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Tuesday 26 May 2009

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des débats
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Mardi 26 mai 2009

**Standing Committee on
Estimates**

Ministry of Economic
Development

**Comité permanent des
budgets des dépenses**

Ministère du Développement
économique

Chair: Tim Hudak
Clerk: Sylwia Przedziecki

Président : Tim Hudak
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 26 May 2009

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The committee met at 0905 in room 151.

MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Good morning, members of the standing committee and Monsieur Lalonde, parliamentary assistant. Welcome to the committee, deputy and ADM.

Given the pattern we followed in the last meeting, this is what I propose we do this morning: The NDP would have 40 minutes, from 9 a.m. till 9:40. Monsieur Bisson, you would have the floor if anybody joins you from the third party. Then, from 9:40 till 10 a.m. the government members have 20 minutes. That would leave us with about an hour remaining in the total time for economic development and trade, which means we would reconvene at 3:30 for one hour split equally between the three parties, because this morning rotation would even it up. So unless there is a deal between the three parties to change times, that's what I'm proposing.

Mr. Naqvi?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: There's a bit of confusion as to what we agreed to two weeks ago, before we adjourned for the Victoria Day break. We assumed that we agreed that we would just sit this morning, that we had some changes in time allocation, and the committee would adjourn vis-à-vis the Ministry of Economic Development, and the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure would be called in the afternoon. He was, as I understand, sent a notice in that regard and he is prepared to appear before the committee starting this afternoon.

Furthermore, with the changes that have taken place with the former minister no longer being minister as of yesterday, our request is that perhaps we just do the line of questioning this morning, have a vote on economic development and then move on to energy this afternoon.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): As Chair, unless there's agreement by all three parties, I need to make sure that all the time that was requested is used up and divided equally among the three parties according to the rules. I'm not hearing that there is an agreement. If there is an agreement or if you guys want to sort something out, that's fine, and we could start energy and infrastructure at 3:30. However, if there's no agreement, I need to make sure we use that time that was requested and then energy and infrastructure would begin tomorrow.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. I can't agree with what you're saying. The confusion around

it—I simply said that Mr. Chudleigh asked if he could take 40 minutes two weeks ago and use it because Mr. Hampton had to leave. Really, it was just an exchange of time for that. We would like our full seven and a half hours, as far as our party is concerned. I don't know how the NDP feels, but the economic development of this province is a huge issue right now, and whether the minister has resigned—we're quite confident with the parliamentary assistant being here. There are many questions to ask on this, so we can't really agree with your request.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Mr. Flynn.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It seems that something would have generated the invitation to the Minister of Energy to be here this afternoon at 3:30. There must have been some agreement in place that generated that invitation.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Well, he can come at 3:40, then, or at 4:30.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: To suggest there's no agreement in place—something has caused that invitation to be sent, and it's been accepted, as I understand it.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): The members of the committee haven't changed that much. Mr. Dunlop and Mr. Bisson are usually here. I'm not hearing that there was any kind of agreement.

Secondly, originally, yes, energy and infrastructure would be at 3:30 because that's the way the schedule had fallen down. Sometimes there are delays that push—so we have an hour that's pushed into the afternoon, and I, as a custom, as Chair do not like to split up the time. I just don't think that's conducive to our debate. So since we have an hour into the afternoon, I'm going to push back energy and infrastructure till tomorrow when it would begin in whole, unless the three parties represented here at the table come to an agreement about the hour spillage in the afternoon. That's the way I'm going to proceed. It's my duty as Chair to make sure full time is given, unless there's an agreement otherwise.

Mr. Bisson, do you have—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, number one, no, we don't agree: We want to use the entire time allotted to these estimates. Number two, the reason it's a little bit off schedule: If you remember, when it came to our rotation, in order to do our lead 30 minutes, I declined it at the time because it would have been chopped up into two positions. So that's why estimates runs into the after-

noon, because some of that time was truncated so that it would all happens under one session. It's not unusual, as you know, Chair, for an estimate of a ministry to finish in the afternoon and then have the other one just come in right after. So that's what we can do this afternoon. That'd be great.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): The way I have operated as Chair, I don't break up the blocks. So if we have an hour of estimates this afternoon to finish economic development and trade, that's it. Energy and infrastructure will begin tomorrow.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's fine by me. I don't have a problem.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Folks, I'm not seeing any agreement. I don't have any choice other than to follow the rules and make sure we get the full time allotted.

I want to welcome Monsieur Lalonde to the committee. I know that there was a change with Minister Bryant stepping down as minister, so I appreciate you reacting and coming in. Customarily, the ministers are here before estimates, but under the circumstances, it's obviously very appropriate for Monsieur Lalonde to be here as the parliamentary assistant. We thank you for taking the time and being here to respond to questions this morning. It's good to see the ministry staff as well.

According to the schedule, again, we're a bit behind, but Monsieur Bisson, you will now have 40 minutes in rotation.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much. The first question is a very simple one, just for the record—we all know, but for the record: Who's currently the Minister of Economic Development and Trade?

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: The Premier is acting as the Minister of Economic Development and Trade at the present time.

0910

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What's interesting is that Mr. Bryant, in his exit, was somewhat vocal in regard to one of the reasons he was leaving. In one of the articles that I read this morning, he was pretty clear that he felt he was pretty ineffective in his abilities as a minister to carry out his duties because everything was decided by way of the Premier's office. I'm just wondering if you have any comments along that line.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I wouldn't agree at all with those comments.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Are you lining up for the job?

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Certainly not. It's a very, very important job.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I raise it because normally it's the ministers. Yes, the rules allow for the parliamentary assistant to be here, and I understand that. My point that I'm making to you is—and I'd just like to know your thoughts—if Mr. Bryant felt ineffective and he was correct that the Premier had a big hand in making decisions about what happens at the ministry, wouldn't it have been more appropriate to have the Premier here to

answer the questions about economic development and trade?

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): It's probably more so for the Chair. It is customary, I think, as Monsieur Bisson and members of the committee know, that the Premier—I don't know if ever—whatever government comes before the committee. We did have George Smitherman come before us as the Deputy Premier when the Premier's office was called. I do believe, under the circumstances, that it's appropriate that the parliamentary assistant is here to respond to questions.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I understand the rules; I've been here for 20 years. I understand that the PA can be here. That's not my question. My question to Mr. Lalonde is, if Mr. Bryant is correct and he was leaving his job as minister to go into his new job because he felt he was not as effective as he could be, because the Premier controlled what happened, do you not think it would make more sense to have the Premier answering, since he's the one who made most of the decisions at the ministry anyway?

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I'm pretty sure that you're fully, fully aware of the Premier's busy schedule. Sometimes you just cannot cancel a commitment that you have made previously.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Have you had any instructions from the Premier in regard to these estimates, as of this morning or last night?

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: The instructions I have are that I'd be working with the deputy minister on any questions that will be addressed.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Does this mark any kind of change in policy in regard to this ministry, now that you no longer have a minister and the Premier is the de facto minister?

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I don't foresee any changes, but that will be up to the Premier.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: All right. So we're right back to where we started.

You will know, obviously, as a member of the government and this assembly, that we are in a very tough economic situation. The government, for good reason, is trying to put together some kind of a package in order to assist the auto industry. We would all agree that the auto industry is one of those key industries that has to be supported in some way. My question to you is:

Considérant que l'industrie forestière était à travers ces problèmes—ça fait asteure trois ou quatre ans qu'une industrie forestière se trouve exactement dans la même situation—pour quelle raison, dans ton estimation, le gouvernement provincial n'a-t-il pas pris un intérêt aussi grand avec l'industrie forestière qu'il prend maintenant avec l'industrie automobile?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je dois dire, M. Bisson, que l'industrie forestière passe peut-être une période de temps très difficile à travers le pays, et non seulement à travers le pays mais aussi dans les autres pays semblables au nôtre. Notre gouvernement, aussi bien que notre ministère et puis le ministère des Richesses naturelles, a travaillé très fort afin de subvenir aux besoins de l'industrie forestière.

M. Gilles Bisson: Excuse-moi; ma question était, pour quelle raison le gouvernement n'a-t-il pas pris un intérêt aussi en mettant en place des plans de restructuration pour l'industrie forestière tel qu'il essaie de faire avec l'industrie automobile?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je crois qu'on a déjà pris la position nécessaire afin de répondre à des besoins tels que mentionnés dans le dernier budget. Pour avoir plus de détails, je demanderais au sous-ministre s'il pourrait répondre à cette question de façon plus précise.

M. Gilles Bisson: Non, non, je suis bien content de le faire avec toi. On est deux francophones; on peut se parler. C'est bien le fun. C'est innovateur. Est-ce qu'il parle français, ce monsieur-là?

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Do you understand French?

Mr. Philip Howell: No, I don't understand French, and the translation is not working here. I'm sorry.

M. Gilles Bisson: Merci. Ma question, monsieur Lalonde, est très simple : quel programme peux-tu nous indiquer aujourd'hui, qui était un programme au moins proche à ce qu'on fait dans l'industrie forestière, qui était offert à l'industrie des forêts? Peux-tu me donner des spécificques des programmes, quelles réponses ils avaient eues?

Mr. Philip Howell: Monsieur Bisson, as you know, the responsibility for the forest industry rests with the Ministry of Natural Resources. They have several programs that are in place to support the forest industry, and those have been established and are there, but the responsibility for dealing with the forest products industry rests with the Ministry of Natural Resources.

M. Gilles Bisson: Monsieur Lalonde, l'industrie forestière représente, en chiffres de conséquences, combien pour l'économie ontarienne?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: J'ai déjà vu des chiffres, mais je ne pourrai pas m'aventurer sur ça dans le moment puisque je n'ai pas la réponse pour vous. Encore une fois, comme le sous-ministre vient de mentionner, cette question tombe sous la juridiction du ministère des Richesses naturelles.

M. Gilles Bisson: L'industrie forestière représente pour l'Ontario quoi : le numéro un, numéro deux ou numéro trois des industries importantes pour la province de l'Ontario?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Certainement pas un ou deux, je pourrais vous dire ça, mais je ne sais pas à quel niveau elle est.

M. Gilles Bisson: Intéressant. C'est numéro deux, mais je veux demander cette question ici dans le sens que, si l'industrie forestière est la deuxième ou troisième plus importante industrie en chiffres bruts pour l'Ontario, est-ce que c'est non, votre ministère n'aura pas un intérêt pour s'assurer que cette industrie est sauvegardée?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Surtout dans le domaine de développement économique, je peux vous assurer, monsieur Bisson, que notre ministère travaille conjointement avec le ministère des Richesses naturelles. Il est toujours à la recherche de programmes pour venir en aide à l'industrie forestière.

M. Gilles Bisson: Spécifiquement, quels programmes est-ce que votre ministère offre pour être capable d'assister l'industrie forestière?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Encore là, je dirais que la question doit être adressée au ministère des Richesses naturelles.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, on a un ministère du Développement économique de la province de l'Ontario qui n'a pas de programme et aucun intérêt envers une des plus importantes industries en Ontario. C'est ça, la réponse?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Vous ne pouvez pas dire « aucun intérêt », parce que moi-même j'ai visité plusieurs industries, de pâte et papier ainsi que de bois, dans votre propre circonscription. J'ai rencontré les responsables, les maires dans les régions. Nous avons discuté à notre ministère, et puis encore là c'est qu'il y a eu des discussions qui ont été tenues avec le ministère des Richesses naturelles et aussi la section dirigée par le ministre Michael Gravelle.

M. Gilles Bisson: Mais toi, quand tu as fait tes visites—tu fais ça comme adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Non, monsieur Bisson.

M. Gilles Bisson: Tu ne l'as pas fait à titre d'adjoint parlementaire?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Non, exactement. J'ai rencontré des personnes. J'étais là pour faire une ouverture du bureau de tourisme à Kapuskasing, par exemple. Je suis allé pour le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités à Timmins. Je suis allé à Hearst pour regarder aussi les demandes qu'ils avaient pour la production d'électricité, donc pas à titre d'adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement économique.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Do you like them? I'll be able to read. Ça, c'est drôle. Je suis arrivé à l'ouvrage sans mes lunettes. J'ai besoin d'en emprunter à quelqu'un. J'ai les lunettes—autrement, pas une personne comme moi.

Mr. Bob Delaney: They're you, Gilles, they're absolutely you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They're absolutely me. Ça, c'est drôle.

Donc, tu as fait ces visites-là comme député simple du gouvernement, non pas pour le ministère. Ma question : dans ces réunions-là que tu as eues avec le monde de Hearst, de Kap et d'autres communautés, quelles recommandations est-ce que tu as ramenées au ministère du Développement économique envers des solutions aux problèmes dans cette industrie?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je n'ai pas visité les régions de votre circonscription—surtout beaucoup de moulins à papier, l'industrie forestière. On avait toujours la discussion des problèmes auxquels on faisait face dans l'industrie forestière dans votre région. Je peux dire qu'à mon retour, j'en ai discuté avec mon ministère du temps, avec la ministre Sandra Pupatello, qui était ministre du Développement à ce temps-là.

M. Gilles Bisson: Puis le résultat était des initiatives de votre ministère qui ont été mises en place ?

0920

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Non.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc il n'y a pas eu d'initiatives envers votre ministère pour répondre aux problèmes économiques auxquels l'industrie forestière fait face ?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: À mon point de vue, non, pas encore.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, je reviens sur ma question principale : si on a un ministère du Développement économique, ce ministère, n'aurait-il pas intérêt à s'assurer que l'industrie, telle que l'industrie forestière, soit en mesure d'avoir l'assistance du gouvernement provincial à travers ces temps difficiles qu'on a eus les derniers quatre, cinq ans ?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Définitivement, nous avons de l'intérêt pour, autant que possible, retenir les emplois qui sont en place et même créer des emplois. Puis je peux dire que nous avons actuellement trois programmes qui sont en place : forest sector prosperity fund, loan guarantee program, northern pulp and paper electricity transition program. Mais encore là, ce sont des programmes sur lesquels nous devons travailler avec le ministère des Richesses naturelles.

M. Gilles Bisson: Je suis content que finalement ton « staff » t'a donné un petit « briefing » avec ce qui se passe à l'intérieur du ministère et avec le gouvernement. C'était le point que j'essayais de faire. Donc, tu n'es pas complètement sûr de ce qui se passe dans ce ministère-là; je peux voir ça.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Nous avons tous des responsabilités et des dossiers avec lesquels on doit travailler, et puis ce dossier-là, c'est travailler avec les responsables des richesses naturelles ainsi que les personnes responsables dans notre ministère.

M. Gilles Bisson: Mais la situation est que le premier ministre, c'est lui qui va être responsable de ce ministère, et toi, comme adjoint parlementaire, on va demander que tu joues un rôle, j'imagine, beaucoup plus important. Tu ne penses pas que ce soit intéressant pour le public qu'on donne à l'assistant parlementaire un meilleur « briefing », sachant quels sont les programmes dans son ministère ?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Monsieur Bisson, on doit être juste dans la question. L'annonce n'a pas été faite que samedi matin et puis là, une journée après—je dis bien « une journée après »—vous arrivez avec ces questions-là. Le premier ministre doit actuellement regarder ce qui va survenir avec ce ministère-là, qui va être appointé à titre de ministre responsable.

M. Gilles Bisson: Combien de temps est-ce que ça fait que tu sois assistant parlementaire au ministère du Développement économique ?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Dans ce ministère-là, depuis qu'il a été mis en place, ça fait peut-être neuf mois.

M. Gilles Bisson: Neuf mois ? Puis on ne t'a jamais donné un « briefing » avec quelles politiques que t'as ?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Mais définitivement il y a eu des « briefings ». Nous avons plusieurs dossiers, mais la

question que vous me posez devrait s'adresser au ministère des Richesses naturelles.

M. Gilles Bisson: Ma question était, qu'est-ce que ton ministère fait pour assister l'industrie forestière ? La première réponse est que c'est la responsabilité du MNR, et là, finalement, ton ADM t'a donné une note disant que oui, on a trois programmes en effet à travers le gouvernement, et tu les as mentionnés. Donc la question devient, es-tu au courant ? Sais-tu en détail quels sont ces programmes ?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je dois dire que je ne suis pas pleinement au courant, mais je sais que les deux ministères, le ministère des Richesses naturelles et le ministère du Développement économique, travaillent conjointement afin d'arriver avec des réponses pour venir en aide. Mais il faut regarder si le marché existe.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc on a un ministère qui a de l'argent, qui a des programmes, qui assiste aussi avec d'autres ministères pour répondre aux besoins des industries, telles que l'industrie forestière, et que tu n'es pas tellement au courant de comment ça marche, si j'ai bien compris.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Bien, je dois dire encore une fois, monsieur Bisson, que les questions que vous m'adressez ne devraient pas s'adresser à moi ? elles devraient s'adresser au ministère des Richesses naturelles. Là, ce que le ministère des Richesses naturelles—

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Folks, I've got to interrupt at this point. I appreciate the debate. You've asked the question, Monsieur Bisson, several times, and if you keep asking—you choose how you ask your questions, but clearly these are programs that are under MNR. I think Monsieur Lalonde has responded to your concerns. If you want to continue to pursue it, you can, but the ministry doesn't have to respond to questions that are outside of its purview for estimates.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you for your assistance. You're such a good Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): I'm just trying to be helpful.

M. Gilles Bisson: I will return to my questions. Le point que je fais : la raison pour laquelle je te demande ça, mon cher collègue, est que, comme tu le sais, ça fait quatre, cinq ans que l'industrie forestière est en pleine crise. On a municipalité après municipalité qui a perdu ses employeurs. Tu le sais ? tu en as visité toi-même. Le sens du public et le sens des maires et des conseillers dans ces municipalités est que le gouvernement provincial n'a pas répondu à la crise de l'industrie forestière. La raison pour laquelle je te demande ça est que ton ministère est un des ministères les plus importants en Ontario.

Moi, je suis d'accord avec M. Garfield, qui a dit : « Écoute, dans l'économie, le ministère joue un rôle clé quand ça vient à être capable d'assister ce qui se passe avec notre économie. » C'est pour cette raison que je te pose cette question. Ton ministère, quant à moi, doit avoir un intérêt dans cette industrie parce qu'il se trouve que c'est une des plus grosses industries dans la province de l'Ontario.

Donc, tu as mentionné qu'il y a trois programmes. Les trois programmes encore sont—can I have a pen? J'ai des questions spécifiques.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Deputy—

Mr. Philip Howell: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The programs that Mr. Lalonde was referring to are administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources. They include the forest sector prosperity fund, a loan guarantee program and the northern pulp and paper electricity transition program. There are three other programs: the forest access roads program, the forest resource inventory program and the Ontario wood promotion program.

M. Gilles Bisson: So my question is this: Monsieur l'adjoint parlementaire, est-ce que ton ministère a une main de fer faisant affaire avec les demandes qui viennent du secteur de l'industrie forestière envers les emprunts, dans le programme d'emprunts pour l'industrie?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je vais demander au sous-ministre de répondre à cette question.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc toi, tu ne sais pas. Okay.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Well, again, let's be clear here. These are programs under the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But there's co-operation between ministries, and I want to determine if this ministry is involved at all in the forestry industry. It's a perfectly good question.

La question encore est, est-ce que votre ministère—avez-vous un mot à dire faisant affaire avec les interactions entre l'industrie forestière et le gouvernement provincial à travers les programmes du MNR ou autres?

Mr. Philip Howell: I think, Mr. Bisson, as you know, there are a number of different ministries in the government that have economic development responsibilities associated with them. Through committee processes, through regular meetings at the officials' level—all sorts of meetings at the deputy, ADM and director level—there is a lot of interaction and discussion among ministries around programs. The ultimate responsibility for the forest products industry rests with the Ministry of Natural Resources. That doesn't mean that from time to time their officials won't consult with ours and, indeed, that their minister wouldn't consult with the Minister of Economic Development to discuss issues.

As you know and I think can appreciate, in many cases the issues are very complex and solutions touch upon the responsibilities of many, many ministries. Consequently, it's necessary for ministries to work together to resolve problems. But ultimately, there has to be a point of accountability for program spending, and in the case of the programs that are available to support economic development of the forest products industry, that accountability rests with the Ministry of Natural Resources. But of course, there is discussion among different parts of the government that have economic development responsibilities.

M. Gilles Bisson: Tu commences à répondre à ma question. Monsieur l'assistant parlementaire, ma question était : quelle est l'interaction de ton ministère avec les

autres ministères et avec l'industrie forestière? On vient juste d'entendre ton monsieur dire qu'en effet, oui, on se consulte de temps à autre. Je comprends très bien que c'est le ministère des Ressources naturelles qui est le responsable à la fin de la journée. Ça fait assez longtemps que je l'entends ici, mais la question devient, y a-t-il quelqu'un à l'intérieur de ton ministère qui est responsable de ce dossier?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je vais demander au sous-ministre de répondre.

0930

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, tu ne sais pas s'il y a quelqu'un. Si je te demande quels sont le numéro de téléphone et le nom de la personne, tu ne sais pas. Non? Okay.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Mais je peux te répondre qu'il y avait une certaine personne qui était là lorsque j'étais au ministère du Développement économique, et de la formation. Mais actuellement je ne pourrais pas répondre.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc c'est qui, monsieur l'ADM—

Mr. Philip Howell: Just for the record, I'm not the ADM; I'm the deputy.

M. Gilles Bisson: Excusez-moi, monsieur. Vous avez eu une promotion aujourd'hui.

Mr. Philip Howell: There are people and there are programs that we have. There are times when forest product companies can apply to those programs, programs like the Next Generation of Jobs Fund and so on, and there are, obviously, officials who are aware of the industry and what goes on, but the responsibility and the primary relationship management responsibility for the forest products industry rests with MNR.

We do have one director who is present today who from time to time would be involved in working with forest product companies.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, vous avez quelqu'un d'appointé à votre ministère qui est responsable pour les interactions et pour les demandes de l'industrie forestière? Il y a une section dans le ministère, j'imagine, monsieur l'assistant parlementaire?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je vais laisser—

Mr. Philip Howell: The primary responsibility for dealing with the forest products industry rests with the Ministry of Natural Resources. We work collaboratively with other ministries, we make our expertise available and our advice available to staff in other ministries to deal with issues and we offer appropriate support, so yes, there are several people who, from time to time would be engaged in discussions with staff from MNR relating to forest product companies.

M. Gilles Bisson: À l'intérieur du ministère, y a-t-il quelqu'un qui est appointé la personne de contact pour l'industrie forestière?

Mr. Philip Howell: We don't have a specific forest industry section; we have people in our sectors division who have experience with the forest products industry and who, as needed, would engage with MNR staff as required.

M. Gilles Bisson: Considérant que l'industrie forestière est pas mal clé et important pour l'économie de l'Ontario, est-ce que votre ministère ne doit pas prendre un plus grand intérêt envers cette industrie pour assister?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je peux répondre, monsieur Bisson, à une partie de cette question. Nous tenons des discussions concernant la création ou la préservation d'emplois, et nous avons des programmes comme AMIS, advanced manufacturing investment strategy, que je peux dire même l'industrie forestière dans votre ville même à Timmins—nous avons eu des discussions, nous leur avons offert le programme, mais encore là on doit travailler avec le ministère des Richesses naturelles.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, il y a des programmes? on n'est pas exactement sûr comment ils marchent. La plupart est autour du ministère des Richesses naturelles. Mais vous avez une couple de programmes, par exemple, ce que vous avez appelé—Next Generation of Jobs Fund, c'est quoi en français? Les emplois de la nouvelle génération, j'imagine. Y a-t-il eu des demandes qui ont été faites par l'industrie forestière dans ce programme de votre ministère? J'imagine que c'est « les nouvelles générations » ou quelque chose comme ça.

Interjection.

M. Gilles Bisson: Ah, bonjour monsieur. Vous êtes capable de nous indiquer qui vous êtes?

M. Fernando Traficante: Je m'appelle Fernando Traficante mais je ne peux pas parler un bon français.

M. Gilles Bisson: Tu parles très bien, monsieur. Voyons, je te comprends.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): He's pretty good.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Il est très bon.

Donc ce programme de la prochaine génération des emplois : y a-t-il des applications qui ont été faites par l'industrie forestière à l'intérieur de ce programme?

Mr. Fernando Traficante: Excuse me. I didn't connect my earphone. But if I understand the gist of your question, you're asking whether forestry companies have applied to the advanced manufacturing—

M. Gilles Bisson: Pas seulement les compagnies forestières, mais le monde dans le secteur de l'industrie forestière, parce qu'il y a aussi value added.

Mr. Fernando Traficante: I work very closely with my counterpart in the Ministry of Natural Resources who is responsible for the forestry sector prosperity fund. That entails several things. One is that I participate with him on his committees in terms of evaluating their proposals that come forward. Second, when we work with companies, we get intake from various ministries that have companies that may be appropriate for the programs, either the advanced manufacturing investment strategy or the Next Generation of Jobs Fund.

When my counterparts in the Ministry of Natural Resources identify a company which may apply to one of my two programs, they would connect us with that company and we would provide them with advice with respect to preparing an application.

M. Gilles Bisson: Est-ce qu'il y a beaucoup de connaissance, de la part de ceux dans cette industrie, de ces

programmes, monsieur Lalonde? Quelle sorte d'effort est-ce qu'on fait au gouvernement pour s'assurer que les petits entrepreneurs et même les grosses industries forestières connaissent ces programmes-là? Y a-t-il une manière de communication?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Lorsqu'une industrie est à la recherche de programmes, on a définitivement le site Web qui va les informer sur les programmes existants du ministère, puis assez souvent nous avons des articles dans les journaux qui décrivent les programmes. On doit toujours dire que les représentants du ministère qui font la tournée doivent promouvoir les programmes qui sont en place.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc votre programme, Next Generation of Jobs Fund : vous avez vu beaucoup d'applications de l'industrie forestière à l'intérieur de ce programme?

Mr. Fernando Traficante: No, we haven't had a lot of applications from the forest industry for the Next Generation of Jobs Fund. We have had more applications under the advanced manufacturing investment strategy, for a couple of reasons. One is, the advanced manufacturing strategy has been around a little longer. Second, it's designed, really, to focus on the manufacturing process; that is, to upgrade and improve the manufacturing process. Forest companies, particularly on the pulp and paper side, that have been making investments have been focusing on those sorts of upgrades. The challenge—and I'll be frank about it—is that those companies have difficulty in terms of bringing together all the financing required in order to make those investments. So there have not been very many investments recently in that regard.

I should point out, though, that I have participated, and my colleagues have participated, in seminars organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources for companies from the north on all of the funding programs which might be available, and we've described them in quite a bit of detail and provided one-on-one consultation with respect to them in terms of how they might apply to the programs.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, la plupart des applications ne viennent pas de l'industrie forestière. Le long puis le court de l'histoire : la plupart vient de l'industrie manufacturière. Est-ce que vous pensez que c'est un manque d'opportunité? En d'autres mots, est-ce qu'on a besoin de devenir plus actifs, comme gouvernement et comme votre ministère, pour trouver des manières de regarder les opportunités pour l'industrie forestière? Par exemple, on sait que l'industrie de base pour eux autres est la forêt, c'est les deux par quatre, les deux par six, c'est le pâte de papier, mais c'est aussi d'autres opportunités pour faire des produits avec ça, des produits finis. Voyez-vous une opportunité d'accélérer l'intérêt dans la valeur ajoutée par ces industries? Si oui, qu'est-ce qu'on fait pour être capable de promouvoir ces initiatives?

Mr. Fernando Traficante: The key to the two programs that I'm responsible for in the ministry, the Next Generation of Jobs Fund and the advanced manufacturing

investment strategy, is that they look for innovation. So they are applicable to companies that are doing something which is innovative.

When you look at how that applies to the forest industry, it looks at two different things. One is, if you were doing a pure process improvement, what is there about that process improvement, either in terms of providing value-added forest products or improving the pulp and paper processes, that might be innovative? It's more than just simply purchasing machinery. Machinery in those industries can be very expensive: \$500 million for a paper machine, for example. But if it's simply a paper machine which is bought off the shelf, there's nothing innovative about it.

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What we look for is, what is the company doing which would make a difference to the production process to make it innovative and to make it move forward in terms of its competitive position in the marketplace? So we are working with companies around value-added wood products.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, le long puis le court de l'histoire est qu'il y a beaucoup d'opportunités dans l'industrie forestière pour la valeur ajoutée. Dans ton estimation, monsieur Lalonde, trouves-tu qu'on pourrait en faire plus dans votre ministère pour accélérer les intérêts du secteur privé pour investir dans ce domaine?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: On est toujours à la recherche de l'innovation, donc tout dépend vraiment des demandes et puis les consultations qui se font entre ministères et puis les dirigeants d'entreprises.

M. Gilles Bisson: Là on voit, par exemple, que votre ministère est impliqué dans l'industrie de l'automobile. Avec ce qui se passe avec les négociations pour GM et Chrysler, vous êtes impliqués dans ces dossiers faisant affaire avec des emprunts qui sont en train d'être discutés dans les manchettes présentement, oui?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: On est en discussions. C'est ce que je pourrais dire pour le moment.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, c'est vrai que le gouvernement provincial, avec le gouvernement fédéral, va faire des emprunts, des prêts à ces compagnies—GM, Chrysler—pour les assister à travers ce temps économique difficile où ils se trouvent?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: On ne peut pas encore dire qu'on va faire des emprunts. On n'est pas rendu à ce point-là. On est encore en discussion.

M. Gilles Bisson: Vous êtes en discussion. En d'autres mots, vous êtes intéressés à les aider? Oui?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Comme d'autres industries.

M. Gilles Bisson: Vous êtes intéressés—écoutez : on a présentement plein de manchettes chaque jour qui parlent des gouvernements provincial et fédéral qui sont en discussion pour être capables de voir comment pouvoir assister ces industries d'automobile, oui?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Oui.

M. Gilles Bisson: Okay. Pour quelle raison—on ne trouve pas ça acceptable, qu'une compagnie comme GM peut faire faillite mais qu'on peut accepter une com-

pagnie comme AbitibiBowater, qui vient d'annoncer qu'elle fait faillite, et on n'a pas d'initiatives ou d'efforts pour être capable de contourner leurs problèmes économiques. On trouve ça un peu drôle.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Ça va à tous les niveaux. Il n'y a pas seulement l'industrie d'automobile que l'on consente dessus actuellement afin de préserver les emplois ou afin de s'assurer qu'elle puisse continuer en affaires. Lorsque la demande survient, il y a certainement des pourparlers qui se poursuivent entre les secteurs, que ce soit le secteur forestier ou d'autres secteurs.

M. Gilles Bisson: Qu'est-ce ce que votre ministère fait ou le gouvernement fait pour assister la question des faillites des grosses entreprises dans l'industrie forestière, telles qu'AbitibiBowater?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je vais demander au sous-ministre de répondre à cette question.

Mr. Philip Howell: The government has provided a substantial amount of support to Abitibi since 2005, but that support has been provided through the programs that the Ministry of Natural Resources operates. Certainly the government is working with AbitibiBowater, but the lead responsibility for those dealings is through the Ministry of Natural Resources.

M. Gilles Bisson: Ma question est que cette compagnie est en faillite. Vous savez qu'AbitibiBowater a annoncé « chapter 11 », et ici au Canada toute la question d'une « bankruptcy », de faillite. Est-ce qu'il y a des plans de la part du gouvernement provincial de faire quelque chose avec l'industrie forestière qui est proche de ce qu'on essaie de faire avec l'industrie d'automobile pour ces compagnies en faillite?

Mr. Philip Howell: The ministerial responsibility for dealing with AbitibiBowater rests with the Ministry of Natural Resources, and that's where a question of this sort should be directed.

I would note that the government has provided significant support to Abitibi in recent years through a variety of programs, but we are not involved. "We," being the Ministry of Economic Development, are not involved in discussions around bankruptcy—

M. Gilles Bisson: Êtes-vous capable de détailler combien d'assistance le gouvernement provincial a donné à Abitibi à travers d'autres ministères?

Mr. Philip Howell: My understanding is that since 2005, more than \$154 million has been provided.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, la question revient. Comme vous le savez, l'industrie d'automobile—on a déjà prêté, je pense que c'était 240 \$ millions, à GM à Oshawa, faisant affaire avec l'ouvrage qu'ils ont fait là, avant même parler de regarder à quoi faire pour prévenir qu'ils fassent faillite. Pour quelle raison le gouvernement provincial trouverait-il inacceptable que pour l'industrie automobile, on ne peut pas allouer qu'elle fasse faillite, mais quand ça vient à l'industrie forestière, on a une approche différente?

Mr. Philip Howell: I can speak about what's motivating the decisions with respect to the auto company support. It's a reflection of the significant size of those

sectors in the economy of the province and the significant impact that an uncontrolled bankruptcy, or just allowing the companies to liquidate, would result in.

I appreciate the importance of the forestry sector in many communities across northern Ontario, but with respect, and as you know, the economic data provided by Statistics Canada would support this: The size of the auto and auto supplier industry in the Ontario economy is greater. That's a fact. I'm not commenting on the decisions that are made at the political level around various degrees of support.

I would note that in the context of ministerial responsibility, the auto industry does reside with the Ministry of Economic Development; the forest products industry resides with the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Let me just say this in closing—I've only got two minutes: Everybody understands that we have to assist the auto industry. There's nobody who argues that fact. But what is really passing strange to many people is that an industry such as the forest industry, which is one of the key industries in Ontario, has a somewhat indifferent response from the government as compared to what we're doing with auto. As soon as auto started to get in trouble, it was, "All hands on deck, everybody line up, we've got to do something." In northern Ontario, the forest industry—the municipalities, the workers, everybody, have had all kinds of organizing to try to get the government's attention to respond to what's happened in the forest industry, and what we've had has been pretty pale in comparison to what we've seen in auto.

So yes, we need to assist auto. There's no question about that. There's nobody on this committee who would argue differently. But I find it passing strange, along with a whole bunch of other people, that one of the key industries in Ontario, the forest industry, gets very different treatment from this provincial government as to their economic problems—because they were the first to feel it. The forest industry was the first into this recession. As of four or five years ago, we started seeing the plant closures, we started seeing the downturn within that industry, and the response of the government was, "Well, let things shake out. The private sector will work it out." The Premier said, "Whoever is left standing after these mergers will be stronger, and life will go on." We didn't take that approach when it came to GM and Chrysler, and Ford is a different story. The government understood that, yes, the government has a responsibility to protect those industries that are important to our province.

I've just got to say I'm mighty disappointed, along with a whole bunch of other people, in regard to what this government's approach has been, and that this ministry, the economic development and trade ministry, doesn't have a larger role to play in it, I think, is indicative of the problems that we have.

Yes, MNR is responsible, but your ministry, Monsieur Lalonde, I would argue, should be one of the key ministries that's there for all sectors of our economy. To

say that this ministry doesn't have as direct a role as it should have when it comes to key sectors like forestry, I think, is a disservice to the economy. I think it speaks volumes about the disinterest of this government when it comes to assisting the forestry sector as compared to auto.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Mr. Bisson, thank you very much, that does conclude your time. That's pretty much right on the nose. Well done.

We'll now go to the government members for their 20 minutes.

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Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the opportunity. Let me just first start by thanking Mr. Lalonde, the deputy and the other staff for being here. I know Monsieur Lalonde had to step up to the plate at the last minute due to the changes in the ministry, so I really appreciate you taking the time and being here in front of the estimates committee.

I'm going to ask some questions about the eastern Ontario development fund, something which I know is very close to both Monsieur Lalonde and me, given that we are from eastern Ontario. Monsieur Lalonde, feel free to pass on any of the questions, any technical questions, to the deputy or his staff, if you feel comfortable doing so.

I wanted to first ask whether the deputy perhaps or Mr. Traficante can explain the scope of the eastern Ontario development fund program and the purpose behind that particular program.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Thank you for the question. Let me tell you that the program was put in place, as announced by the Premier, in July 2008. It's an \$80-million program, over a period of four years. Just last week, we made five new announcements in eastern Ontario. We know that eastern Ontario is affected and will be more affected by this recession; I would call it the tough economic situation. Up to now, we have officially allocated \$5.3 million in grants, for a total number of projects of—I forget the number of projects; it's 15% of the investment that the company has to do. We have received up to now 46 applications from different companies that want to expand. I've always said that this program was put in place to retain, to retrain and to create jobs, and this is exactly what we're doing at the present time. The program has been well received by companies in eastern Ontario, and we have to keep promoting it. The best way to do it is, again, on the website, where it's well-described why the program is in place. I can tell you that the people are very pleased with it.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: You just said that \$5.3 million had been invested by the government of Ontario thus far through the eastern Ontario development fund. Do you have numbers, Mr. Lalonde, or the deputy, as to how much investment is leveraged due to that Ontario investment and how many jobs are created and retained as a result?

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Well, I don't know if—

Mr. Philip Howell: We do. I'd like to ask the acting assistant deputy minister, Ken Albright, to come forward,

please. The program responsibility for the eastern Ontario development fund is in his division.

Mr. Ken Albright: Yes, thank you. My numbers are actually slightly more out of date than Monsieur Lalonde's, but to date, because of the 15% leverage, \$4.1 million of investment will lever about \$28.6 million of private investment, creating about 162 jobs. The minimum threshold for job creation is 10 jobs created over a period of five years, so each of these would be in excess of that threshold, averaging 15 to 20 jobs apiece.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: So these are new jobs that are being created?

Mr. Ken Albright: These would be new jobs, in addition to those that are retained, which we haven't tracked here.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Albright, can you explain the scope of the program? Who qualifies? What are the guidelines or the criteria to be applicable under the program?

Mr. Ken Albright: Sure. It's a continuous intake fund. It's \$80 million allocated over four years. It's a discretionary, non-entitlement grant program to encourage economic development in eastern Ontario.

There are two streams, actually: One is for businesses and one is for local economic development agencies. In the business stream, companies can invest in capital, equipment, technology and processes to improve their productivity and competitiveness. The program is 15% grants—so an eligible project expenditure, as just described, provided they meet the agreed-upon job and investment targets. Everything is negotiated. In the business stream, eligible projects have to create 10 jobs over five years, or companies with fewer employees have to increase their footprint by 20% from their current number of jobs—some extraordinary projects may not create jobs; we haven't had any of those yet, but they may be considered by the chair of the Treasury Board—and companies must commit to a minimum investment of \$500,000 over five years.

Applications are accepted on a continuous intake basis. We work with companies continuously and through outreach from ourselves and through other ministries to encourage program applications to be made. Proposals are subject to detailed review. There are program criteria, there is a financial due diligence report associated with each, there's an inter-ministerial ADMs' committee that reviews all proposals, including financial due diligence reports, and recommendations are made to the Minister of Economic Development. Program service standards—and they're adhered to. In most cases, they're 45 days.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: In your experience, those timelines are being followed?

Mr. Ken Albright: In most cases they are. They're always back and forth. Sometimes it takes companies a while to generate information that we request from them. Most of these are smaller businesses, so the running of their day-to-day affairs is always more important than things that are a little extraordinary. We are asking for a lot from them.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Can you give an example? You said quite a few businesses have received this funding, by which the investment by the government, through this fund, has helped secure existing and new jobs.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Well, at the present time the program will be creating over 220 jobs. There were 15 applications approved. As I said previously, there are either 46 or 48 applications being reviewed at the present time.

Total investment: I don't have the exact figure. You've mentioned it, I guess. For the first 10, the investment was over \$30 million. That is the answer that I have at the present time.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Okay. I'm going to move on to the Communities in Transition program. Deputy, if you can explain the nature and the scope of that program and who that is applicable to.

Mr. Philip Howell: This program also is under ADM Albright's purview, so I'll let him take that.

Mr. Ken Albright: The Communities in Transition program is an initiative to provide assistance to Ontario communities and industry sectors facing economic development challenges, including plant closures, significant job losses and industry-wide restructurings. It's a flexible program. It's tailored to innovative economic development solutions not covered under existing programs. It has its allocation—it's fairly small, \$2 million a year, potentially supporting about four to eight projects a year. We're currently having more demand than that through that program.

It's supported a number of different agreements. I think to date it's something like 22 projects and a total of \$10.3 million associated with those projects, all in southern Ontario and eastern Ontario.

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Mr. Yasir Naqvi: How is that money to be used? What's the purpose for giving money? I understand—I mean, I'm seeing that some municipalities, or economic councils etc., have qualified to get that funding.

Mr. Ken Albright: It's probably best to give you an example of that. For example, the South West Economic Alliance in Ontario: We provided \$300,000 to that organization, which represents industry, education and government from 15 counties. Funding is to support the development of an operating plan, marketing and regional branding and research to help them plan for the future.

Another example would be that through the Canadian Tooling and Machining Association, we provided \$600,000 to increase that sector's competitiveness; strengthen their manufacturing base by adopting industry-leading software, skills and work practices to enable them to increase their ability to capture complex tooling work; and increase sales and profitability.

The four steps in that, for example, were the assessment of shortfalls in current software skills and training programs; working with software suppliers to identify solutions; testing and evaluating that software—which is very unique in that sector—primarily in Windsor, parts of Toronto and in the area around Kitchener-Waterloo; and

finally, the development and delivery of new training programs to address the shortfalls in those software skills. That's to aid the transformation of those kinds of companies.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Would you be able to give a specific example of this initiative in work? How long has this program been going on?

Mr. Ken Albright: It has been running for about two years.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Two years? So you must have some specific examples of how this initiative is helping communities that are going through a transition. Can you share an example or two with us?

Mr. Ken Albright: Sure. I'll get my notes here for some examples.

For example, in Huron county, we provided \$300,000 to assist a number of economic development initiatives, including:

- conducting property assessments to attract investment that would reuse the existing Volvo plant there;
- developing a business case for using the Centralia College facility as an aeronautics and/or airplane refurbishing training facility;
- examining opportunities for the redevelopment of the Goderich harbour;
- conducting a study to determine possible future uses of the Richard W. LeVan Airport, focusing their current market activities or strategies for the county with an emphasis on database and website development and related marketing programs; and
- development of an economic development opportunities blueprint, to unify and direct economic development efforts in the region.

Similarly, for the city of Hamilton, we provided them with \$386,000 for improved economic development planning through a new, multi-year economic development strategy; development of an economic development marketing plan; economic impact and land needs analysis for the Hamilton airport; research into eco-friendly business parks; and helped them to organize the Hamilton economic summit, held in May last year.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Okay, great. Thank you very much.

I'm going to move on, deputy, to the Ontario Open for Business initiative. That's something the Premier announced about a year or so ago, talking about reducing the regulatory burden on businesses. Can you please describe exactly what the initiative is?

Mr. Philip Howell: Sure. I'm going to ask the associate deputy minister, Gail Paech, who is responsible for that program, to come forward.

Underpinning the Open for Business concept is something that I think other governments have been concerned with. I think this is fundamentally something that every government has to come to grips with in terms of ensuring that there's a business climate that's conducive to business investing and expanding and creating jobs, and I would argue that this is even more the case today than, say, may have been the case 20 years ago, just because of the interconnectedness of economies around the world.

The Open for Business initiative is focused on just that: improving the business climate.

Gail, maybe you would like to go into a little more detail about the program.

Ms. Gail Paech: Open for Business was announced by the Premier in March of 2009. It is a three-year initiative whereby the government is looking to streamline the regulatory process to improve the services that are delivered by government and to develop a better working relationship with the business community.

The overall objectives of this program are to continue to ensure the protection of the public, and also to streamline the way services are delivered by government to the business community, creating an environment that assists business to stimulate the economy, to increase and create jobs in the province of Ontario and make the province of Ontario an attractive environment for business to invest.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Can you share with us what kind of specific initiatives the ministry has started to take to implement that objective under Open for Business?

Ms. Gail Paech: Certainly. In September of 2008, Open for Business started a program to understand what the burden was that was imposed by business through the regulatory environment that exists in Ontario. A count was done to understand the impact and the obligations business needed to conduct in order to comply with regulations.

All of the ministries reported in a three-month period of time what the burden was that was imposed by the regulations, and were there opportunities where, while continuously ensuring the protection of the public, there were outdated regulations and these regulations no longer were serving the intended outcome that was originally proposed? Was there an opportunity that these regulations no longer needed to exist?

At the same time, what was done was that the government has also imposed a cap-and-trade program, which was in the platform of the government, that for every new regulation coming forward, two existing regulations would be revoked. This was for a one-year period of time and will be reassessed. The objective really is that in the meantime Open for Business would look at developing new tools, new ways of (1) consulting with business, and (2) also looking at developing new tools for policy development and the process of the development of regulations in a more collaborative way with the business community. So those programs are under way.

At the same time in September, what was announced was that every ministry would identify 10 initiatives that would help also to reduce the burden on business. Those initiatives were submitted by each of the ministries in December of 2008, and the ministries are presently working to bring forward those initiatives to reduce the burden on business.

Presently, what we are doing is that in February 2009, the government approved a strategy for modern services and modern government and a new relationship with

business, and we are presently going forward to treasury board with a submission.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Okay, great. Thank you very much for your time.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Members of the ministry, thank you very much for being here today. Jean-Marc Lalonde, the parliamentary assistant, thank you for filling in on what I know is short notice.

Folks, I'm not going to start a new rotation. We will recess for four or five hours. When we return—I misspoke earlier, and I apologize about that. The clerk and I have looked through here. This is the way we will do this rotation. We have just over an hour remaining, so the committee will resume at 3:30 for one hour.

Because of the rotation that was used previously, the official opposition has had more time than the other two parties. So what we're going to do when we come back is begin with the third party for 20 minutes, the government members have 20 minutes and the remaining 20 minutes will be divided up equally. So the time for the official opposition will be tight, but that will make it even for all three parties through the entire seven and a half hours. Folks, are we all good with that? All right.

We are recessed until 3:30 p.m. back in this room. Thank you very much.

The committee recessed from 1012 to 1546.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We'll call the meeting back to order. We've got an agreement here, I think, between the three caucuses that we rotate. We've got an hour and three minutes left. We understand that there was agreement to take 26 minutes for the NDP, 26 minutes for the government and finishing off with six minutes for Mr. O'Toole, of the official opposition. Have we got agreement on that? Okay. Thank you very much. Agreed.

Mr. Bisson, you've got 26 minutes.

M. Gilles Bisson: Bonjour, monsieur Lalonde. Comment ça va?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Très bien, merci.

M. Gilles Bisson: Excellent. Une question : l'ancien ministre, M. Bryant, avait fait des commentaires dans un discours récemment avec le club économique de Toronto qu'il y avait des gagnants et des perdants et que c'était la job du gouvernement de choisir les gagnants et les perdants. Ton opinion?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je n'ai aucune idée. Je n'ai pas lu le discours qu'il a prononcé donc je ne sais pas si le sous-ministre a une réponse à cet effet-là. Je ne suis pas au courant du discours qu'il a livré.

M. Gilles Bisson: Toi, personnellement, penses-tu que le gouvernement a un rôle à jouer quand ça vient à décider quel secteur de l'économie aider plus que l'autre?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: On doit toujours analyser le tout avant de prendre une décision. On doit être à l'écoute, on doit s'asseoir avec les différents « stakeholders », comme on les appelle en anglais—excuse l'expression—et puis c'est là que, avec les gens du ministère, avec le sous-ministre et ses collègues de bureau, on doit discuter de la position qu'on doit prendre.

M. Gilles Bisson: Mais parfois les gouvernements de toutes les couleurs décident qu'ils vont faire une emphase sur un secteur de l'économie plutôt que sur l'autre. Est-ce que c'est l'impression, de ce que tu vois de ce qui se passe à l'intérieur du ministère, que ce ministère va présentement prendre certaines positions qui favorisent un secteur de l'économie plus que l'autre?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je dois dire encore une fois que lorsqu'on prend une position, on doit analyser un peu à tous les niveaux quelle est la position que le gouvernement doit prendre pour répondre aux besoins et répondre aux besoins des familles de l'Ontario.

M. Gilles Bisson: À quoi l'ancien ministre faisait-il allusion quand il a dit qu'il était pour choisir un perdant ou un gagnant ou donc, comme il disait, faire certains choix, où faire les investissements avec les perdants et les gagnants? Qu'est-ce qu'il voulait dire par là?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je ne suis pas au courant du discours qu'il a livré, donc je ne sais pas. Peut-être que notre sous-ministre a une réponse à cela. Do you have an answer to that, what the minister meant by saying that there would be losers and winners?

Mr. Philip Howell: I can't really speculate on precisely what he meant. That was a question that was raised in earlier sessions of the estimates when he was here to answer that question.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Do you believe that at times the ministry and the government have to make some decisions about where to put their money more effectively, one sector versus the other? Do you think that is an approach that's sound?

Mr. Philip Howell: I believe the government is always faced with decisions on where to allocate fiscal resources, which unfortunately are always limited. Ultimately it's the government's decision where it chooses to spend money. The government has the opportunity and the public service has the obligation to provide advice on various options and bring options forward to help facilitate the decision-making. Ultimately it is the government's call, and obviously it's a reality that there are not unlimited funds that are available, so decisions have to be made.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: So it would be fair to say that in the past governments have made the decision where to invest public dollars, one sector versus the other?

Mr. Philip Howell: Governments have the responsibility to make a decision on where they're going to choose to spend their fiscal resources. That, by definition, I think is going to end up with monies going into certain areas and monies not going into others. If you've got limited resources, choices will have to be made.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I would say on this issue—

M. Gilles Bisson: Tu peux le faire en français? on se comprend.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: De temps à autre il faut prendre une décision lorsqu'on parle de perdants et de gagnants. Si on veut être plus compétitif—un exemple est qu'on va offrir des programmes à l'industrie en leur disant : « Bien, pour devenir plus compétitif, si on

augmente ou améliore l'équipement qui va produire davantage », à ce temps-là tu peux dire, « Vous allez peut-être réduire le nombre d'emplois, mais on va sauver un grand nombre d'emplois au lieu de tout perdre ». C'est une position que le gouvernement doit toujours prendre.

I'm saying that at times, really, you could turn around and say, "Well, to be more competitive, we are ready to look at a program where we have to allocate financial support so you could upgrade your equipment to be more competitive." In this case, sometimes you could end up by having losers and winners because you will retain jobs, you would save jobs.

I was giving a good example of a company of 220 jobs. I knew that they could not compete with other countries, but if they come up with new equipment that is available, upgrade their equipment, they would save 160 jobs. They would lose 60, but they would save 160 jobs. This is a section that the government always has to look at to save as many jobs as possible.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc généralement, le gouvernement va faire un choix selon les opportunités économiques qui sont présentes dans l'économie, et avec les fonctions disponibles il va faire des choix : à qui faire les investissements publics dans le secteur privé avec les gagnants et les perdants.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Le tout est analysé avant de prendre une position : est-ce qu'ils ont besoin d'une certaine formation pour arriver puis être plus compétitifs? Donc, le ministère doit s'asseoir avec les responsables et négocier une entente et, s'il y a lieu, en avoir une pour sauver les emplois.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, pourquoi le bureau du premier ministre était-il contre cette position qui était prise par le ministre?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je ne pourrais pas répondre à celle-là? je m'excuse.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Let me phrase the question in English, just to make sure he understood the translation. You heard it? Okay, well then go.

Mr. Philip Howell: First of all, we in the ministry do not approach our duties in the concept of identifying winners and losers in terms of who support is provided to. The way that we approach our job—I think it's important to understand what the Ministry of Economic Development's programming provides in an appropriate context of the government's overall agenda for economic development. There are a number of tools that the government has at its disposal in order to ensure a competitive business climate, to ensure that companies have the opportunity to prosper, create jobs here, make profits and invest further.

Obviously the committee will have a chance in a few weeks to question the Minister of Finance on the recent tax program that was introduced in the latest budget. Tax measures are an extremely important and effective tool the government has to ensure competitiveness in the economy.

Similarly, governments—this was reflected in economic development programs in a variety of ministries—

have an opportunity to provide support to various companies. The way you want to do that to get the most effective outcome is to develop programs that are application-based and programs that have fairly clearly defined criteria around them in order to provide support to companies where it's going to meet economic development objectives of the government.

From time to time there are going to be situations that arise where there are economic development considerations that perhaps can't be met through any existing programs, and at that point any government has the opportunity to craft specific support programs to deal with that.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc clairement, d'après ce que je comprends, monsieur Lalonde, c'est qu'un gouvernement a des fonds limités pour être capable d'assister le secteur privé et que parfois un gouvernement doit choisir où on va faire ces investissements selon les besoins de l'économie et la possibilité de succès. Donc, si je comprends bien, c'est la politique du ministère du Développement économique qui va choisir les gagnants et les perdants.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Mais elle doit choisir les gagnants et les perdants. Je devrais dire que nous regardons toujours pour que tout le monde soit gagnant dans les positions que le gouvernement doit prendre.

M. Gilles Bisson: Des équipements, à qui—

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je dis bien que tout le monde est gagnant. Le payeur de taxes, c'est lui. Il y a un payeur de taxes en Ontario comme il n'y a qu'un payeur de taxes au Canada. Puis les positions qui sont prises par le gouvernement doivent être pour le bien-être de tous les gens, la force ouvrière aussi bien que le payeur de taxes.

M. Gilles Bisson: La question que je vous pose est que, clairement, d'après ce que j'ai compris de vous et du sous-ministre, c'est qu'à la fin de la journée le gouvernement fait des choix.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Mais c'est normal qu'il doit faire des choix. S'il t'arrive que tu me demandes de l'aide financière puis tu n'as rien pour prouver comment ça va être bénéfique pour les employés aussi bien que pour les payeurs de taxes de l'Ontario, définitivement. Mais si tu arrives avec un plan de travail, « a business plan » comme on l'appelle en anglais, qui ne rencontre pas les critères du gouvernement—quand je dis « ne rencontre pas les critères du gouvernement », c'est pour dire qu'il doit bien détailler s'il est vraiment rentable de faire une avance d'argent ou un octroi à cette entreprise—définitivement, la compagnie ou l'industrie ne sera pas gagnante.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, le gouvernement fait des choix. Puis la question que je me pose est, pour quelle raison le bureau du premier ministre était-il si contre, et en colère contre, les commentaires faits par le ministre Bryant quand il a dit : « Il faut choisir des gagnants et des perdants » ? Est-ce que ça marque un changement de politique de la part du gouvernement provincial et du bureau du premier ministre?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Ce ne serait pas juste de ma part de commenter sur ça. Je n'ai pas lu le discours qui a été prononcé puis je ne connais pas les commentaires qui ont été faits par le premier ministre dans ce cas-ci.

M. Gilles Bisson: Mais tu étais bien l'adjoint parlementaire du ministre Bryant dans le temps qu'il a fait ces commentaires il y a trois semaines? oui ou non?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: J'étais l'adjoint parlementaire, oui, et puis on n'a pas le temps de tout regarder. Un ministre est appelé à de différentes fonctions presque tous les jours, et puis moi, je suis appelé pour le remplacer de temps à autre. Je peux faire un commentaire sur les endroits où je me suis présenté, mais sur les autres commentaires je ne peux pas.

M. Gilles Bisson: Quand un ministre fait une annonce qui marque un changement de direction d'un ministère qui va prendre une position qui est différente que celle du passé, n'y a-t-il pas une conversation qui se passe dans votre ministère puis dans votre gouvernement qui dit : « Il y aura une annonce et vous avez besoin d'être au courant, que le ministre va faire certains commentaires qui annoncent un changement de politique de la part du gouvernement »? Vous n'avez pas eu une conversation?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je peux dire que j'ai des rencontres avec les gens du ministère régulièrement, toutes les semaines. On se tient en contact tous les jours.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc, c'est qu'il ne vous a pas parlé et il n'a pas parlé à toi comme l'assistant parlementaire, ni au sous-ministre, ni au premier ministre? c'est ça qui est arrivé? Il a fait ça lui-même de son propre idée?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je ne peux pas commenter. Je ne peux faire aucun commentaire dans ce cas-ci.

M. Gilles Bisson: Mais d'après ce que je comprends, c'est un peu la politique du ministère de choisir où ils vont faire les investissements. J'essaie de comprendre pour quelle raison le bureau du premier ministre a fait—vous allez avoir une chance, monsieur le sous-ministre, de répondre. Mais j'essaie de comprendre : pour quelle raison y avait-il une différence d'opinion entre le premier ministre et le ministre responsable sur ces commentaires? Puis aujourd'hui il est parti. Une partie de la raison pour laquelle il est parti est ces commentaires. Donc, j'essaie de comprendre où le changement de politique est arrivé et pourquoi le premier ministre est contre.

Monsieur le sous-ministre, vous voulez répondre? Monsieur Lalonde?

Mr. Philip Howell: There wasn't a policy shift in the ministry. The ministry is not involved in choosing winners and losers, at least in the context that I believe I understand your question to be coming from. What we do have in place in the ministry are a number of economic development programs that are application-based. The companies that have criteria that are specified can come forward, and against those criteria decisions are made in terms of support going to companies. Ultimately, it is the minister who makes the decision as to which company gets that support, but it's with the benefit of a lot of due diligence on the application, it's with the benefit of a lot of interaction from the initial application to the final one to ensure that there's value for the taxpayer dollars that you're going to be investing and so on.

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M. Gilles Bisson: Je comprends très bien qu'un gouvernement va faire des choix selon les priorités. La question que je demande c'est que l'ancien ministre, M. Bryant, a fait ses commentaires, qu'il a besoin de choisir des gagnants et des perdants quand ça vient à certains secteurs de l'économie. Suite à ces commentaires-là, le bureau du premier ministre n'était pas d'accord. Donc, cela me dit que soit il y a eu un changement de politique où le premier ministre essaye de dire, « On va donner l'argent à tous et on va essayer de plaire à tous », soit le ministre lui-même a fait ses commentaires sans l'autorisation du cabinet pour le faire. C'est lequel? Est-ce que le premier ministre annonce un changement à la direction de ce ministère ou est-ce que M. Bryant est en train de faire des commentaires sur ses propres idées, selon lui comme ministre?

Mr. Philip Howell: My understanding is that Minister Bryant was offered the job and decided to take that job, and it was with the city of Toronto.

M. Gilles Bisson: Mais ce n'est pas ma question? non. Ma question : un ministère fait des décisions selon des priorités, où ils vont faire des investissements. Vous avez dit vous-même, selon vos paroles, qu'un ministère a seulement tant d'argent pour être capable d'investir et il faut faire des choix. Donc l'ancien ministre, M. Bryant, s'en va au club économique et fait une annonce qui dit qu'on continue dans cette veine—on va faire le choix des gagnants et des perdants—et tout à coup le bureau du premier ministre n'est pas d'accord. Donc, soit il y a eu un changement de direction de ce ministère où on va arrêter cette direction de prendre des décisions selon où faire nos investissements selon nos besoins, ou—

Mr. Bob Delaney: Chair, on a point of order: I don't think it is appropriate to speculate on what the former minister may have been thinking at the time. I think in estimates we can examine the activities of the ministry as they are or going forward, or talk about the results-based plan. But perhaps Mr. Bisson would like to rethink his question in terms of—

M. Gilles Bisson: Certainement pas. On a le droit de demander des questions ici au ministère. Il y a une politique qui est en place, ça fait assez longtemps, qu'un ministère va décider selon les moyens qu'il a où il va faire ses investissements. Un ministère ne peut pas donner à tous? c'est bien simple. Ils ont besoin de faire des choix. Le ministère dit qu'on a besoin de faire des investissements dans certains secteurs selon la décision politique du gouvernement, quel secteur il veut aider le plus parce qu'il pense qu'il y a une opportunité et qu'il y a un montant limité d'argent à investir. Donc, la question que je pose est : y a-t-il eu un changement de politique de ce ministère?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Absolument pas. Il n'y a eu aucun changement, et puis dans toute position qu'un gouvernement doit prendre, aussi bien dans les débats à la chambre, il y a toujours des personnes qui se disent « perdants », mais je dois dire que tous les gens, tout le public est gagnant parce que la position qui est prise est

pour le bien de tous les payeurs de taxes de l'Ontario. Lorsqu'il y a une demande pour une assistance financière pour un projet ou une industrie, le gouvernement, selon les politiques qui sont établies, des fois ne rencontre pas la demande, ne rencontre pas les politiques qui sont en place. Donc c'est une façon de parler : on peut dire qu'ils sont les perdants, mais ce n'est pas vraiment ça. Quand tu regardes à fond, ce n'est pas ça qu'il veut dire : « Il est perdant? il n'a pas été capable d'avoir l'approbation de recevoir une subvention. »

M. Gilles Bisson: Je comprends très bien le point, monsieur Lalonde, et il vient juste de répondre à la moitié de ma question, qui est : le ministère, selon vos paroles, va continuer de faire des décisions selon les fonds limités qu'ils ont et selon où on pense qu'on peut faire le plus d'effort pour assister l'économie de l'Ontario.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Exactement.

M. Gilles Bisson: La réponse est oui, donc j'ai simplement demandé, est-ce que le bureau du premier ministre veut changer la politique du ministère?—la prochaine question. Si le ministère dit que la politique du ministère est telle que vous l'avez énoncée, est-ce que le premier ministre annonce à travers, comment dire, le désaccord qu'il a eu avec M. Bryant un changement de cette politique?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je dois dire que dans ce cas-ci dans tout programme qui existe, de temps à autre les officiels du ministère se rencontrent pour regarder quels sont les nouveaux besoins. Là, nous traversons dans une période économique très faible et on veut s'assurer à ce que nous ayons une économie forte en Ontario. Donc, de temps à autre il faut s'arrêter pour regarder quels sont les changements, s'il y a lieu d'en avoir, à être apportés? C'est ça qui arrive. Mais dans ce point-ci encore on regarde, quand on sait qu'il y a des négociations qui sont en cours avec une certaine industrie, et puis on a des politiques en place et les gens du cabinet peuvent regarder les politiques, s'il y a lieu, à être modifiées.

M. Gilles Bisson: Donc vous me dites que le bureau du premier ministre n'indique aucune différence dans l'approche du ministère du Développement économique envers ses politiques de choisir dans quel secteur de l'économie ils vont faire des investissements?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Vous dites : « aucune importance »?

M. Gilles Bisson: Non, non. Je vais encore répéter : vous me dites que le bureau du premier ministre n'indique aucun changement à la politique du ministère envers les choix faits pour les investissements par ce ministère.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Je vais demander au sous-ministre de répondre à celle-là.

Mr. Philip Howell: I have had no indication of anything other than business as usual in terms of the economic development program of the Ministry of Economic Development.

M. Gilles Bisson: Vous avez répondu aux deux tiers de la question. Le premier tiers est que le ministre a annoncé ce que le ministère fait d'habitude. Deux, vous

me dites que le premier ministre n'indique aucun changement à la politique du ministère. Donc, la dernière partie de la question est : pour quelle raison le bureau du premier ministre était-il en désaccord avec les annonces faites par ce ministre quand il a parlé au club économique? Je ne comprends pas. C'est une question très simple et claire.

Mr. Philip Howell: I don't know that they have or have not disagreed with Minister Bryant. There's been a lot of speculation—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He's no longer there, so I think they had.

Mr. Philip Howell: Minister Bryant was offered—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I think you are speculating here, though.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Chair, this is well inside the realm of speculation.

Mr. Philip Howell: Minister Bryant was offered an appointment to head up Invest Toronto. He chose to take that. Whether he pursued it or not, he ended up being offered that appointment. He has taken it, and he obviously will be leaving as an MPP; he has left as a minister. The work of the ministry continues. At the moment, I have heard nothing to indicate that there's any change being requested in terms of our program.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's all I have. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Three minutes left, so you used 23 minutes. Now over to the government party, then.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm not going to take my full time. I know that the deputy has another very important engagement. I'm just going to ask one question of the deputy. We are in an unprecedented time in terms of what's happening globally in the economy right now, and I think one of the trends we're seeing is that there's a lot of coordination, collaboration and co-operation taking place between governments globally. We're seeing the same trend taking place here within Canada. Can you, from a departmental point of view, explain to us the kind of work you are probably doing with the officials in the federal government to make sure that the interests of Ontario companies are being put ahead to make sure that we weather the storm?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I'll ask the deputy minister to answer that one.

Mr. Philip Howell: Thank you. Sure. There's always collaboration and contact between federal governments and departments and their provincial ministerial counterparts. I would say that one thing that the economic situation over the past year has done is to really focus attention on the need for a more collaborative and productive relationship between the federal government and the province. I think we've seen that play out in a lot of ways. Certainly, in the context of the support for Chrysler and General Motors, there's been very close co-operation, not just between the Premier's office and the Prime Minister's office but between ourselves and Industry Canada, and also between the Ministry of Finance and the Department of Finance.

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Similarly, with the federal government stimulus package, a variety of ministries have been working closely with their federal counterparts to facilitate flowing that money and to ensure that Ontario business and industry, Ontario people and Ontario communities benefit from the support that's there.

I would say that over the past nine months there has been a marked change in the degree and extent of collaboration, although it's always there, just as a matter of good business practice in ensuring that—as Monsieur Lalonde said earlier, there is only one taxpayer, and their needs need to be served.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much. I really want to thank Monsieur Lalonde for once again picking up the ball and running with it with the change in ministers in the last few days, and to the deputy minister, and through you to all your staff for the really good work they're doing in some very challenging economic times. I really do appreciate the hard work. Thank you very much for taking the time. I know you're quite busy and travelling a fair bit, advancing the interests of Ontario, so I really appreciate you being here.

On that note, Mr. Chair, we have no further questions on the government side.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Thank you very much, Mr. Naqvi. Mr. O'Toole, you have six minutes.

Mr. John O'Toole: Very good. I appreciate the opportunity, limited as it is. I've been left a few questions to put on the record and I'll do that as quickly as possible. This isn't an opportunity to just sort of shoot the breeze; they're some specific questions. I'm actually going to be referring to the results-based plan briefing book. Basically, they're straightforward questions, reasonably technical. As I said, I've only got six minutes.

The first question I have is with respect to the Next Generation of Jobs Fund. I'm looking at page 51. That particular fund was \$125.9 million in 2008-09, but only spent \$25 million. I guess the question is, what happened to the \$100 million?

Mr. Philip Howell: Mr. O'Toole, I'm going to ask the director responsible for that program, Fernando Traficante, to address that question.

Mr. Fernando Traficante: Mr. O'Toole, two things happened. One is, the program was in start-up mode in the first year, and it took some time both for applications to come in and then to be processed and brought to ministers for decisions and approved, announced and signed. So we weren't able to flow as much cash as we were hoping to in that first fiscal year. The result of that was that we took most of the money that was unspent and had it reprofiled into future years.

Mr. John O'Toole: I see that there. I didn't write the question, obviously, but I'm looking at page 51; it's pretty obvious that you've loaded it into 2009-10.

The next question here: The Ontario automotive investment strategy is another interesting one, which I'm somewhat familiar with in terms of that sector. In

2008-09, you had \$108.327 million, and you spent \$41 million, but you've actually cut the program in forward years, in a sector that's dying, by 29%; you've only loaded up \$77 million. Could you give us a brief explanation of that strategic change?

Mr. Philip Howell: I'll ask Ken Albright, the ADM of sectors, to address that, please.

Mr. Ken Albright: Certainly. The Ontario automotive investment strategy was a \$500-million program over five years. Money was spent as investments were made. So in terms of contracts with manufacturers, it's essentially fully committed at this point. It's just a matter of the timing of those cash flows being made. And there have been, as you know, a number of changes in the state of the industry in the past year.

Mr. John O'Toole: How far back does that program date? Is that any part of the Beacon and those other projects?

Mr. Ken Albright: It includes Beacon, it includes the Ford Centennial project, Chrysler and others.

Mr. John O'Toole: Is there a detailed list available of that? It would be helpful if I had that, because those are the questions that I'm really interested in.

Mr. Ken Albright: We could certainly make one available to you.

Mr. John O'Toole: Very good. I'd appreciate that.

I'm going to just pursue this one; it's more for an explanation, perhaps. It's the next line on that page: "Ontario automotive investment strategy fund—Interest incentives." Now, this program here is really being chopped as well, by 99%. It was \$24 million; they spent \$23 million. The previous year, 2007-08, they spent \$22 million, but looking forward, it's only allocated \$292,000. A strategic change there? What's this?

Mr. Ken Albright: The interest incentive refers to the General Motors project. There's a \$175-million interest-free loan, and the interest concession would be that portion that's attributed to that loan in that given year.

Mr. John O'Toole: Okay, very good. Those are all good answers, that's for sure.

I'm going to move slightly, but it's not totally. The really interesting one is the dropped program, and I think this is the "Large-scale strategic investment fund." It was \$5 million, and it's completely scrapped. It's a fund, the large-scale strategic investment fund.

Mr. Ken Albright: The large-scale strategic investment program was grandfathered into the Ontario automotive investment strategy when that fund was created. It is actually two projects. One is Navistar and the other is Brose.

Mr. John O'Toole: Okay, how did the Navistar program make out? Did they actually keep jobs or—

Mr. Ken Albright: They did. It was designed to respond to the announced closure of the facility at the time.

Mr. John O'Toole: So did we retain jobs or not? Was it just—

Mr. Ken Albright: We retained jobs and in return for our investments we actually got an R&D facility in Windsor.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You're down to just over a minute there, Mr. O'Toole.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's tough, you know. I'd seek unanimous consent for more time, but—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I don't think you're going to get it.

Mr. John O'Toole: I would like to put on the record here that there are questions outstanding here on the AMIS program as well, and I'd like to submit those to the clerk and perhaps just have a response. That's the best way. They're straightforward questions. For instance, one is—I'm going on to page 58 of the report I referred to earlier. It says that the AMIS operating assets were \$100 million in 2008-09 but show interim actuals of \$36 million—I guess explaining some of those numbers when they're large numbers on a project that's so important. That's the thrust of about eight questions here similar to that: different funds and how come the money is either disposed or not disposed of. Okay, I'll just leave the questions with you?

Mr. Philip Howell: Yes, and we would be pleased to answer those and get them back to the clerk in a timely way.

Mr. John O'Toole: In the interest of expediting time, thank you very much, and good luck, Mr. Lalonde, as well. I hope they give you the full salary.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Thank you very much, Mr. O'Toole. That brings the end of the rotation today, and of our time.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I thought I had three minutes.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): No, we asked for unanimous consent originally, at the beginning of the session, that we'd use 26, 26 and 6.5. You didn't use—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: When I came back I thought I still had three minutes. That's why I was back.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): No, you don't have three minutes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Can I table some questions?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, you can table some questions.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —just for the record—

Mr. Philip Howell: Mr. Vice-Chair, we have answers, which we'll table with the clerk today, for questions that were asked early in the previous two or three sessions of estimates. And we will take these tabled questions and also Mr. O'Toole's tabled questions and we'll get answers back in a timely way.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): That's very much appreciated.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just for the record, I'm just going to table; it'll take two minutes.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay, do you want to read them in?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to follow up on the GM financing that the province will be providing. (1) Will the total value of the provincial package be in the \$2-billion range? (2) Will it consist primarily of loans? (3) What will be the interest rate and repayment terms of any loan component? (4) What is the requirement of GM in terms of employment levels; capital investment; Ontario footprint—in other words, percentage of North American production; dealing with the pension deficiencies, what are the annual payments that GM will have to make into the fund to make up for the unfunded liability? (5) What are the penalties if the above terms are not met by GM? (6) Will Ontario get either (a) board representation or (b) an equity position for lending that money?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Thank you very much. Those questions will be tabled, as Mr. Bisson has mentioned.

With that, I'd ask the questions.

Shall vote 901 carry? Carried.

Shall vote 902 carry? Carried.

Shall the 2009-10 estimates of the Ministry of Economic Development carry? Carried.

Shall I report the 2009-10 estimates of the Ministry of Economic Development to the House? That's carried.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much today to the ministry staff, the deputy, Mr. Howell. Mr. Lalonde, thank you so much for attending, and have a safe trip on your journey to New York.

With that, the meeting is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1620.

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