'd notice that. The actual budget increase from about \$55 billion to \$70 billion—

Mr Colle: On a point of order, Speaker: This attack on people's personality, name-calling—it's been done twice already this morning. I would ask that you ask the member to stick to the issues before us and stop the name-calling.

Mr O'Toole: It wasn't name-calling. [*Inaudible*] not looking forward to full employment. If there was any offence, I withdraw it completely. That was not the intent. It was taken that way, and I guess you feel sensitive about it, but it wasn't intended that way.

We felt that the economy grew from around \$55 billion to \$70 billion. We increased \$10 billion in health care. I want health care, as each of you do, but if you don't have a strong economy—this is the fundamental debate today—you don't have the quality of life. You have to have the revenue to pay for the quality of life. If you need any proof, you have to look at East Germany or some other countries that are struggling with no monetary system, no judicial system, they have no economy and they have no confidence in investment. Even the retroactivity measures in this bill are very poor signals to the investment climate. I guess we could go on, but I just think the tone we're setting here today is respectful, but it's also substantive change for the people of Ontario. It's tax-and-spend time, people.

The Chair: Any other comments? Seeing none, shall the amendment carry?

Mr Barrett: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Barrett, O'Toole.

Nays

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

The Chair: The amendment is defeated. Shall section 4 carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole.

The Chair: Section 4 has carried.

Section 5: Are there any comments, questions or amendments?

Mr O'Toole: I would like to bundle all of the sections we've dealt with, sections 4 through 8, together and save some time, unless there's some debate on those sections. We have an amendment in section 9, so I'd be prepared to bundle them.

Mr Colle: That's fine.

Mr Wilkinson: We just dealt with section 4.

Mr O'Toole: I mean section 5; you're right.

The Chair: So just to be clear, you mean section 5 through section 8, inclusive.

Mr O'Toole: Right.

The Chair: Shall section 5 through section 8, inclusive, carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole.

The Chair: Section 5 through section 8, inclusive, have carried.

Section 9: Are there any comments, questions or amendments?

Mr O'Toole: We have an amendment to section 9(1) as follows:

Subsection 9(1) of the bill, paragraph 10 of subsection 3(1) of the Income tax Act:

I move that paragraph 10 of subsection 3(1) of the Income Tax Act, as set out in subsection 9(1) of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"10. The additional tax for each of the 2002 and 2003 taxation years is the aggregate of,

"i. 20% of the amount, if any, by which the gross tax amount of the individual for the taxation year exceeds \$3,685, and

"ii. 36% of the amount, if any, by which the gross tax amount of the individual for the taxation year exceeds \$4,648."

1040

If I may, Mr Chair, with a brief explanation, what this does is change the personal income tax surcharge. What you're actually doing—we had initially tried to move the surcharge, which is the tax on personal income, to a threshold of \$75,000 and progress it to \$80,000. That's the first level of taxable income.

Perhaps I'm speaking too loudly. Maybe I'm speaking too much, but that's another issue.

Our thinking is that in today's world, with two people working—we're talking about income surtax, right? What you're doing actually is moving it back to \$55,000, where the surtax will click in earlier than we had proposed. This was passed in our budget bill. It's difficult for the average citizen to fathom these very subtle, some might say mean-spirited—retroactively in almost all cases you're going back and undoing what we felt, from listening to the people of Ontario, with the broadest consultations in pre-budget hearing history in this province—I was PA to finance, so I have some clue of how thorough those consultations were. I don't believe the average taxpayer understands what you're doing. In fact, I'm convinced, just by the somewhat vacant stares, that some here don't get it either.

I'm concerned, because what we're saying is that if we allow middle-income earners to have more of their money, they're going to spend it to help their children and their families, their communities and their small businesses. Now you're going to take it and exactly what you're going to do with it, I'm not sure. Anyway, that's what this amendment proposes to do. Vote on it at your peril, because we want a recorded vote on the amendment.

The Chair: Any other comments?

A recorded vote.

Ayes

Barrett, O'Toole.

Nays

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

The Chair: The amendment is lost.

Are there any other amendments?

Mr Barrett: There is a second amendment to this section, subsection 9(2) of the bill, paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 of subsection 3(1) of the Income Tax Act.

I move that paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 of subsection 3(1) of the Income Tax Act, as set out in subsection 9(2) of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"11. The additional tax for the 2004 and each subsequent taxation year is 56% of the amount, if any, by which the gross tax amount of the individual for the taxation year exceeds \$4,648."

Mr O'Toole: On this one, it's important to realize what you're actually doing.

At the threshold of income that we said you're lowering, the taxable income surcharge, where the surtax actually applies, if you look at it, what this is actually doing is, beginning in the additional tax for 2004, moving it from 36% to 56%. How many people throughout the province of Ontario are really going to get this? It is a tax increase and you are voting for a significant tax increase on those middle-class, hard-working families. I believe the results over the next three or four years—I know this

bill is to get all the tax revenue you can in your first year. But going forward, you're going to have gobs of cash to just flush into the system, and I hope there's more accountability and transparency. Those are the terms you use all the time.

So I hope you'll support this one section. We're not going to go forward with even more tax increases. I'm optimistic at this point; I see a few people starting to smile, but we're doing the best we can.

Mr Prue: I have a question. How many people does this affect? You were the PA. I hope you can answer this. This is what you had planned to do the last time. This was what was in your budget. How many people would this remove from the tax roll? How many individuals does this involve?

Mr O'Toole: I would not presume to know. I would only speculate that each of us makes around \$80,000, or something like that, except the government members. They make \$90,000-something. That's fair. I understand that. I had a decrease in my pay of about \$800 a month, which is fine. It's not fine—but what it does is, they are not exempt from the tax roll, Mr Prue.

What we are actually going to be moving later on—we really had a strategy of saying that anyone under a certain threshold—we thought it was around \$18,000 of taxable income per year. We were going to remove them completely from the tax roll. That's our goal: For hard-working people who are just entering the workforce or whatever, the first \$18,000 will be tax-free. What you're actually doing here is getting more money from the middle-income, the people between \$30,000 and basically \$75,000. Our threshold was going to move to \$80,000. They are not exempt. They still pay tax at the basic tax rate, which I think is about 8% or 9%, provincial tax. They still pay federal tax. In fact, there are more people on the federal tax rolls than there are on the provincial tax rolls. They get you right down to about \$15,000, I think. But if there are ministry experts here who know these numbers—they get paid full-time to do this all the time, for life. I don't. I just do my own income tax. I like numbers. I'm so disappointed here. It's frightening for my five children. Three of them work here in Toronto, one for the city of Toronto; they're not going to be able to afford a rent increase.

Interjections.

Interjection: You shouldn't have done that, John.

Mr O'Toole: Rents are actually decreasing, if you're reading the papers. The vacancy rate is actually increasing; rents are going down. I'm saying the other costs of living, to support the Raptors or whatever—thanks.

The Chair: Any other comments? Seeing none, shall the amendment carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Barrett, O'Toole.

Nays

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

The Chair: The amendment is lost.
Shall section 9 carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

The Chair: Shall section 9 carry?

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole.

The Chair: Section 9 is carried.

Section 10: Are there any comments or amendments?

Mr Barrett: We have two amendments with respect to subsection 10(1).

I move that clause (c) of the definition of "lowest tax rate" in subsection 4(1) of the Income Tax Act, as set out in subsection 10(1) of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"(c) 6.05% for each of the 2002 and 2003 taxation years, and

"(d) 5.65% for the 2004 and each subsequent taxation year."

The Chair: Are there any comments?

Mr O'Toole: Yes. Just a quick comment again. It's actually a bit micro-level stuff, but what it's really doing is—we're trying to reinstate—you're moving it to 6.05% for the 2002-03 tax year; we're trying to move it back to the 5.65%. Most importantly here, this income level of taxation is for the low-income bracket. There are three or four different bracket groups where different tax rates click in. This really affects those people earning less than \$33,000.

In fairness, Mr Prue, I understand your argument, and I in many respects support the integrity you bring to the table. This is a case where you could send a signal that for the low-income—and don't take my word for it. There are experts sitting here. These are the very lowest, hardest-working people trying to make our lives better. I would encourage you, if only for symbolic reasons, to look at that tax rate. I don't think there's a huge cost. I'll leave it at that. That's what it's doing. The \$33,000-and-under group; think about it. There isn't some corporate deal going on here.

1050

Mr Prue: Just so I can understand it, those are people who would be in the bottom quintile, probably, and this would further reduce their tax?

Mr O'Toole: Yes, reinstatement [*inaudible*] passed in the last budget, down to this rate. If you read clause (d)

there, it's 5.6% for 2004 and subsequent tax years. You're proposing 6.05%.

Mr Prue: And in your view [*inaudible*] the treasury—and by negligible, I mean less than \$50 million.

Mr O'Toole: I think it probably costs us more to collect it than we get. By the time they do all the analysis of tax filing and transfers, because it's all collected by the federal government, towers and towers of bureaucrats working behind computers that you pay to collect your tax—I don't get it, personally. Why don't they come up with some real policy that helps hard-working people under \$25,000? Take them off the tax roll, period. Then let's deal with the people who actually have a fair chance of survival in the economy—anyway.

The Chair: Any other comments? Seeing none, those in favour of the amendment?

Mr Barrett: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Barrett, O'Toole, Prue.

Nays

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Wilkinson.

The Chair: The amendment is lost.

Are there any other amendments?

Mr O'Toole: With your indulgence, this particular amendment is dealing with the middle-income bracket, which I am going to read now.

I move that clause (c) of the definition of "middle tax rate" in subsection 4(1) of the Income Tax Act, as set out in subsection 10(2) of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"(c) 9.15 per cent for each of the 2002 and 2003 taxation years, and

"(d) 8.85 per cent for the 2004 and each subsequent taxation year;"

That's the end of the amendment. A small explanation: This really affects the income group that I spoke of before, the next level, the next tranche from \$30,000 income to about \$60,000 income. It really moves the tax rate from 9.15% down to 8.85%. On the middle income, I would say the income is something less than \$1 billion. I don't know if there are tax experts here in the room. I see there are some ministry people here, if the Chair wanted to call them. It might be important.

I commend Mr Prue for supporting the low-income group. That's whom they really have the ear of and the voice for, and I suspect we all do. This group here, we're just marginally moving it from 9.15% down to 8.85%. The even broader question is, what is the revenue from 1% of provincial tax on personal income tax? Is that a question we could get answered from staff?

The Chair: I would ask Mr Colle if he has a comment to the question.

Mr Colle: Again, these amendments put forth by the opposition are amendments they've put together. I would

assume they would have had the cost impacts of these before they put them forward. I think the onus is on them to put that information forward.

Mr O'Toole: To Mr Colle, in a respectful manner, I honestly don't know. I used to know a number that at 1% of GDP represented about \$600 million in revenue. I'm not sure of the relationship of 1% of personal income tax on revenue. I think it's a useful number to know, going forward. Would you indulge me? Maybe there are staff here who—it's not meant in any negative terms. Do you mind? There are staff here.

Mr Colle: It's your amendment.

Mr O'Toole: I would ask that the staff—

Mr Colle: You should have that information. Obviously you thought it out.

Mr O'Toole: We're really reinstating. If I was to refer back to our original budget documents, and I have them here, we're reinstating the tax rates in our budget. That really is what this is about. We believe—

Mr Barrett: Very simply, we're not the government any more; you are. We're asking for some information on this scheduled reduction in income taxes that has been known for a number of months.

Mr O'Toole: I guess I could frame this as a different question. You have a bill here that's amending the existing tax rate from 8.85 to 9.15. Can you tell me, with the intent of the legislation, how much revenue it would raise for you?

Mr Colle: As we said at the onset, the financial situation of the province is in such a desperate state, which you left it in, that we cannot afford to proceed with your reckless tax cuts. We're not going to micromanage your former government's tax cuts. We're saying that we reject them all, because the cumulative effect is that they're going to destroy our ability to fix health care and education.

Mr Barrett: Do you have any numbers to back that up, or are you making decisions totally in a vacuum? You're making some very dramatic decisions with Bill 2.

Mr Colle: The dramatic decision is basically not to proceed with your reckless tax cuts. We cannot afford those tax cuts. We have huge deficit numbers to deal with that you left us—\$5.6 billion, not including the OPG deficit. Those are our numbers.

Mr Barrett: And what will the deficit be next year, on March 31, 2004?

Mr Colle: I don't think that's before us right now. We're dealing with this bill.

Mr Barrett: You raised the issue of the deficit as the justification for this legislation. If that issue is not before us now, I question why this legislation is being rammed through so rapidly.

Mr Colle: We are moving this legislation expeditiously because the financial situation of this province is in such dire straits, as you left it, that we have to move quickly if we are to repair the incredible damage you've done to our social infrastructure, our health care infrastructure, our energy infrastructure, our urban infrastructure.

We have a \$60-billion infrastructure deficit on the hard side alone that you left us with and that you did nothing with. We have an emergent situation here that we have to fix as quickly as possible in order to undo the damage you've inflicted on the people of this province. That's why we are not going ahead with these reckless tax cuts and these reckless amendments, which have the cumulative effect of increasing the deficit even more than we have today. We're not going to support that, and that's why we're against this amendment.

Mr Barrett: Very simply, Chair, we're just asking you to have staff from the Ministry of Finance come forward to put some numbers to these deficit and tax-increase discussions.

The Chair: As you would know, the Chair cannot compel them to bring information to the committee. You can ask for it.

Mr Barrett: I am asking, through the Chair—I always respectfully ask through the Chair—the Ministry of Finance staff to enlighten all present.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent that staff bring forward figures?

Mr Colle: No.

The Chair: I heard a no.

Mr Barrett: I wasn't aware you needed unanimous consent.

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

Mr O'Toole: As we move through a rather sophisticated bill, for new members—and I might include myself in that—it would be worth knowing the value of 1% of personal income tax in terms of revenue. I didn't realize we don't know it, and I think it's a good number for all of us to know. If you are saying, "Every time I do the 1% thing, what's the impact?"

1100

Now you can make the argument that we need more revenue. We heard that from Annie Kidder yesterday. She said there's not enough money in this tax bill to satisfy education. She said that on the record. I understand that, having chaired about four school board budgets. There's never going to be enough money, because all children are unique etc. What I want to know is, what is the value of 1% of personal income tax to the Treasury of Ontario? It's a simple question.

Mr Colle, I implore you to empower the staff to bring that forward for us as members who really don't bring anything more than our worldly experience to the table here.

Mr Wilkinson: The tax system is very complicated, and that question actually belies a certain ignorance of the tax system. We have a progressive system, so to ask, "What would 1% be?" would assume there is a flat tax in this province, which there is not. So I think the question itself is misguided.

I think we need to be very clear that these amendments just make sure we're not proceeding with tax cuts people have not yet received. The basis for being able to do that is because we received a very clear and very large mandate from the people of Ontario, and we would be

remiss in our duties if we did not do that, because the voters choose. Beyond that, all these proposals were sent to the chief election officer, so it's not like the good people of Ontario were not made aware through the appropriate mechanism that we were planning on doing this if duly elected, which we have been.

Mr Prue: There is much in what Mr Wilkinson has said that is correct, and I think I agree with the general direction. However, I do have to say that I find it a little bit troubling not to have some staff here, when members of this Legislature are handed amendments and have to vote on those amendments and are not totally aware of the consequences of the amendments.

I find myself in a very difficult position. I got them this morning. Even if I had got them yesterday or a week ago, I could not have done anything. As you know, I have no research staff. I cannot even ask anyone what this means, other than the staff in this building.

When I get this as I walk into this room at 10 o'clock and have to affix a vote to it, I have to tell you it is very difficult. I would appreciate very much now, and in every subsequent meeting, having someone here from staff to answer to the best of their ability. If they don't know, that's fine. I can understand if it's too complex and staff say it's too complex; I can live with that. But to just vote blindly on all these amendments, either for or against them, is not what I believe I or any of us were sent here to do. I will neither toe the line of the governing party, nor will I always behave in opposition. I try to do what I think is right, and not knowing will not allow that to happen.

So please, Mr Chair and Mr Parliamentary Assistant, if you can't do it today, do it for the next meeting, because I intend to raise this again and again. I have no other way of finding out what these bills and these amendments are, except for what I hear here. I have no staff, and you all know that. I have no staff. That's the decision of the Legislature and of the governing party. I need to know, or my alternative is to vote no to every single thing that comes forward, because how can I know what I'm voting for? I don't want to do that.

Mr Barrett: I recognize the issue of cost has been raised by Mr Prue and by the parliamentary assistant, and as amendments are proposed, they obviously do have an influence on the bill and on the whole system of taxation.

The question is out there. We do have ministry staff present, as I understand, and for us to continue this discussion in the context of cost, we also need to know how much this Bill 2 will cost taxpayers. It's a very brief question. If we could get a thumbnail sketch from staff—now I've chaired a standing committee for eight years, and I am not aware of the need to have all-party support to ask a staff person present a question.

The Chair: I would ask Mr Colle if he has a comment on the questions raised.

Mr Colle: Again, the movers of the amendments were the Conservative Party, who are basically moving amendments they had in their own tax bill that they voted on. Those cost figures, those numbers were available to

them when they made these amendments. They can bring forward those figures as much as they want, and they're more than free to do so. I'm sure you have those numbers available. You voted on these bills. At this point, as I said, we are not proceeding with them because we feel they're not fiscally prudent. So you have the information, you've done your own analysis, you've put forth a motion; give us your numbers and what you based your motions on.

Mr Barrett: I'm certainly not in the dire straits of Mr Prue, with respect to research staff, but quite clearly this bill was time-allocated. We know from the delegations yesterday that they had very, very short notice. They were very rushed and a number of them did not have the time to prepare. Again, I ask the question, what is the reason that the staff would not be able to give us a bit of an overview or a thumbnail sketch of the impact of this legislation and its cost to taxpayers? I'm not sure why I cannot ask staff to answer that question.

Mr Colle: I've answered that question.

Mr O'Toole: In a broad description, we are trying to set some ground rules. This is really the first formal committee, and in fairness, it is where members do bring good work to the process, and part of that is questioning amongst ourselves and your own caucus trying to find some kind of accommodation, however small. I can recall in government where we did adopt opposition amendments. We may have even recessed for a few minutes to sort of run a caucus on it, but we did.

This is a case where, in my view, the election was about increasing taxes. I understand that. People kind of went along with it, and good for you. But I don't think that in this bill people were given enough notice, nor do they know the implications on personal income tax, what these hikes are; you don't know, I don't know. We know in our budget—and I can only put to you that for the personal income tax surcharge our cost estimate was about \$100 million. We've already talked about the surtax. It's troubling that the government has tabled legislation without acknowledging the cost to taxpayers.

In the broadest sense, I'm disappointed, because you time-allocated this. There wasn't a thorough analysis, and there wasn't appropriate time or notice given, even to the presenters yesterday. You want to give the appearance of public hearings. We know clearly that Jack Mintz, a professor at the University of Toronto, a brilliant commentator on the economy both locally and internationally, did comment that he was rushed to adjust his schedule.

What we're saying here is, in fairness, the democratic process that's occurring here—and Mr Prue has made the clear appeal to all of us that you haven't given them party status, therefore you haven't given them any resources to analyze these complex pieces of omnibus tax bills—that's what I call it: omnibus 1.

I guess we're at a bit of a stalemate here, Mr Chair, unless you want to exercise some of your democratic rights to act impartially and to request that we be given some information on the implications of some of these,

what we consider in this whole bill. We do have some numbers at a macro level: It's a \$4.1-billion tax hike. I'm prepared to file that information with you. We've done analysis of the personal income tax and the corporate income tax. We see the corporate income tax as \$2 billion, and we could go on. It's a fair question and it's early in the debate. We have Mr Baird, who's eminently qualified to add to what's already been said.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): I just had a question. I had asked Mr Sorbara questions yesterday with respect to low-income earners and with respect to the tobacco tax. He promised that he would get back to us. I wonder if that information has been filed with you, Chair?

The Chair: No, it has not.

Mr Baird: Could I ask the parliamentary assistant? Mr Sorbara had promised to get us information with respect to the tobacco tax and with respect to low-income earners. He promised me and the committee that he would. Do you have that information?

1110

Mr Colle: I'm not aware of the request. Where did you make the request?

Mr Baird: Right here in committee, when he was here yesterday.

Mr Colle: We'll follow up on that. I think we have it.

Mr Baird: My question, just to refresh your memory, was that he said the rationale behind the increase in tobacco tax was to reduce consumption. I just wanted to know how much he had budgeted for in terms of—

Mr Colle: Chair, we're not on that section.

Mr Baird: I've got the floor. I'll yield the floor if you'd like to give the information.

Mr Colle: Let's deal with one clause at a time here and then let's—

Mr Baird: I have a question. We may not have debating time for the later clauses.

The Chair: We are on section 10.

Mr Baird: Could you table that information you have there?

Mr Colle: Yes, I have it here.

Mr Baird: Could you table it with the committee?

Mr Colle: Yes.

Mr Baird: Right now? Thank you.

The Chair: Further comment?

Mr Wilkinson: I find it interesting because there seems to be this question about what this is going to cost. What we are proposing in this bill is to tax people at exactly the same rate that the previous government taxed people at for this year. So it seems kind of odd.

Mr Baird: The education tax credit—

Mr Wilkinson: I thought I had the floor, Mr Baird.

I find it interesting because the opposition members are here and they're asking for all this information. My understanding is that they've never asked for any briefing on this bill, and this bill has been up for quite a few days, so it's not like we just introduced it this morning. Now they're asking us to cost their amendments in less than one hour. I really wonder whether this is obstructionist.

Mr Baird: Maybe we should just leave. You can do anything you want.

The Chair: Any other comment?

Mr Peterson: Hear, hear.

Mr Baird: Hear, hear?

The Chair: Any further comment? Seeing none, shall the amendment carry? All those in favour?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

The Chair: We are voting on the amendment to section 10.

Ayes

Barrett, O'Toole.

Nays

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Orazietti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

The Chair: The amendment is lost.

Shall section 10 carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Orazietti, Peterson, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole, Prue.

The Chair: Section 10 has carried.

We move to section 11. Are there any comments? Seeing none, shall section 11 carry? All those in favour?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Orazietti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole.

The Chair: Section 11 is carried.

Are there any amendments to section 12?

Mr O'Toole: I have an amendment to subsection 12(3) of the bill, subsection 8(15.5) of the Income Tax Act:

I move that subsection 12(3) of the bill be amended by striking out "January 1, 2003" in the third line and substituting "January 1, 2004."

Just to comment on that, this is really the clause that's affecting the education tax credit. I appeal to you on this one, single change, on which you heard from every presenter, from the B'Nai Brith, C.D. Howe, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Canadian

Jewish Congress, Children First: School Choice Trust, the Islamic Society of North America, the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco, the Ontario Association of Jewish Day Schools, and People for Education I think also supported this.

This addresses the retroactivity clause. Recognize that what you're doing is a very slippery slope of going down the road and saying, "OK, people made plans in their lives," and all of a sudden retroactively, which had passed, by the way, you're going back and clawing that. It actually was portrayed yesterday as being—well, they were less than complimentary about what they said. It was "mean-spirited," as I recall one of the presenters said. I'm not trying to be smart here.

Mr Colle, I implore you personally, as the leader on that side over there. This is the retroactivity clause. I think you'd be doing yourself a great justice to amend that section of the bill alone. We may even support you, because you were elected. We respect that. This retroactivity thing is a bad approach that you're starting. If you get away with it this once, what is next?

Tim, you of all people, with a financial background, should know that retroactivity in an investment climate is a very, very bad signal. It's not huge. It's more symbolic than of any consequence of this to the treasury of Ontario.

I urge you to support this bill and discuss it.

Mr Baird: I came in particularly to debate this amendment being presented by my colleague the member for Durham. We certainly had an election campaign, and this issue was a substantial source of discussion during that campaign. I disagree with the decision of the government to bring forward the legislation on this issue.

I take this issue very, very seriously. I look at the government members on the committee and just implore them to perhaps give some pause and reflect on, is it fair to retroactively raise someone's taxes? A lot of families have made some really big decisions, for them—working people, people with low and modest incomes.

I'll just give you a few examples, if I could. There's a Christian school in Metcalfe, Ontario, in my community. The parents actually go in on Saturday mornings. They have a duty roster and they clean the school themselves. They can't afford to have a janitor. The school has about 60 students and it's just not something that they can afford.

If you go into the staff room at that school: One of the teachers brought in the refrigerator when she got a new refrigerator. If you look at the repairs that are done on the school roof, you'll find two or three of the parents will do it themselves on a weekend. A lot of these families have done without a second car. They'll do without a family vacation to afford to send their children to a religious school.

Mr O'Toole talked about the presenters yesterday from B'Nai Brith, the Canadian Jewish Congress and others who talked about the retroactivity of this being a real concern and a real hardship. Yes, definitely, people

heard that the official opposition of the day was against this bill and was likely, if they were elected, to retract it—fair points. Most of you I assume campaigned on that and think it's a fair and logical outcome of the election campaign, and I don't dispute that.

One of the things, if you've noticed, in the House—I don't mean this as any commentary with respect to the third party—we have really tried to do things differently in this House. I can recall long conversations with Mr Duncan, the government House leader, “Could we operate things differently?” when I was the House leader and he was the opposition House leader. I think we've really tried to do it. The programming motion that we had is really unprecedented in any Parliament in Canada and it demonstrates that we're really trying to be a more responsible opposition, to put aside some of the politics. I'm pleased with that. I think it reflects well. Someone whom I respect called it a very mature decision on both sides. Frankly, the government gave a lot. We got an opposition day. We got more time to debate bills that were important to our constituents. We got these committee hearings, which didn't often happen. I think last time, we probably each got the government and the opposition we deserved. We are trying to do things differently.

1120

This is a really great signal each of you can send that these committee hearings matter. It's a small change in the big picture of things. This is a pretty significant bill for a lot of families. This is an opportunity where each of you—Mr McGuinty said time and time again that he wanted to free up his caucus members to do things differently. In fact, I think the party discipline around here on all sides—there have actually been fewer interventions by opposition members against their own leader's position than there have been from government members. So it's not just the fact that government members always fall behind the cabinet; opposition members always fall behind the Leader of the Opposition. That's been my experience here for eight years, on both sides.

This is a powerful opportunity that I think each of you have, to say, “You know what? We went through these hearings. Yes, the government is going to get 99.9% of what it wants, but on this one thing...” We listened to the hearings, we listened to Bernie Farber from the Canadian Jewish Congress, we listened to Joseph Ben-Ami's presentation from the B'Nai Brith, where they expressed real, substantial concern over the retroactivity of this. I just implore members to think about supporting it. It is a bit of a push-back, but it's not that substantial an issue. Frankly, I think it will look good on the government. I think it will look good on this committee. I think it will look good on parliamentarians. We did the programming motion, where the opposition is really working constructively with the government. This would show that these hearings mean something; that it's not just a matter of going through the motions, listening to all the people and saying, “We're not going to change a thing.” I really want to implore each of you to think about supporting this motion.

Mr Colle, I know you have a substantial number of Jewish families in your community who are supportive of this change. I know your constituency perhaps better than other members. There may be a Christian school in Perth-Middlesex.

I'm going to commit that if this motion does pass, it will show that it's a big victory for Parliament, that we actually listened to a presentation that came before us here. This is important to these families. I don't have a personal interest in it. We all make at least \$85,000 a year, so 500, 1,000 or 2,000 bucks, depending on how many kids you have, ain't a lot of money, but, boy oh boy, when it's that last—once you've paid the rent, once you've paid your taxes, once you've bought clothes for the kids, once you've bought food and paid your utilities, you don't have a lot left if you're a young family.

I just really think this would a powerful message to the rest of the Parliament that these committees can really mean something. That will reflect well on all of us. It won't be, “Oh, we got them to back down.” I certainly will commit never to say that, but that it was a good day for this Legislature. We're going to have an opportunity with this motion, with this vote on this amendment brought forward by Mr O'Toole, to set a good start for this Parliament. I think we've done it in the House with that programming motion and attempted co-operation. We're working well with Mr Bisson and members of the government on the Board of Internal Economy, at least we're trying to, and that's setting a good stage. I think this would send a really powerful message to all of us, as members, that these committee hearings mean something. I implore you to give some thought to it and say, “You know what? We'll just give a little push on a little issue.”

You see this in the House of Commons quite often, where you actually have members of the government vote against legislation. I think of the endangered species act that was before Charles Caccia's committee, where a number of Liberal members actually voted against the whole bill. I'm not asking you to do that; I'm not expecting you to do that. I'm honest enough to tell you that I never did it. But here's a small area where I think there's a meaningful opportunity for us to say that these committee hearings, over the next four years, will mean something. I really ask all of you to think about supporting this resolution—you may not like the equity in education tax credit, but to say that we won't cancel the credit two weeks before the end of the year and go retroactive 11½ months.

I'm really excited about this. I feel important about it. We didn't have this scheduled. We talked about it in debate in the House, but the presentations from the Jewish community, the Muslim community and other parents' and Christian groups were powerful. You're going to get 99% of the bill. We've even allowed, as the official opposition, that, with no debate, you're going to have a vote on it, instead of having days and days of time allocations and bell-ringing. Could you give us this one half of 1%, not just for these families but for the sake of

the institution? I think we'll all look good, and I beg the consideration particularly of members of the government to support this resolution. It will look good on this institution and it will look good on you.

The Chair: Further comments?

Mr Prue: I have to tell you from the outset, and I think most of the members here will know, that I did not support and I will never support the equity in education act or anything like it that funds private schools. As a New Democrat, as a person from Regent Park, I can never support that kind of school. I think everyone deserves a decent and fair public education, and the money needs to flow to our public education system.

Having said that, I must admit I have some considerable difficulty with retroactivity in this bill. I have considerable difficulty with retroactivity in any government bill, in any law. The fact that it does not exist very often in our parliamentary democracy, either in Ontario or Canada, is with good reason. I can think of only a handful of laws in the last 20 years, either in Canada or in any of the provinces, that are retroactive in any of their provisions. That is because people need to understand the law on the day that they are making decisions and they need to understand the law so that they do not contravene the law. You cannot come by and say—as in the War Measures Act, it was against the law to be a member of the FLQ on the day the law went in, not retroactively, so people could have an opportunity to quit if something was suddenly seen to be against the law. This is not as dramatic as that, but that is a very good example.

This is a group of people who went out and made a decision and spent their money on something which I do not support. I think they would get better value in the public education system, and I'll put that right upfront, but they spent their money and they expected a return on it.

I have considerable difficulty in retroactivity. I would ask the members to continue what you're doing in terms of not funding private schools, I think that's a good decision, but that should be effective on October 23, or January 1, 2004. It should not be retroactive. I know you campaigned on doing away with the private school tax credit, but I didn't hear at any time during that debate that it was retroactive. I never heard Dalton McGuinty, I never heard any of you, I never heard my Liberal counterpart in Beaches-East York, once say that it would be retroactive to the beginning of the year. They all said they would do away with it, as I did. As I knocked door to door, I said that was one of the things I would do away with, and had we formed the government, I would have done so on October 23, either for that day or for January 1, 2004.

I am going to support this motion, not because I believe in equity in education but because I believe in fairness to people who made rational decisions.

Mr O'Toole: Both Mr Prue and Mr Baird—I could not add anything more substantive to what Mr Baird said. I just make one further concession. We have another amendment to section 13 which is far broader than this.

As a sign of acquiescence on our part, I'd be very happy to remove that amendment, which is really contradictory to our policy position on the equity in education.

I think Mr Baird said it all, and Mr Prue summed it up very nicely, saying this is about sending the right signal for tax fairness. I don't know what staffer put in the retroactivity clause but it sure wasn't any of the members of the Liberal caucus I've grown to know over the last eight or nine years. I know them to be honourable people. We may have differences, we're going to have differences, but that being said, it's up to you now, when the vote is called, to look at this one clause for this few-month period where for the first time in Ontario's history you're going to retroactively affect people's lives. That's purely a matter of fairness.

I commit to you that I would not acquiesce—I think it would show genuine leadership and compassion from the now Liberal government. If you fail—this is not a threat—I believe it will be a nemesis for you, however small. I'll leave it at that. It's not said as a threat; it's appealing to you to be, in the first instance, fair, and Mr Prue said it all; it's fair for people who may even have supported you. After all, you are government.

1130

The Chair: Further comments? Seeing none, shall the amendment carry?

Mr Barrett: Recorded vote.

The Chair: A recorded vote is requested.

Ayes

Barrett, O'Toole, Prue.

Nays

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Wilkinson.

The Chair: The amendment is lost.

Shall section 12 carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

The Chair: A recorded vote is requested.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole, Prue.

The Chair: Section 12 is carried.

We move to section 13. There is a motion before us on section 13. I would like to ask those who put forward this motion—this motion is related to the motion to amend subsection 12(3) of the bill. That motion was defeated. This motion is not needed. As we just—

Mr O'Toole: No, no. A clarification, through you, Mr Chair. My understanding is, we felt the amendment that was just defeated by the Liberal stonewalling would not

look at the retroactivity condition. What this actually does is look at the whole section of the equity in education tax credit. In fact, it strikes out that section completely. It's subsection 13(1), if you look at it, and that is repealing the original equity in education tax credit. I think it is in order.

The Chair: This amendment is not in order because you cannot strike out a section.

Mr O'Toole: Well, we will have to make a statement on the record here that the intent of this amendment—

The Chair: It would have—

Mr O'Toole: If I could, with your indulgence, the intent of this amendment was to cancel the government's intent to eliminate the education tax credit, and that's the record. You've ruled it out of order. I'll take the word of the clerk, because they are professional, objective people. Politically, I've done what I have to do, because I support parental choice in education. I guess there's still a motion on it, so we'll go on to section 14. They'll all go through now, Mike. You're going to get 100% of what you set out to do.

The Chair: We will now vote on the section. Shall section 13 carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Orazietti, Peterson, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole, Prue.

The Chair: The section is carried.

Section 14: Are there any questions, comments or amendments?

Seeing none, shall section 14 carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Orazietti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole.

The Chair: Section 14 is carried.

We're now on section 15. There is an amendment to section 15 that is similar to the amendment to section 13, whereby you're trying to remove a whole section of the bill. It is out of order.

Mr O'Toole: Out of respect for the intent of this motion, just to have it clearly on the record, I understand that this section of the bill eliminates any tax relief for seniors—persons on fixed incomes. It's a fault in the bill. There has to be some mechanism to allow seniors on fixed incomes—those on fixed incomes—to stay in their

own homes. With the ever-increasing pressure of municipal taxes, this was our attempt, and we're sticking by it. It's been ruled that this is not in order. We understand that; perhaps it's our drafting. But this bill has been crafted in such a way that it's almost antidemocratic. That's for the record. You have given the NDP absolutely no resources to analyze this and come up with creative ways to improve the bill.

The Chair: Mr O'Toole, speak to the amendment.

Mr O'Toole: I am. The section I'm talking about, section 15, was our attempt to provide some small, minor relief from tax for persons on fixed incomes, and you're voting against seniors—your grandparents. I feel badly for you. May you live to regret it.

Mr Barrett: Section 15 is very important. There are well over a million senior citizen households in the province.

Mr Colle: Are they challenging the Chair? I'm not sure what this discussion is about. Is it a challenge of the Chair? You've ruled, Mr Chair.

The Chair: This motion is out of order.

Shall section 15 carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Orazietti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole.

The Chair: Section 15 is carried.

Mr Wilkinson: It's interesting to see that there was nothing done for seniors for the last eight years while they were in government.

The Chair: We move to section 16. Are there any comments, questions or amendments on section 16?

Mr O'Toole: I have a question for clarification—we have no amendment on this. What this section does is increase the threshold for a loan, which is cash flow really. I'm wondering, what is it today and why are you increasing it? It's my understanding that it's about a \$2-billion increase in the loan limit. Is there anybody—the government should know that; the PA to finance or staff. It's a point of clarification on section 16, the Ontario Loan Act, which entitles the line of credit to spend more money.

Mr Wilkinson: The minister was here yesterday.

The Chair: Through the Chair, please. Is there a response?

Mr Colle: It's basically routine procedure. It's exactly what the previous government and governments before have done. In essence, it's to enable the government to do its day-to-day business. Again, it is totally normal to ensure that government can proceed with its day-to-day activities.

1140

The Chair: Any further comment?

I remind members that section 16 is set out in schedule A at the end of the bill. We need to carry schedule A prior to carrying section 16. I would ask for a motion to move schedule A.

Mr Wilkinson: So moved.

The Chair: Mr Wilkinson has moved schedule A. Shall schedule A carry?

Mr O'Toole: Are there questions or comments on that section? I have a question.

The Chair: Mr O'Toole.

Mr O'Toole: I remember that when we were the government, we passed rather routine business to meet payroll commitments etc. This was passed by cabinet and not brought to the House. This amount of borrowing, \$7.1 billion, is being done behind closed doors, shall I say. It is authorizing \$7.1 billion to flow into the consolidated revenue fund with no accountability, no transparency. I'm going to be voting against schedule A. Even though Mr Colle assures me it's routine, it's anything but routine. It's increasing the amount of the slush fund in the consolidated revenue fund. That, for the people of Ontario, is one more lack of control or public debate or consultation.

The Chair: Any other comment?

Seeing none, shall schedule A carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Kular, Marsales, Oraziotti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

Nays

Barrett, O'Toole.

The Chair: Schedule A is carried.

Now we can go back to section 16. Shall section 16 carry?

All those in favour? All those opposed? Carried.

Mr O'Toole: Mr Chair, with your indulgence, I'd like to acknowledge in the audience Mr John Sewell, who has served as a great advocate for the city of Toronto in the megacity debate and other debates, and formerly as mayor of Toronto. He sent a rather hastily drafted letter—I've just read it—dated December 10. Really, what he's saying is that it's short notice and a failure to have full public disclosure and discussion on Bill 2. I just wanted to acknowledge, as a courtesy—he's probably not agreed with one thing we did, but he's here, and I think it's important to take note of that for the record.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr O'Toole. Members can read the submission. I'm told that everyone should have a copy.

Mr Prue: Mr Chair, I know it's probably not going to pass, but I think, given the circumstances—this was the first meeting, there was 18 hours' notice—he has

something unique to offer and to say, which was not debated or brought up by any of the other deputants. I would seek the Chair's and the committee's indulgence and ask that he be allowed to speak, either now or this afternoon.

Mr O'Toole: I support that motion.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent for Mr Sewell to come forward and give his presentation? Agreed.

Mr John Sewell: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I have three brief points that I outlined in my letter respecting the bill. I very much appreciate having the chance to speak now.

One is the name of the bill: I really believe that it's time we got out of this, as I call it, odious practice that was established in the last seven or eight years of putting political tag names on bills. I think we should start to get back to generic, descriptive names on bills. I think it would be good for all of us to do that. This is the first important bill the government is bringing forward. I think they should get it right. I don't think we should wait until 10 or 15 bills down; let's do it now. Let's just get a nice, reasonable bland name on the bill.

The second thing is that I'm very disturbed that the practice, again, that Mr Harris and Mr Eves followed of jamming all sorts of unrelated issues into one piece of legislation has been done here. I understand the problem: People want to act quickly, these are minor issues, and on and on. It's an awful practice. Under the Conservatives, it led to a substantial limitation of debate by members of the Legislature and an inability to focus on what the issues really were. We're dealing with legislation. While I understand why the government wants to proceed—and some of these are considered technical, small, non-debatable issues, as it were—I really believe that it is a very bad practice to put unrelated issues in legislation. Until the last seven or eight years, it rarely happened.

The third point, of course, is the process. I think it's absolutely imperative that people are notified of legislation and are given an opportunity to speak to it. I believe input from the public will help the government. It won't hurt the government; it will help the government. I believe that people from the public are just as informed about issues—maybe more informed—than those who are elected. So the more opportunity you have to hear from people, I think, the better your legislation will be.

I, like many other people, see this as a new era, a very hopeful era. Good things can happen; I have no question about that. But we're going to have to have a good process to do it in. I think we should start out in a reasonable way. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Sewell.

Interjection.

The Chair: You would have to put that in the form of a question.

Mr O'Toole: I would just say that I first commend Mr Prue, who is arguing for the voice of democracy, as Mr Sewell is—

The Chair: Do you have a question?

Mr O'Toole: Yes, I do have a question. My sincere question here is, the idea of this being an omnibus bill—

The Chair: Mr O'Toole, the committee hasn't been empowered to ask the deputant any questions.

Mr O'Toole: They haven't?

The Chair: I need guidance.

Mr O'Toole: This is one more—it makes the point that Mr Sewell has taken the time to make. It's not a democratic process. It's business as usual.

The Chair: I am at the will of the committee, and we have not determined whether there would be time for questions.

Mr Colle: There is no objection on this side if he wants to ask a question pertaining to the presentation.

Interjections.

The Chair: One at a time, please. If you put up your hands, I will recognize you. Mr Prue.

Mr Prue: I would move that all parties in the committee be given a two-minute opportunity to ask questions of Mr Sewell.

Mr Colle: I said, no problem.

Mr Prue: No, that's what the Chair wanted. He wanted a formal motion, so now you have one.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent? Thank you.

Mr O'Toole, you have two minutes.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you, Mr Sewell. I will be as compact as possible. Let me just read for the record, in the form of a question:

“Sadly, Mr McGuinty's new government seems to be following that tradition in not allowing reasonable notice of legislation nor providing reasonable opportunities for the public to express their views on it. It would seem to me this idea should be at the top of the democratic agenda.”

1150

That's what they ran on, this “new hope, optimism, time for a change,” all this kind of blah-blah-blah stuff—high-level rhetoric, in my view. You believe that if they don't listen to you today—fortunately, it was Mr Prue that gave you the opportunity to speak. The government did not allow that. They just sort of acquiesced to our request. It was Mr Prue, I must say that.

Do you believe that, unless they listen to you, these omnibus bills and the closure and time allocation motions—do you see the very treacherous nature of this, though? The very treacherous nature is the retroactivity clause in here, slipping that in. There's a retroactivity clause and, furthermore, the one thing is, they have to have this bill before they recess next week. They have to have it because the bill would not come into effect until it's passed and if we can delay it until after January 1, it's a major defeat. So it's time-allocated; it's squeezed into a box. They never intended to consult. It's all been a sham, this whole last two days. You're included because they didn't give anybody time.

That's a question: Do you think this is real democracy by the McGuinty government or not?

Mr Sewell: I think that the kinds of practices your government established are odious and have caused very

bad precedents to build on. You've given an interesting speech, but I don't believe there are any real values behind it.

I happen to think that this is an opportunity to move ahead and I wanted to have the ability to point out that these are areas that they should be moving on quickly, and doing these things. But I don't happen to think that the democratic agenda they talked about is a blah-blah-blah agenda. I think it's a reasonable one and it should include these points. I'm delighted that I was able to speak to the committee today.

Mr Prue: Just a very short statement and then one small question. The committee does fairly good work—at least, I hope it's going to do some good work. But the problem we have in this particular committee, or at least the problem that I have seen today, is that there is very little by way of staff backup to explain what is contained within the bill or within the amendments. You are not speaking directly to what are the contents of the bill, although you are speaking to the process of the committee.

In that vein, do you foresee, if the committee is ever going to be relevant and listen to what the public has to say, any need to expand the amount of information made available to committee members and, in particular, to members such as myself who have no research or staff budget?

Mr Sewell: I do. I think the really key thing in this bill is the repeal of the Conservative measures that were brought forward. I don't think you need a lot of explanation about that. I think that's something the government has a clear mandate to implement. I'm not quarrelling with that part of it at all. I might not quarrel with any parts of it, but I agree that, on the other parts, I don't have very much information. I don't know what it's about.

I believe that if you start to separate out these bills so that each bill deals with a subject, then you can in fact start to get reasonable amounts of information on it. I understand the government's need to push ahead quickly on the repeal of the tax measures, and I don't quarrel with that. As I say, I believe there's a clear mandate to move on that quickly. If that was in a separate bill, I might even think you might not have to have hearings on that because there was an election on that very issue. So I'm not quarrelling with that.

For the other parts of it, though, I think you need separate bills so you can actually see and the public—I've argued very strongly in one of my recent books that one of the great traditions we've had in Ontario are white papers for legislation, so you actually get to see why the government is doing something. It doesn't have to take a lot of time. We've got the Internet now. You can do stuff really quickly. I believe that would be very helpful for everybody.

Mr Chairman, just a last point: I believe members of the public have terrific ideas. They've got to get before the committees. They will inform you, the people who are here. I think it's a tragedy that the Conservatives

decided they had all the answers and they didn't want to hear from the public. The more we can start to get back to saying, "How do we engage the public? How can we make sure that we're informed by them?" the better government we're going to have here in Ontario, regardless of party.

I want to make those points very strongly. This is the start. Hopefully, it's the start of new change, of looking at things in a different way. Let's get off of those, in my opinion, odious practices that the Conservatives introduced and that we've been stuck with. There's no need to go along with them. Let's start right off in a good, clean, fresh way.

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I appreciate that I could be heard.

Mr Colle: Mr Sewell, thank you for your presentation. I will ensure that your presentation and your sentiments go forward in a meaningful way, if not through the democratic renewal efforts that were underway through Caroline Di Cocco, the member from Sarnia-Lambton, and Mr Bryant, but I will certainly bring it up in our caucus also. I appreciate your coming forward.

Mr Sewell: Thank you very much.

The Chair: We will move to section 17. Are there any questions or comments or amendments to section 17?

Mr O'Toole: On this section here I just think there's a number of retail sales tax—I have put a question more than an amendment, if it's permissible.

In this section here I wasn't certain when I read the explanatory notes here at the beginning, and I'm still not, even though I do take time to read these. This retail sales tax applies to energy-efficient appliances. You've got an energy bill in another committee. This goes to substantiate what Mr Sewell was saying, although I disagree with many of his points of view.

There's a bill on electricity, the freezing of the rate, but really that policy is being fragmented here. What this does is extend the retail sales tax that we had put in place on energy-efficient appliances. I think it doesn't go far enough. That's the problem here. I'm not seeing a comprehensive policy development on energy conservation. So it's fragmentation here, and in another bill, where it should have been dealt with. These are the strategies to bring some control into consumers' hands.

I agree with this section. This is where it's really an anomaly for me. But it's such an omnibus bill that, like Mr Prue has said and Mr Sewell has said and many of the presenters have said, it's been hastily drafted. It's been an inconvenience to the people like Mr Sewell and others who wanted to comment substantively. Here's a section where I agree. In all these tax measures, I agree with this one. I believe that any energy-efficient appliance should be free from all tax. I think, if I look at some of your strategies going forward on solar power and wind power, tax policy should be handled in a separate bill dealing exclusively with the strategy to allow consumers to arm themselves to deal with the rising cost of electricity which you have in another bill.

I think this in itself is a very, very important debate. Energy conservation and tax measures that incent that, whether it's on the generation of electrons or the consumption of those electrons, is something that's really out of sync with this entire bill, which is really a tax hike. Every one of them is raising taxes. This one is actually reducing them and giving consumers power. So I'm perplexed.

We're almost going to recess, because it's 12 o'clock. Maybe we can vote on this section after, because I'd like to talk. I want to support this. I'm serious.

Mr Colle: Move section 17 right now.

Mr O'Toole: I'd like to consult so that I am not kicked out of my caucus. Do I have to cross the floor and become an independent?

The Chair: Shall section 17 carry? Carried.

Now the committee will recess until following routine proceedings.

The committee recessed from 1158 to 1549.

The Chair: Order. The standing committee on finance and economic affairs will come to order. Prior to the recess, we had just completed section 17. We're now going to discuss section 18.

Committee members, I'm ruling that amendments 10 and 11 are out of order. These motions have the effect of raising the taxes payable on a category of tobacco products. Therefore, they can be characterized as money bill motions. Pursuant to standing order 56, money bill motions must be proposed only by a minister of the crown.

Are there any comments on section 18?

Mr Prue: I fully realized at the time this was submitted that this may be problematic, but I did so in an effort of good faith, because I think the speaker who came here from OCAT, the Ontario coalition against tobacco, made a very good point that I think the government ought to look seriously at. I understand that only the minister can do that, but I offered this up in good faith.

I would hope that the parliamentary assistant might take this back to the minister for two reasons. The first reason is that it will increase the revenue, and we all need to do things that will increase revenue to government, especially in these trying times when the government finds itself so deeply mired in debt, not necessarily of your own making—I'll be very blunt about that.

The second reason is that it is problematic to me that tobacco is being sold in this way and that the number of people making roll-your-own cigarettes is increasing from 8% to 11% in a very short span of time. That is predominantly, I believe, among the young, who are finding that this is a way of somehow paying less money for the tobacco products and, in effect, getting hooked just as surely as if they had store-bought ones. It would go a long way, I think, to stopping this particular sale of tobacco, every bit as much, and possibly more, than the tax that is being imposed.

I was also mindful of what has happened in Alberta: A \$2.50-per-carton increase showed a 24% reduction in

tobacco usage. Surely that must be one of the goals of this government, and if it isn't, it should be.

Having said that, I am mindful. I will abide by the Chair's decision because it is one I unfortunately had anticipated. But I still think it would make good policy.

The Chair: Mr O'Toole, did you have a comment?

Mr O'Toole: Yes, I did. Thank you very much, Chair, for the opportunity to put on the record that with the time allocation motion that we're dealing with on Bill 2, there was, as has been said in many forums—publicly and even in the House today—a diminished amount of time in notice to various stakeholders with the ability to put their concerns on the record. This is one more case of an anti-democratic approach to passing omnibus bills, rolling up a huge number of tax increases—in this particular section.

I spoke today with members of the community that grows tobacco. They promised in pre-election that they were going to increase taxes, which this section does; it increases the tax on cigarettes. It's probably a good thing from the point of view of health. But you also promised an exit strategy for the tobacco growers in Ontario. I know you, Mr Hoy, have advocated long and hard for the agricultural community and, as Chair, I know you have a detached role here other than just procedures. They spoke to us today about their general sense of alarm at being silenced by the undemocratic nature of this bill. I want that to be on the record.

I know Mr Prue's motion wasn't necessarily something that I would have supported, but the debate was important, and it has been silenced by your inability to allow the voice of the people of Ontario, from different points of view, to be heard. That should be on the record, and it is now.

Mr Colle: I'll just comment. I'll assure Mr Prue that I will bring the information forward to the minister's attention, as expressed in these motions that he put forward, and we'll certainly get more background information from Mr Perley on the points that he made before this committee.

Mr Wilkinson: Just for the record, our ability to deal with this bill is settled under the program motion which was unanimously agreed to by the opposition.

The Chair: Any other comment?

Shall section 18 carry? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Now we move to section 19. In regard to section 19, motions number 12 and number 13 relate to motion 7, which was defeated this morning. Any questions or comments?

Mr O'Toole: Just briefly. You would know, Mr Chair, that we had moved paragraph 4 of subsection 19(2) to be struck out. More or less, we felt, as complementary amendments, as you said, they're at this point out of order. Once again, the time permitted and the very omnibus nature of this bill make it very difficult to untangle the numbers. Also, we've heard today in the discussions that even the finance PA was unable to respond to a simple question of what would 1% in personal

income tax result, in a general average—we didn't need an absolute number because none of your numbers are absolute, including the 5.6 number that you use all the time. I just think it's unfortunate that this can't be untangled, and it's procedural. I appreciate and will respect the ruling that you and the clerk have made.

The Chair: Any other comment? Seeing none, shall section 19 carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Marsales, McMeekin, Oraziotti, Peterson, Prue, Wilkinson.

Nays

O'Toole.

The Chair: Section 19 has carried.

Section 20: Are there any comments, questions or amendments? Seeing none, shall section 20 carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Section 20 has carried.

Shall the title of the bill carry? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Shall Bill 2 carry?

Mr O'Toole: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Marsales, McMeekin, Oraziotti, Peterson, Wilkinson.

Nays

O'Toole, Prue.

The Chair: The bill shall carry.

Shall I report the bill to the House? All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair: If the committee would permit, we have a subcommittee report on committee business. The clerk is handing it out to each of you, if we could deal with that at this time. Is there anyone who would want to move this into the record?

Mr Colle: I will so move.

“Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

“Subcommittee on Committee Business

“Report of the Subcommittee

“Your subcommittee met on Monday, December, 8, 2003, to consider the method of proceeding on Bill 5, An Act to temporarily freeze automobile insurance rates for private passenger vehicles and to provide for the review and regulation of risk classification systems and automobile insurance rates for private passenger vehicles, and

recommends the following, subject to the bill being referred by the House to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs:

“1. That the committee meet in Toronto on Monday, December 15, 2003, to hold public hearings on Bill 5.

“2. That members of the subcommittee provide the committee clerk with lists of who they would like to appear as witnesses by Thursday, December 11, 2003, at 4 pm.

“3. That the government and the official opposition be allotted six selections each, and the NDP member four.

“4. That the witnesses be allotted a maximum of 15 minutes in which to make their presentations and answer questions from the committee members.

“5. That the research officer prepare a summary of the proposed amendments heard.

“6. That the amendments be filed with the clerk of the committee by Tuesday, December 16, 2003, at 9 am.

“7. That the committee proceed with the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 5 on Tuesday, December 16, 2003.

“8. That the clerk of the committee, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized prior to the adoption of the report of the subcommittee, to commence making any preliminary arrangements to facilitate the committee’s proceedings.”

I so move.

1600

The Chair: Before I ask about comments, the clerk has informed me that he has received some calls by phone. Would the three caucuses prefer that he send these to you as to their identity, for your selection prior to Thursday at 4 pm?

Mr Colle: Sure, send them on. There may be a duplication of some that have the contact list.

The Chair: We’ll see that that goes to—

Mr Colle: All three caucuses?

The Chair: —subcommittee members. We will do that. Any comments?

Mr O’Toole: I don’t want to become kind of clerical in nature here, but again it’s the short notice. For a point of information really, will this be posted on the government channel where the people of Ontario can see and know they can notify the clerk, and make it as convenient as possible by e-mail or fax, and that the clerk will then forward those on to the appointed person of each caucus? Because otherwise we aren’t going to get these—we’re actually starting on Monday morning. We will have to submit lists, it’s my understanding, by tomorrow at 4 o’clock. You know what I mean? Boy oh boy, the stakeholders—with respect to auto insurance, it’s a huge issue. In fact, I’m not convinced that it goes far enough. I should remind members I did the consultation on auto

insurance reform. It was in our documents—again, the issue I’m talking toward is making sure it’s posted—I know there’s no time to advertise—and that all members be notified of all groups so that we can make our selection tomorrow night, 4 o’clock.

Mr Colle: Just to remind Mr O’Toole, these timetables were agreed to by your caucus unanimously in the House. Your representative on the subcommittee agreed to these terms without any questions. We acquiesced to his considerations, and we are following his direction as the direction of your own caucus. In fact, we are even giving an extra day, because we could even have had the meetings tomorrow. Instead, we’re going ahead with more time allocation for contacting people by doing this for Monday and Tuesday. So we have in fact added time to it.

Mr O’Toole: Just to not lengthen discussion here, and in the interest of time, because it is an opposition day today—I should be there—my point is that today we made an exception. I commend the government for allowing Mr Sewell to speak, even though he had nothing complimentary to say; it was a good show of democracy. I would hope that on Monday, if there are victims of accidents for whom it may be difficult—if they show up on Monday, I’ll be moving that they be allowed to add their voice to the public record. Would that be agreeable? There’s no real agenda on my part here, except to say that those short notices—your time allocation motion—predetermined all the outcomes here. You are government and you will pass the bill at the end of the day.

Mr Colle: Just to repeat again, the timetable for the committee meetings had been agreed to by you and all the members of your caucus unanimously and we were following your instructions on that. Secondly, you, as a member of your caucus and member of this committee, can choose to select anyone that you want to appear as a witness before this committee, as decided by your subcommittee member, where we were allocating six, six and four; that was agreed upon without question by your representative, Mr Miller, the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

The Chair: Any other comment?

The committee accepts the subcommittee report. Thank you.

Mr Tim Peterson (Mississauga South): Could we fix the times for Monday now?

The Chair: It’s in the programming motion that the committee may meet from 10 am to 12 noon and again following routine proceedings until 6 pm on each of the two days.

If there’s no other business, this committee is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1605.

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex L)

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant PC)

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence L)

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex L)

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex L)

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Mr David Oraziotti (Sault Ste Marie L)

Mr John O'Toole (Durham PC)

Mr Tim Peterson (Mississauga South / -Sud L)

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York ND)

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex L)

Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

Mr Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale L)

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot L)

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton PC)

Clerk / Greffier

Mr Katch Koch

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