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Wednesday 20 April 2011

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 20 avril 2011

**Standing Committee on
Estimates**

Organization

**Comité permanent des
budgets des dépenses**

Organisation

Chair: Garfield Dunlop
Clerk: Sylwia Przedziecki

Président : Garfield Dunlop
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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Wednesday 20 April 2011

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The committee met at 1614 in room 151.

ORGANIZATION

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Members, I call this meeting to order.

Good afternoon, committee members. As you know, the Lieutenant Governor has transmitted the estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2012, to the Legislative Assembly. Pursuant to standing order 59, these printed estimates, upon tabling, are deemed to be referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates. All members of the House should have received a copy of the 2011-12 expenditure estimates after they were tabled yesterday, Tuesday, April 19.

The objective of today's meeting is to select the estimates of certain ministries or offices for detailed review by the committee. Standing order 60, which you all have before you, sets out the process by which the committee makes its selections. Essentially, each of the recognized parties on the committee shall select the estimates of either one or two ministries or offices in each of two rounds of selection. The official opposition selects first, followed by the third party, then by the government. After two rounds of selection, the committee will have selected the estimates of six to 12 ministries or offices for review.

Each party also determines how much time is to be allocated to the consideration of estimates of each ministry or office selected. A maximum of 15 hours is permitted per selection. If only one ministry's estimates are selected in a round, those estimates could be reviewed for a maximum of 15 hours. If the estimates of two ministries are selected in a round, they could be reviewed for a combined maximum of 15 hours. It is up to the party making the selection to determine how the 15 hours are to be divided between those two ministries chosen.

At the conclusion of the two rounds, a maximum of 90 hours will have been allocated to the estimates review of the selected ministries or offices. The ministries and offices shall be reviewed in the order in which they were selected. This order may only be changed by an order of the House.

Are the members ready to begin the selection process? Seeing no opposition to that, I guess we'll go to the official opposition. Mr. O'Toole.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much. I'm certainly here, substituting quite capably, I think, for Garfield Dunlop, and yourself, I guess.

I know I'm not allowed to make a speech, but I will anyway. The 2011-12 expenditures are another example of the government's increasing spending, and we're here to hold them to account. How we're doing that is in round 1, I want to move that our choices would be revenue, which is the HST debate, and government services, which is the increased spending in public sector wages.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Time, John?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): How many hours, Mr. O'Toole?

Mr. John O'Toole: We have to pick seven and a half hours, I guess.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): For both?

Mr. John O'Toole: I would say—

Mr. Bob Delaney: If you pick seven and a half for one, it stands to reason—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Yes; we want to leave seven and a half for the other. Okay.

The third party. Mr. Prue.

Mr. Michael Prue: We do go a couple of rounds?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Yes. It's like the first draft choice.

Mr. Michael Prue: I think we'll go with finance for the whole 15 hours.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Okay. The government members, please.

Mr. Bob Delaney: The government is pleased to announce as its first draft choice the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs for seven and a half hours, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for seven and a half hours.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): I'm given good counsel here that there is no Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Gosh, that will be a surprise to the minister.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): We'll check on that.

Mr. John O'Toole: Just go around.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): We'll go around to the member of the official opposition.

Mr. John O'Toole: We would certainly put forward the idea of unanimous consent that we get their time, because there's no ministry that they asked for. Does everybody agree?

Mr. Bob Delaney: No.

Mr. John O'Toole: In round 2, I would put forward—I'm not totally in agreement, but I have been told—energy and the Attorney General; that is, Duguid and Bentley. Energy would be for the high cost of energy for Ontario citizens, and the Attorney General would be for the unfairness to victims of crime, just to give you a little bit of our spin.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): So seven and a half again for each?

Mr. John O'Toole: If we could have more—there's an option here—it would be research and innovation, because there's been so little of it.

Mr. Bob Delaney: You only get two this time, John.

Mr. John O'Toole: Okay. We've got to try. We got it on the record; it's all on the record.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Mr. Prue?

Mr. Michael Prue: We will choose health for 15 hours.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Health?

Mr. Michael Prue: Health. That would be the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. It's all one ministry. I want to make sure it's not just divided.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Okay. So noted.

Mr. Delaney, it would be the Cabinet Office, then. We show here that the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs comes under Cabinet Office.

Mr. Michael Prue: I think that would be a great choice.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): That's the way it's listed in the estimates.

Mr. Bob Delaney: All right. If that's the way it's listed, that's the way it's listed.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Okay. That's still your choice, then?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Yes, Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Okay.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Our second round draft choices are the Ministry of Transportation and highways and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Okay. For seven and a half hours each?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Yes, sir.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Okay.

Mr. John O'Toole: Chair, through you, if I may, I have a question here. In the seven and a half hours each, I'd like to do seven and a half hours on the energy file, because that's a disaster, but five hours on Attorney General and two and a half hours on the Ministry of Research and Innovation. Is that possible, with your indulgence?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): You only have the two picks, though.

Interjections.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Mr. Prue, are you okay with—for the record, let me read them back into the record. Okay?

For the official opposition, on their first round they chose revenue for seven and a half hours; their second pick was government services for seven and a half hours. Mr. Prue from the NDP and the third party picked finance for 15 hours. Then we went to the government and their first pick was intergovernmental affairs—

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): Cabinet Office, sorry—for seven and a half hours, and also the Ministry of Housing for, I guess, seven and a half. Then, back to the official opposition, their next pick was energy for seven and a half hours and the Attorney General's office for seven and a half hours. Then we moved to Mr. Prue and the NDP: health and long-term care for a total of 15 hours. When we come back around to the government, it's seven and a half hours for the transportation and highways department, and seven and a half hours for economic development and trade.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Robert Bailey): The Ministry of Transportation. Sorry, I correct that.

As the members know, we're not here next week as it's constituency week. So the committee will meet again at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, May 3, to begin consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Revenue. If there's no disagreement on that, we're adjourned and we can all go back to work.

The committee adjourned at 1623.

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