



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
First Session

Select Special
Ethics and Accountability
Committee

Friday, December 18, 2015
9 a.m.

Transcript No. 29-1-3

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Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee

Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (ND), Chair
Payne, Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (ND), Deputy Chair

Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (W)
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)
Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (ND)
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W)
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)*
Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (PC)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND)
Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (ND)**
McLean, Stephanie V., Calgary-Varsity (ND)
Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (ND)
Miranda, Ricardo, Calgary-Cross (ND)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (ND)
Nixon, Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (ND)
Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)
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9 a.m. Friday, December 18, 2015

[Ms Gray in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call the meeting of the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee to order. Welcome to members and staff in attendance.

To begin, I'm going to ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, and then we will address members on the phone. We do have a few on the phone, so we'll figure out how to best work with that situation. I'll begin to my right.

Mr. Nielsen: Chris Nielsen, MLA, Edmonton-Decore.

Ms Miller: Barb Miller, MLA, Red Deer-South.

Loyola: Rod Loyola, MLA for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Cortes-Vargas: Estefania Cortes-Vargas, Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Miranda: Ricardo Miranda, MLA, Calgary-Cross.

Ms Renaud: Marie Renaud, St. Albert.

Mr. Malkinson: Brian Malkinson, Calgary-Currie, subbing for Stephanie McLean.

Mr. van Dijken: It's Glenn van Dijken, MLA for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Dr. Starke: Richard Starke, MLA, Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Mr. Clark: Good morning. Greg Clark, MLA, Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Reynolds: Good morning. Rob Reynolds, Law Clerk.

Dr. Amato: Sarah Amato, research officer.

Dr. Massolin: Good morning. Philip Massolin, manager of research services.

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk.

The Chair: Good morning. I'm Christina Gray, MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

If we could have the members on the phone introduce themselves.

Dr. Swann: Good morning. It's David Swann in Calgary.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Payne: Good morning. Brandy Payne, Calgary-Acadia.

Mr. Nixon: Good morning. Jason Nixon, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Hunter: Grant Hunter, Cardston-Taber-Warner.

The Chair: I believe we have one more on the phone.

Mr. W. Anderson: Wayne Anderson from Highwood.

The Chair: Fantastic. Thank you very much. To those on the phone: I will be listening for any time you'd like to speak. I'm also on Lync, and you are welcome to send me a message to add yourself to the speakers list when we get to those portions of the meeting.

For the record I will note that Mr. Malkinson is an official substitute for Ms McLean. Mr. Hunter is an official substitute for Mr. Cyr.

We have a few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. A reminder again that the microphone consoles are operated by the *Hansard* staff, so there's no need for members to touch them. Please keep cellphones, iPhones, and BlackBerrys off the table as these may interfere with the audiofeed. Audio of the committee proceedings is streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Hansard*. Audio access and meeting transcripts are obtained via the Legislative Assembly website.

The first item on our agenda is approval of the agenda. Does anyone have any changes to make? Seeing none, I would ask a member to please move a motion to approve our agenda. Moved by Dr. Starke that the agenda for the December 18, 2015, meeting of the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee be adopted as distributed. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

Next is the minutes from our last meeting. Are there any errors or omissions to note? Seeing none, I would ask that a member move adoption of the minutes. Moved by Ms Miller that the minutes of the October 22, 2015, meeting of the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee be adopted as circulated. All those in favour? Opposed? That motion is carried.

On our agenda we have some information items. First, the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act. With this session and consideration of the main estimates it has been about a month since this committee last met. With this in mind I wanted to briefly give everyone an update on our review of the whistle-blower protection act. Committee members will recall that this act is to be comprehensively reviewed and that the review be completed within a one-year time frame.

A stakeholder list for PIDA was distributed for consideration at our last meeting, and committee members were given one week to make any additions they felt necessary. Using the final version of this list, letters have been sent out to all identified stakeholders inviting them to make a written submission regarding the act by January 4, 2016. These letters went out a month ago, and we have received our first three submissions, so that has begun to reach us. Those are available internally for committee members on the OurHouse website to review.

Our research staff during this time have also completed a crossjurisdictional comparison of related legislation in other areas. This document has been provided for information, and I'd like to invite Dr. Amato to give us a quick run-through before we move on to our next item of business.

Dr. Amato: Hi. Good morning. I'm just drawing your attention to this crossjurisdictional document. As was mentioned, the document was prepared by research services in response to a request by the committee to have a frame of reference to compare Alberta's Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act to similar legislation in other jurisdictions in Canada.

As I just said, the purpose of the document is to provide a frame of reference. It will likely be most useful towards the end of the committee's deliberations, at the end of the process, when it comes time to compare provisions in Alberta's PIDA to those of other legislation across Canada to understand how other jurisdictions in Canada manage the process of, for example, disclosures or reprisals. What the document does is that it compares legislation in 10 jurisdictions in Canada. All of these jurisdictions have public interest disclosure legislation, and the document notes both similarities and differences between the provisions of each legislation.

To take one example, disclosure to the commissioner – this is on page 15 of the document. What you might note there is that Alberta is the only jurisdiction in Canada other than Nunavut to require internal disclosures as the first recourse except in specific circumstances. So what this means is that in Alberta an employee of the public service who suspects or knows of a wrongdoing must first make a disclosure to his or her designated or chief officer except under very specific circumstances, which are described in the act, when that employee may go directly to the commissioner. In all other jurisdictions in Canada except Nunavut an employee may make a disclosure of wrongdoing directly to the commissioner or his equivalent in all circumstances. The document provides this sort of comparative information, which, as I said, may be particularly useful as the committee completes its review.

Just as a footnote, one jurisdiction that is not discussed in the document is Quebec. Quebec has just introduced – just; it's at the introduction stage – Bill 87, which is An Act to Facilitate the Disclosure of Wrongdoings within Public Bodies. Bill 87 is in the introductory stage, but it is interesting because so far its provisions are very similar to other public interest disclosure legislation across Canada. We can certainly provide more information about that as it proceeds through its process.

Thank you very much. That's the introduction.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Are there any questions for Dr. Amato?

Loyola: I'm just wondering if you could elaborate on any differences that you saw in comparison to Alberta or anything that you'd like to mention.

9:10

Dr. Amato: Well, I think that the document is particularly useful in noting differences. I would look at differences in the definition of wrongdoing across Canada. I would look carefully at the section on disclosure, as I mentioned, both processes for internal disclosure and disclosure to the commissioner. I would also look closely at the section on reprisal, the discussion on motivation for reprisal, and then the processes of: whom do you disclose your reprisal to? That differs across Canada. Some jurisdictions in Canada have compensation for employees who suffer reprisals. I'm missing one: the public disclosure provisions. Public disclosure in some jurisdictions in Canada occurs only in one circumstance. It's always only to do with one particular wrongdoing, and that's the reporting of imminent – it's a complicated one – danger to persons and the environment, but it occurs in some jurisdictions in Canada. There are particular processes for that and not in others.

That's the essential list, I would say, of five, and then there are more discussed in the document. There are lots of similarities as well, which are very, very interesting to note and, I think, probably quite important.

The Chair: Any further questions?

Dr. Swann: Thank you for that overview. What is the implication of Alberta being the only jurisdiction that requires internal reporting as a first action?

Dr. Amato: I just would say that it's not the only jurisdiction; Nunavut as well. I think that perhaps that's a question for the stakeholders and for the Public Interest Commissioner.

Dr. Swann: Clearly, part of the reason for whistle-blower legislation is to allow people to raise questions without risk of retaliation or impact on their work. Other provinces, apart from

Nunavut, have decided that to be meaningful, I think, and to reassure those that would blow the whistle on wrongdoing, they have to provide that opportunity to go outside the organization for anonymity because, as we all know, employers can find various ways of affecting people's jobs quite apart from firing and quite apart from an immediate action if there was a problem there. So I guess it's an important issue for the committee to address at some level and decide whether this provision is in the interests of transparency and in exposing of wrongdoing or if it's an important first step for an organization to try to address problems within itself.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your comments, Dr. Swann. Dr. Massolin, did you have a comment as well?

Dr. Massolin: Yes. Thanks very much, Madam Chair. I do. I think this will come up a little bit later when you notify the committee about the document received from the Public Interest Commissioner. I think Dr. Swann and other committee members may be interested in looking at that document, especially page 5, with respect to what the commissioner's views are on this issue. There's some interesting information there as well. I would expect that the committee would hear from the commissioner at some point again, so there could be questions asked.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Dr. Massolin.

Dr. Swann: One other question, rather – I should know this. Contracted individuals such as physicians in the health system who are not employees of the health system: what is their role? Are they protected under whistle-blower legislation?

Dr. Massolin: Madam Chair, I can start. I think, again, that document that the committee just received does speak to that issue in terms of, you know, the implications and even recommendations.

Dr. Swann: Okay. So we need to do some more review of that.

Dr. Massolin: Right. I think perhaps Dr. Amato would have information with respect to some cross-jurisdictional comparison if I'm not mistaken.

Dr. Amato: I do. I'm just looking it up.

Dr. Swann: I hearken back here to the time around the changes in the health care system, where there was a lot of concern around intimidation of physicians and in some cases the firing of a couple of physicians around lung cancer access-to-surgery issues. There was a call for an inquiry, in fact, by the Liberal and other opposition parties, an inquiry into intimidation and bullying and physicians' role as advocates for their patients and how that came into conflict sometimes with the system. It was in that context that I think physicians became less and less willing to speak out on issues that were not working well in the health care system. I certainly had a number of questions about, then, the need for whistle-blower legislation, which I don't believe was active at that time. I think it was still going through the process at the time. So it's relevant to a number of professionals who work in contract relationship to the government of Alberta.

Dr. Amato: I was just trying to look up the jurisdictions where there are similar provisions to what you're talking about in place, and the first one that came to mind was Manitoba. It's the second one that I didn't remember, and it's the federal jurisdiction, the

government of Canada. It's discussed on page 23 of the crossjurisdictional, and what I state there is that Alberta "does not extend protection to contractors who have a significant business relationship with the provincial government." In Manitoba that protection is extended for reprisals, and in, I think, a fairly interesting way the government of Canada also extends protection to contractors who have a significant business relationship with the federal government. Those provisions are discussed on page 23, and they're interesting to consider in relationship to Alberta's PIDA.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Amato, and thank you, Dr. Swann, for the questions.

With your understanding I'm going to end questions on this topic for now. What we have is the crossjurisdictional comparison of related legislation in other areas, that's been briefed to us. We have also received, from the Public Interest Commissioner, a briefing including their recommended changes to PIDA, and that document is available to us on our internal committee website. Both of these items should be received for information now and considered, and then we will be bringing them both forward at a subsequent meeting for further discussion. Is that reasonable to all members? Okay. Wonderful. Thank you very much. Thank you, Dr. Amato and Dr. Massolin.

Our next agenda item refers to Bill 203, the Election (Restrictions on Government Advertising) Amendment Act, 2015. On November 16, 2015, the Assembly referred Bill 203, sponsored by Mr. Strankman, to this committee for consideration. This bill would amend the Election Act, which is also part of our mandate. That bill, that information, is now referred to our committee.

Mr. Reynolds, is there anything further that you would like to add or that should be said on this at this point?

Mr. Reynolds: Thank you, Chair. As members may recall, Bill 203 was referred to this committee by a motion on November 16 in the Assembly. It was referred to the committee after it had received second reading. I point that out because the role of the committee on a bill that's received second reading is a bit different than before it's received second reading. Second reading indicates that the Assembly has approved the bill in principle, so changes to the bill or recommendations are more limited than if it hadn't passed second reading.

9:20

Bill 203 is before the committee, as part of your mandate, to look at, really under the provisions of the standing orders. Keen proceduralists will know that it was referred under Standing Order 78.1. Committees are allowed, under 78.2, to have public hearings on bills that are referred to a committee after they receive second reading, and the committee issues a report under 78.3. We've put them all together. Isn't that great?

In any event, there you have the bill before you. The only consideration – and this is a hypothetical – is that if, for instance, hypothetically speaking, the Legislature prorogued, then Bill 203 would no longer exist on the Order Paper. The Order Paper is, as it were, wiped clean at a prorogation. But one might think that even if that happened – of course, it hasn't – the idea incorporated in Bill 203 is very much with the committee, and it's something that, I would say, the Assembly has asked the committee to consider.

Thank you, Madam Chair. If there are any questions, I'd be pleased to respond.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

As chair of the committee I think it's really important to just address and say that we are committed, as this committee, to

looking at the Election Act to review and address the contents of this bill both now and in the future.

Are there any other comments regarding Bill 203 and its referral to our committee? Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. Just with regard to the bill, I take it that we will continue the research necessary to get an understanding of other jurisdictions, how they're handling this type of situation, and that we will continue to move this along in a way that we can get some kind of clarification on what we need to do here.

The Chair: Absolutely. As far as research requests, we will be talking about that under item 6, so let's make sure that we articulate research requests around Bill 203. I believe it has already been noted by our research team on that particular item.

Regarding responsibilities on Bill 203 having been referred to us, I understand that we are responsible for issuing a report regarding Bill 203 while it remains on the Order Paper. If in the future it is not on the Order Paper, I believe that rather than issuing a report, making sure that any addressing of Bill 203 is included in our final recommendations will then meet that requirement.

Mr. Clark: Recognizing that we're talking about this bill, it is, even just leafing through it here now, a remarkably simple bill and, I think, pretty straightforward. I just want to state for the record how important I believe it is that this committee not just consider that bill but, you know, that we put this sort of provision in our final report. I think that probably we all agree that that's something we should do. I think it's interesting that we're considering this bill, but irrespective of whether the Assembly prorogues and it finds its way off the Order Paper, I think the principles of that bill are absolutely vital and essential to the outcome of this committee. I just want to make that abundantly clear from my perspective and make sure that's on the record. I imagine that my colleagues around the table probably agree with that, and I would think that of all the things we're going to deal with, this is perhaps one of the easier ones. I think that that is important to be said and captured.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clark.

Mr. Reynolds: Sorry. For people who may be listening or reading the transcript later, I just thought I'd indicate that Bill 203, as the title indicates, deals with restrictions on government advertising. The purpose of the bill is to place limitations on government advertising during election periods and by-election periods. I'm sort of wrapping up where perhaps I should have started, but there we are.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

Any further discussion? Mr. Nielsen.

Mr. Nielsen: Yeah. I would certainly have to agree with my colleagues. Let's find out where this takes us and what we come up with and get as much information as we can so that we have it to consider this and look at implementing it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any further comments? Okay.

Thank you, everyone. That is where we stand on the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act and Bill 203, which has been referred to our committee.

Business arising from the previous meeting. We have for our consideration a deferred motion that is currently on the floor. At our

meeting on September 29, 2015, Mr. Clark moved the following motion, that

the [Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee] undertake a comprehensive consultation with Albertans, including but not limited to in-person hearings to be held in both urban and rural Alberta and also including an online feedback capability.

Does anyone have any comments on the motion today? Member Miranda.

Miranda: Thank you, Chair. I don't know if this is the right time, but I do have an amendment I would like to introduce. Procedurally is this where we start, or do you want to have further discussion first?

The Chair: Procedurally that would be fine.

Miranda: Okay. Perfect. If that's the case, can I start reading it for the benefit of those listening?

The Chair: If you could please read it into the record.

Miranda: Okay. Thank you. Here's my proposed amendment. I move that

the motion be amended (a) by adding after "that" "after receiving and reviewing written submissions" and (b) by striking out "undertake a comprehensive consultation with Albertans, including but not limited to in-person hearings to be held in both urban and rural Alberta and also including an online feedback capability" and substituting "determine the manner of public consultations with Albertans after assessing the most effective and affordable means, which may include in-person hearings in urban and rural Alberta and some form of online feedback."

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We have an amendment to the motion on the floor. Is there any discussion?

Miranda: If I may speak to the motion?

The Chair: Yes, you may, Member Miranda.

Miranda: Thank you. I think we had a very fulsome discussion last time. We did receive some documents. My intention originally in adjourning debate on this issue was so that I could actually take a look at the documents that were presented then. Since then, of course, we have seen other factors that come into play. There is absolutely a commitment on the part, I believe, of all of us to ensure that every Albertan is heard and that we are consulting and receiving that information. This committee has that obligation, and I think that nothing is more important than the Election Act. However, in the context that we're in right now and given the economic climate, we do have a responsibility. Actually, even in the best of economic times, we always have the responsibility to ensure that the money that we spend is in the most effective and affordable way of doing business and conducting that work for Albertans.

With that in mind, I believe that the motion here allows us flexibility without committing us to taking specific actions that could perhaps be overly expensive at this time. I can tell you, for example, that from what I understand and from what I've seen in other committees, there is a substantive cost when you have off-site meetings because you do require the presence of *Hansard* and other support people to travel with them. Those different costs, from what I understand, do add up substantially.

Having said that, however, I do think that this motion speaks to the intent, which is actually to be engaging, to be receptive to all

the information that can be provided. So I would ask all of us to support this motion.

Thank you.

9:30

The Chair: I have Ms Miller and then Mr. Clark.

Ms Miller: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just was involved with the heritage trust public meeting, and I got a breakdown of costs for the one meeting: the radio advertising, \$6,500; local print, \$10,000; limited provincial print, \$10,000; and the broadcast was \$7,500, which is \$34,000, and that doesn't include any travelling costs because we had it in this room. Ms Dotimas was the one who got the information for me.

Could you elaborate on any of the extra costs for travelling?

The Chair: I will ask our committee clerk to take that question.

Ms Miller: Okay.

Ms Rempel: Sure. Just to be clear, you are wondering about the extra costs if you went off site?

Ms Miller: Right, based on previous heritage trust's travelling to other places.

Ms Rempel: Okay. I mean, I think that we would probably stand by the estimates that we handed out at the last meeting, which were, you know, using Calgary as an example, but we think it's pretty fair regardless of where you end up. It didn't include any costs for televising; that would be a whole separate thing, which could probably vary considerably depending on where you are. But it worked out – I guess if you take local advertising out of it, because you did mention that in your numbers, you'd be looking at about \$17,000 to \$18,000 on top of that.

Ms Miller: Okay. Our cost for broadcast was also the streaming, so it was basically one or the other or like they were both included in the same price. Streaming was the same price.

Ms Rempel: Right. Yeah. I guess I'm just saying that the number that we gave at the previous meeting, \$27,500, did include \$10,000 for local advertising because presumably if you travel, the purpose is to get people to come to the meeting. We didn't include any televising, whether television or video streaming. We do, of course, always audio stream.

Ms Miller: So did that include the extra staff that had to travel and hotels and everything?

Ms Rempel: It included extra staff. It didn't include, you know, folks such as myself, who would just be there regardless. It included the technology requirements for kind of the usual services as far as *Hansard* and online audio, that sort of thing. It included meals. It included member and staff travel costs, use of a meeting venue, yeah, basically just all the extras that you start having as soon as you move out of this facility.

Ms Miller: Thank you.

The Chair: Before I invite Mr. Clark to speak, I'll just note for the members who are on the phone that a copy of this amendment has been sent to you by e-mail.

Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Madam Chair. Where to begin? I find it remarkable, what the government members choose to decide is

worth fiscal prudence and what is not worth fiscal prudence. Your government has spent \$736,000 advertising the budget to Albertans, which we debated in the Legislative Assembly at length, which the news media covered at length. It is a purely political exercise and has nothing to do with corresponding or having a dialogue with Albertans. It is one-way political communication, which the government seems to be perfectly fine with. If we accept the cost estimates that are provided to us and, frankly, even if we find that the cost estimates are low, were we to do five consultations around Alberta, that would be about \$135,000. So your fiscal prudence argument doesn't hold water at all.

The amendment itself fundamentally changes – I mean, the fact that the amendment strikes out every single word after the very first word of my motion: I don't know if our friend the Parliamentary Counsel would want to weigh in, but that seems to be something more than an amendment to me. Technically it'd be amendment, but you've quashed it entirely. But being very clever, what you've done is that you've left in the words “may include in-person hearings . . . and some form of online feedback” perhaps, sometime, maybe. So when the media calls, you can tell them in good conscience: well, we might; we could possibly.

This leaves me with the sinking feeling that the ND government has decided already what the outcomes are for the committee and that we already know, you already know what's going to happen and that we're called to Edmonton to occasionally sit and meet, but Brian Topp has decided what we're going to do. You've already decided. So I do wonder if you're going to do this, in fact, even only accept written submissions. Who in the world sends a written submission anymore? What you're doing is narrowing the field so much that only academics and elites have an opportunity or the willingness, really, to provide input into this most important of reviews.

This committee could have been a truly crosspartisan, multiparty, open process. I was really encouraged when the Premier and the Leader of Official Opposition got together and said: let's do this committee; let's review the fundamental aspects of Alberta's democracy for the first time in the 110-year history of our province. We have a tremendous opportunity here. We should never, you should never presuppose what Albertans are going to say. We should never presuppose that we may get three or five or 10 people at a meeting in Vermilion, Alberta. We don't know, and if we do, those three or five or 10 people have a legitimate right to tell us as legislators what they want from their democratic institutions, how they want to elect their MLAs, how they want to fund their political parties, what sort of ethics laws they want, how they want to handle whistle-blower protection. These are the fundamental cornerstones of democracy, and it is astounding to me that you are unwilling to go out and listen to Albertans.

Some of you may recall the discussions around Bill 6. How did that go? Even the lack of consultation on Bill 8 caused some significant issues. It is astounding to me that you're unwilling to even commit to doing a proper online consultation. You're doing an online consultation for payday lending, but you won't do that for democracy? How do you think this is going to go over with Albertans? Go back to your constituents. Go to a holiday party this weekend. Present this motion to one of your constituents and ask them what they think. That's your job.

I will vote against this amendment, Madam Chair. Thank you.

Mr. Nielsen: I'm just doing some quick math here, and based on the numbers that MLA Miller provided, adjusting for advertising – and I just rounded things down just to be safe – if we're to look at five consultations on the road, I'm looking at probably \$200,000 to do that. My question, I guess, Madam Chair, if you know the

number off the top of your head: what is our budget for this committee?

The Chair: I believe that our budget for the committee is \$156,000.

Mr. Nielsen: So based on the numbers that I'm coming up with, we're already busting the budget for the entire committee on just this item. Am I correct there?

The Chair: Our budget would need to be adjusted. You are correct.

Mr. Nielsen: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Loyola.

Loyola: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I, too, have so many things to say, especially in regard to how the member across the way is framing the issue here. Nobody is saying that we are not going out to consult. All we want to do is that we want to make sure that it's both effective and affordable. That is the true essence of the amendment here.

9:40

Again I reiterate: I take issue with the fact that the member is stating that we don't want to consult with Albertans. We do in fact want to consult with Albertans. We want to make sure that every Albertan is heard. We want to make sure that they have the means to address this committee but to do it in the most effective way. We have new technologies whereby people can do that. Taking into consideration the budget that has been allocated to this committee, that we are in tough financial times and we're trying to be fiscally responsible – I mean, how many times have we heard it? Every time. That's the argument against the NDP, that we're: spend, spend, spend. We listen to Albertans when they say that, and we want to demonstrate that actually our history is not of spend, spend, spend. It's even been mentioned in the House, how Tommy Douglas was fiscally responsible, right? We want to make sure that we're sticking to that line as we move forward on the consultation process.

As we go through Alberta, we have to see first: well, what is the interest? Let's allow people to demonstrate their interest before we just unilaterally decide which communities we're going to go to, right? If there's a low demonstrated interest in particular localities, then maybe we use new technology in order to allow those people to respond and to submit their feedback to this committee. Perhaps if there are more people from a particular locality that want to provide feedback, then we can entertain the issue of perhaps doing an in-person consultation. But to put a blanket statement saying that we don't want to consult with Albertans regarding democracy is, I believe, a false way of talking about the issue.

I really want to encourage us to get out of the realm of rhetoric regarding consultation because I've had just about enough of it. Let's talk about the real issues, about how we engage Albertans. Let's do that. Let this be a productive meeting, where we talk about how we get out there and we talk with Albertans because that's what Albertans really want to hear about: how do we really do this? I know that there are ways that we can reach that, but let's leave the rhetoric out of it, and let's focus on being solution focused and productive.

The Chair: I have Dr. Starke, Member Cortes-Vargas, and then Mr. Clark.

Dr. Starke: Well, I have to say that I, too, am not interested in a lot of rhetoric, but I guess my concern with this amendment is the uncertainty, that there is no certainty about this at all. My colleague

across the way talks about being sick and tired of hearing about consultation . . .

Loyola: I didn't say that.

Dr. Starke: Well, okay, but you said, I think – I'll paraphrase; I don't have the Blues in front of me – that you've had it up to here or something.

Loyola: Don't misquote me, please.

Dr. Starke: Okay. Well, fine. You made a comment about consultation.

I guess my concern is that this amendment does not ensure that consultation will in fact happen: "Assessing the most effective and affordable means." Well, these are bringing terms in now that can be defined in different ways by a lot of different people. What exactly defines effective? Is it defined by the number of people that participate? Is it defined by the number of submissions you receive? What defines affordable? Here again we can toss all kinds of numbers back and forth. I mean, Mr. Clark mentioned \$736,000 for budget promotion for a budget that is only going to be in effect for five months. That's roughly just a little under \$150,000 a month. It'll actually be the budget that's the budget of the land. In April we're going to have a whole new budget. What is being spent right now on promoting Bill 6? We're getting a whole new line of commercials that have come out now to promote how great Bill 6 is.

I think my objection, speaking specifically to the amendment, though, is the uncertainty. "Determine the manner of public consultations." In other words, it's something that's going to still be left up in the air until some time next year. I mean, my attitude is that if the committee majority members from the government don't want to do public consultation, then just vote Mr. Clark's original motion down, and let's move on. Let's quit delaying and deferring and adjourning and doing all the other things. Let's make a decision on this.

In my view, it is important that we go out. Yes, of course, we have to be cognizant of the cost, and we have to do it in a way that is cost-effective, but it is also a critically important discussion to have. It's a big province, and, you know, getting around the province costs money. To suggest that we can do everything just from our ivory towers here in Edmonton: I don't think it's acceptable to most Albertans. I've been involved in cross-Alberta consultation. I've been involved in that process. I've done it on a number of different issues in this province. There's nothing that gives you more credibility than coming out of the ivory towers and going and meeting people on their own turf. That's what tells people that you're interested in hearing from them.

You know, the problem I have with this amendment is that it just introduces more uncertainty as to whether this will in fact occur or not occur. I see it, quite frankly, as just being a delaying tactic. If the members of this committee do not feel that this is something we should proceed with, then let's vote on Mr. Clark's original motion and either pass it or defeat it and move on, but let's not delay it or make it more uncertain with additional amendments that, quite frankly, do nothing to assure people that, in fact, in-person consultations will occur.

The Chair: I have Member Cortes-Vargas, followed by Mr. Clark and then Mr. van Dijken.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Chair. I think it's important to note that as a committee, you know, we have a broad range of legislation to reflect and to bring back to the community. The way we go

around making that consultation available to them allows for them to engage in a meaningful way. By presenting multiple forums, having online forums, having the flexibility to decide, depending on which direction we're going, what feedback we're looking for – we can determine that as a committee. We can look at how we can be most effective for the public engagement.

In essence, what we really need to decide is how we're going to present that information to the public, how we're going to frame it in such a way that we get meaningful consultation, so it's not just us. It's a lot of legislation to cover. To just go out to all of these meetings and to cover four pieces of legislation, five with the addition of Bill 203: we need to really decide how we're going to do that. In order to do that, we need to come together as a committee, see our direction, and then decide as we're going along how the online forums, how the public consultations – which ones are best for each part of the process? I think, you know, it's a discussion that we'll continue to have as a committee because we are dedicated to serving Albertans, to hearing Albertans, and that's something we work for every single day. I think we all work for the public interest, and it's something that – we have similarities in that way.

We have to think as well: what is an effective use of the money? We have to evaluate those pros and cons because we need the public consultation, and we also need to evaluate how much we're putting into making sure that that is happening. We also have to make sure that there are various options because various people have different things available to them. In leaving this as a conversation that will continue and that we'll always have in this committee – because it is part of our mandate to consult, we will continue to consult. We will always be consulting with Albertans because we are here to serve them. We are here to build a system that represents them. We are here to make sure that Albertans feel that their government representatives are acting on the Election Act in representing them, and we're going to continue to do that.

I think that this motion allows for us to continue doing that, and it allows for us to evaluate the options in which we are going to engage with them, so I hope that everyone will be supporting this amendment.

Mr. Clark: I'm just going to start with a question for Dr. Massolin. Do you know off the top of your head or can you come up with a quick calculation of how many stakeholders were contacted with regard to the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act? Do you have a rough estimate of how many names were on that list?

9:50

Dr. Massolin: Madam Chair, if you can give us a minute or two, I can get back to you right away.

Mr. Clark: Sure. Thank you.

While you do that, I'll make a few other points. I mean, I do find it funny that the argument around being effective and affordable – it is funny what the government chooses, decides to be, quote, unquote, fiscally prudent about. I can't think of a single thing that this government has chosen to spend less on in the budget. It's either flat or more for everything. So any argument that the NDs are somehow fiscally prudent, I'm afraid, just doesn't hold water.

It seems to be politically expedient for you not to go and travel the province and talk to Albertans. My earlier comments about picking and choosing whom we listen to: that's not gone well for the government this session, and I think you need to really consider that. One of the things that Mr. Loyola said was: well, when Albertans demonstrate interest, you know, we'll listen to them. So

do you have to pass some sort of hurdle, some sort of test to be able to participate in democracy? Do Albertans have to demonstrate some sort of interest in democracy before we allow them to vote? No. Albertans know better than us; we don't know better than them.

We, sitting in this committee room on the second floor of the Federal building here in Edmonton, are the furthest away from our province that we could possibly be. It would be a tremendously valuable experience for all of us as members to travel the province and talk to Albertans. But at the very, very least, you haven't even committed to doing online feedback: we might or we may. What we have committed to do is to ask for written submissions. From whom? From academics? From, quote, unquote, experts on democracy? The experts on democracy are Albertans, and if we don't give them the broadest possible range of options, if you're not even willing to commit to an online feedback mechanism, that's not consultation, I'm afraid. That is telling Albertans what we're going to do, what their government is going to do. That is not consultation.

Albertans would judge us not by our words but by our actions, and your actions here clearly demonstrate that you aren't interested in actually listening to Albertans. There's no question of that. You can't argue that you are because of actions, what you've done specifically on Bill 6. But this is exactly the same thing. I'm actually surprised. I am actually surprised how weak this amendment is.

If Dr. Massolin has the data, I'll turn the floor back to him.

The Chair: Dr. Massolin.

Dr. Massolin: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. Approximately 120 stakeholders.

Mr. Clark: We have 120 stakeholders who have a direct interest in that bill, and those are people who work within government. That's a very small number of people, who have a very specific interest. They have some expertise, absolutely. It's absolutely vital that we listen to those folks as well and that we have the Ethics Commissioner come in and the Privacy Commissioner come in and the Chief Electoral Officer come in. They talk to us, and they tell us their perspective, and they share their documentation with us. That's tremendously valuable.

But going and asking Albertans open-ended questions: that's democracy. I would ask each of you to reflect personally on why you got into politics in the first place, why you sought elected office in the first place. Did you do it to represent your constituents, or was there some other reason? If you did it to represent your constituents, does this feel right in your gut? Does it actually feel right for you to do, or do you feel that you're just going along with what your government whip told you to do? That's an important question. I can't answer that for you, but ask yourself if you feel, in your heart of hearts, that this is right and if you can go back to your constituents and justify this.

Thank you.

The Chair: I have Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Madam Chair. Where to start? I also will not support this amendment. I do believe that it's just another delaying tactic and, essentially, getting us no further along in what we actually need to get done as a committee. Given the recent history of this government's public consultation, whether it's Bill 6 or Bill 8 or whichever, I do believe that Albertans in general are nervous that they're not being heard and that proper, due consultation is not occurring. It does give me a little bit of hope, in the statements I'm hearing here, that the members are getting sick and tired of the consultation message. Possibly, as independent MLAs of the governing party they will start to ask the questions

necessary to be sure that fulsome public consultation is actually taking place.

With regard to spend, spend, spend, it appears to me that the government is willing to spend, spend, spend as long as their message is being propagated in the public, whether it's the \$736,000 to promote a budget, the estimates of \$700,000 to promote a climate policy. We have no idea what it's costing to do a Bill 6 promotion.

Here we sit. This committee is budgeted with \$136,000 to do its work throughout an entire year. If we are going to do proper consultation, I would suggest that this is a very restrictive budget and appears to handcuff the committee into essentially sitting around this table a few times and coming to the conclusions that the government would like to come to at this time.

I do believe that we need to make a decision on the existing motion, and I will not be in support of this amendment. Thank you.

Cortes-Vargas: I just have a question for the clerk, just to clarify what "written submissions" in the amendment includes. What would written submissions include?

Ms Rempel: Well, I think you'd have to look to the mover of the amendment for what he may have had in mind. I can certainly speak to what it's included in some other legislative committees.

Cortes-Vargas: So in other legislative committees what has written submissions included?

Ms Rempel: What kind of stuff have we received? We've pretty much received everything, from kind of a one-line e-mail saying, "Hey, this is a really good idea" or "This is a really terrible idea" to, you know, actual composed reports at kind of a professional and/or academic level. When we ask for written submissions, we really do receive a broad range. Certainly, some topics lend themselves more to one end of the spectrum than the other, but we do receive pretty much everything from A to Z.

Cortes-Vargas: So from my understanding, you can receive from open-ended questions to very structured answers as well?

Ms Rempel: We put out a call for submissions on whatever the topic might be – in this case, it would be the legislation – and, yes, then we receive comments on it. As I say, sometimes they're just very brief comments and something that would clearly be from – you know, we consider them private citizens. And, yeah, like I say, large reports have been prepared in response to the issue.

The Chair: Okay. Dr. Massolin.

Dr. Massolin: Yes. In doing this for about eight years, I've seen a lot of these reviews. I think that, as Ms Rempel has indicated, you get a wide degree of variability. You have to distinguish as well between the stakeholder feedback and the public feedback. The stakeholder feedback tends to be more targeted, tends to be more technical, and tends to be more on point, if I can say so, whereas the public feedback may be a little bit less technical, less on point perhaps, if I can use the word, a little bit less focused. So there's a high degree of variability in terms of the response, the nature of the response, the content.

That's it. Thanks.

Mr. Nixon: Madam Chair, could I get on the speakers list, please?

The Chair: Mr. Nixon, yes, I'll add you to the speakers list.

I have Mr. Nielsen and then Mr. Nixon.

Mr. Nielsen: Again, just for my own clarification, then, to the clerk: so written submissions are anything from an e-mail, a letter – forgive me – to a carrier pigeon coming in and everything else in between?

Ms Rempel: Yes. We do actually still even receive the occasional handwritten snail-mail submission when things are advertised in some fashion to the public. As I said, I mean, it's a very broad range.

Maybe just to elaborate a little bit on what Dr. Massolin said, there does tend to be a difference between the folks that you may consider the stakeholders and more the private citizens. You get more personal stories, personal experiences, that sort of thing, often from your private citizens whereas, yes, you often get more technical comment from, you know, folks that you might consider to be more in the stakeholder category.

10:00

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Nixon.

Mr. Nixon: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple of things. First, I'd like to point out that this motion by Mr. Clark has been on the table, I believe, since the first time this committee met. It has been discussed at each meeting since then, and I think we're, you know, at about three to four months now where this has essentially been on the table. So it certainly appears, now that we've read the amendment the government has brought forward, that the majority of this committee has been trying to avoid the vote on Mr. Clark's motion. I find that a little bit disappointing and alarming. The amendment that has been brought forward clearly guts Mr. Clark's original motion completely and essentially makes it a different motion. So, first of all, I think that if it was the case that the NDP majority on the committee wanted to put forward something different, they should have done that on their own and brought Mr. Clark's motion to a vote and made it clear where they stood on the important issues that he was bringing forward.

With that said, I will be voting against this amendment, and I encourage everybody on the committee to as well, mainly because this amendment provides no assurances of consultation. The intent of Mr. Clark's original motion was to ensure that we had consultation all across the province and in all different areas of the province, something that I think is pretty important. Given this government's history in the last few months of not consulting on certain bills and then consulting on others, I don't think there's any way that opposition MLAs on the committee can in any way trust the NDP to make sure that they consult with all these stakeholders involved. I think that this amendment is nothing but an attempt to move Mr. Clark's original motion out of the way and to try to buy more time for the NDP to decide what they want to do. I think that that's unfortunate. We should be voting on Mr. Clark's original motion.

With that, I leave it to the floor.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Payne: I was wondering if I could be added to the speakers list, please.

The Chair: Yes, you can be.

Mr. Clark and then Ms Payne.

Mr. Clark: Just very briefly, with the discussion here about this written feedback we may get, I think the answer you get depends entirely on the question you ask and how you ask it, and I believe

the next agenda item probably is, under communications, going to talk about that ad that we've circulated. If we asked Albertans, "Please give us your input on the Election Act, on the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act," they will almost universally tune out. If we say, "How do you want to elect your MLAs?" or "How do you think we should fund political parties?" or "How should whistle-blower protection work?" or "What should MLA ethics look like?" – we'll ask a big, broad question, an open-ended question – we're going to get better answers.

But the form in which we do that: we need to cast the widest net possible. So although there seems to be this suggestion that if we solicit written submissions from Albertans, that's going to be sufficient and we can count that as consultation, it creates a very unfortunate perception at the very least, if not the actual fact, of deliberately narrowing the consultation that we do as a committee driven by the ND majority to hear only what we want to hear, to hear only from elites and from experts and not from as many Albertans as possible. Again, I'll just state one more time for the record that it is absolutely mind-boggling to me that the NDP does not want to hear from as many Albertans as possible on something as essential and fundamental as democracy.

I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

The Chair: Ms Payne.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to state for, you know, anyone listening at home that this committee does have a draft advertisement with the intention of going out to communities across Alberta soliciting feedback. So in addition to the targeted stakeholder list of people who are experts in this field and who have spent a lot of time thinking about these issues and how to improve our democracy – we'll be seeking feedback from those people – we are going to be seeking the feedback of everyday Albertans on this issue and on these acts.

In no way does this amendment change anything about future consultation, about any of the online consultations that this committee may choose to undertake. Simply, it says that we're going to look at this and we're going to continue to evaluate it, to do it in the most efficient and effective way possible.

I think we've heard from a number of people that some of the town hall meetings are not efficient communications methods. However, I think that, you know, as a committee, taking the time to decide what is the most effective way for us to hear actual feedback from Albertans about their concerns about the way elections are run, about concerns around the Conflicts of Interest Act or the whistle-blowers act, and then incorporating that information into the deliberation of this committee and the recommendations that this committee brings forward to the Legislature is critically important. I'm absolutely in favour of this amendment.

The Chair: Thank you.

An Hon. Member: Question.

The Chair: The question has been called. All those in favour of this amendment, say aye. All those opposed to this amendment? The amendment is carried.

On the now amended motion, is there further discussion? Seeing none, all those in favour, say aye. Opposed? The motion is carried.

Our next agenda item continues this discussion around communications. Based on all the discussions that we've had, both at this table and offline, as a starting point I asked the communications branch to draft an advertisement based on what's been done in the past, that we could use and go out with to all Albertans and invite them to make written submissions, either by

snail mail or through e-mail, and give them more information about the acts that are within our mandate. My thinking was that this would be a good starting point for a discussion on this initial public consultation.

Before I open the floor to discussion, I'd like to invite Ms Dotimas to give us some further information on this.

Ms Dotimas: Thank you, Ms Chair. My name is Jeanette Dotimas. I'm actually with the communications branch for the LAO. As you mentioned, my manager, Rhonda Sorensen, who previously sat at this table, was asked to provide some of the options outlining some strategies that are available to the committee as, of course, you continue to discuss further consultation approaches for the future. The plan was provided to the committee, so I'd just be looking at some of the salient points of the plan based on the direction of written submissions at the moment.

The ad that we have up there is one that we have taken from some of our best practices from previous committees that have undergone similar processes, particularly the call for written submissions at this point. This ad that we have provided costing for is for written submissions only. We're looking at an ad of approximately five and a half inches. There are some slight variations, of course, based on the publications that we choose to advertise in. Right now with written consultations only we're looking at a province-wide advertisement that would go to approximately 115 communities in Alberta. There are nine major daily papers in the metropolitan areas as well that we would be targeting. Those are the daily publications.

At this point I do have the costing available for a campaign that would run between January 9 and 15, depending on the publication date of each one. The ad itself directs folks to the website, where all of the information is available to them to assist them in providing the written submissions or in participating in this review. That's where we would start.

10:10

In order to supplement any of the cost investments for the communications plan, we'd also be looking at all of the no-cost, if you will, communication strategies that would support the advertisement going out to all the communities. We'd be looking at updating, of course, all the information on the website. We'd leverage all of our social media contact, with media relations, of course, welcoming pitches to local-market radio stations in order to have your designated spokesperson speak on the review and how the information could become more available for written submissions.

In addition to that, we would also offer our services in terms of writing, I guess, if you will, a general feature article that could be supporting your constituencies. If you send out newsletters to your constituencies across the province, we would be able to provide some of those key messages that would allow them to, again, go back to the website and gather the information they need to produce their submissions. We also have e-cards that are readily available that could be sent out through the committee to all of your networks, however you wish to distribute those.

There are, of course, lots of cost investments that we would be able to explore as well, depending on how you want to proceed. There are some online options that could become cost-effective as well if that is a concern. We would just have to get the direction from the committee in terms of how they want to reach that public, and we would support it.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

The ad that we're looking at is one that would go out to the public through weekly and daily newspapers, between January 9

and 15, used to increase the public's awareness about this. Mr. Clark, I heard your concerns about the way we ask the question and how that will guide the responses that we get. I know that one of my thoughts, if possible, would be to use the website to go more in depth or perhaps ask some of those bigger, broader questions that you were referring to. But when it comes to the advertising that goes into the newspapers for a limited run for that week, I thought that this ad might be a good starting place for our discussion because it will be difficult to choose which big, broad questions we might put on an advertisement when we are talking about four separate acts, just to address questions, concerns you had raised earlier.

Mr. Clark: I don't know if there are any sort of requirements of us to actually list out the acts in the advertisement and if that is, in fact, a requirement or if perhaps we can ask a somewhat broader, maybe plain-language question, something along the lines of, you know: the Legislative Assembly of Alberta is reviewing Alberta's democratic institutions, how we elect our MLAs, how we fund parties. You know, if we were to be talking with our constituents, how would we describe this? I don't think we would talk about the specifics of the act. We would talk about what the acts do. I'm just wondering if that's an option here.

The Chair: I think that's a good question. My understanding is that our mandate is to review these four pieces of legislation, these four acts, and I think it may be important that we use that language when we go out and advertise to the public. That being said, I feel like there is an opportunity with the website to potentially, then, go into some of those bigger questions or to help give the public in particular, less so the stakeholders, some guiding thoughts for when they're drafting their submissions. But in the main advertising referencing the four pieces of legislation we've been mandated to review, I believe that is something that makes sense.

Mr. Clark: Recognizing that it is nearly 2016, is there a plan to do online advertising and Facebook, Twitter, social media, those sorts of things as well? That's one question. The other is that I would encourage that unless there's a legislative requirement for us to list the acts, perhaps that information could be on the website and that the information we have on the advertisement is: we're asking you about democracy. This ad looks not compelling. No disrespect at all intended to the folks who put together the ad, but it comes back to my earlier concerns, that our job here should be to try to attract as many people as possible. It shouldn't be a sterile kind of process. It ought to be an engaging: hey, we're talking about democracy. That should be what we're doing here, as enthusiastically as we possibly can, to try to engage as many Albertans as possible. Otherwise, we're left with the unfortunate perception already created by this committee that we're not really that interested in hearing from Albertans, and I think that would be – certainly, for those of us in the opposition who voted against the way that the committee has chosen to consult, I think we need to do whatever we can to get as much input as possible, and I think we can spice it up a bit.

Dr. Swann: I support what Clark is saying there.

The Chair: Okay. Looking for other speakers. Member Cortes-Vargas, followed by Ms Renaud.

Cortes-Vargas: I think my question is just generally: what are the main guidelines for the advertising, and do they need to mention the acts? I'm not sure who the question should be directed to.

Mr. Reynolds: Sorry. So the question was: is there a requirement for what to put in the advertisement?

Cortes-Vargas: Yes. Are there any general guidelines of what needs to be stated in the advertisement so we can kind of get a consensus of what maybe we can change, what we can't exclude or have to include?

Mr. Reynolds: No. It's up to the committee. All I'd say is that the Legislative Assembly passed a motion to ask the committee to look at these four acts. That was, I believe, how the wording of the motion was, so that's what you've been charged with doing. How you wish to interpret that mandate is up to the committee. Certainly, these are the acts that you've been asked to look at. I don't want to bring up the dead weight of precedent, but usually when you go out to look at an act, the advertisements have said what act it is that you're looking at.

Cortes-Vargas: So, I mean, we would be free to use more rainbow language, I guess, to bring more attention to it as long as we're addressing the main mandate of what we're asked to do?

Mr. Reynolds: Yes. In my view, the committee is the master of what it decides to put out in terms of an advertisement. One would hope the advertisement would be reflective of what it is that the committee can do and the sort of scope that the committee has to look at things in the sense of – well, just to be accurate with respect to what it is the committee's function is with respect to looking at particular pieces of legislation.

The Chair: As chair of this group the comments are well received and do make sense to me. I'm cognizant of our timing because the hope was to be able to begin engaging the public in early January. I really, truly hope that we don't have to adjust that timing because we do need to start getting the public engaged.

The form of the ad and exactly how it looks: I think we're open to adjusting it and making use of the website to direct people, to either have the website with the broader questions and the more colourful input language or, alternatively, have the ad shift to a more broad question with the more detailed legislative information on the website. Either could be an option. My question at this point is what would be the most efficient way for us to proceed rather than editing an advertisement by committee, which I don't think will be effective.

Dr. Starke: Can I suggest that the folks in communications that draft these come up with a second draft that incorporates some of the suggestions involved here? I mean, I would agree. There is nothing technically wrong with this advertisement. Not a thing. Everything that's required by the advertisement is here, but if you read the legal notices page in most newspapers, I think you'll agree that they can be very dry and technical documents that just fulfill the legal requirements of what has to be told to people. I don't know that they necessarily stimulate a lot of discussion or get a lot of people thinking about things. You know, I actually think that the four acts need to be named in the advertisement. That needs to be very clear, that this is what we're considering.

10:20

Again – Mr. Clark mentioned it; Dr. Swann has mentioned it – we have to talk a little bit about how these are the acts, but these are what acts talk about how we choose who our MLAs are, how elections are run, how elections are financed, how the public interest is protected by protecting those who come forward to reveal wrongdoings. That's what that means. I think even having three or

four questions at the top of the page saying, "Are you interested in this?" or "How do we elect our MLAs?" or "Do you have ideas on this?", something that's just a little bit more engaging to the public, would result in – I'm not suggesting that it would result in a flood of submissions. I don't think that that's likely. But I think it may as well get people who aren't interested in this primarily as an academic exercise.

I mean, I know that full well that there are a lot of people out there who are actually very interested in how it is that we move into the 21st century, whether it's electoral reform or whether first past the post is what we stay with or a number of other issues. I think that to at least try to engage or stimulate that discussion is a good thing, and certainly one of the ways to do that is online and using social media as well. I mean, I think that those are all things that we can do. Again, I want to stress that there's nothing wrong with this other than – it fulfills the legal requirements – it's pretty dry.

The Chair: I have Ms Renaud, Member Cortes-Vargas, and then Mr. van Dijken.

Ms Renaud: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. I do think that it is very important to have the pieces of legislation in addition to maybe some direction about how to ask the broader questions and how people can respond to the broader questions. But I think we're doing a disservice to Albertans if we assume that they can't understand that this specific committee was tasked with looking at these pieces of legislation and not looking at democracy as a principle or as an activity but looking at these pieces of legislation. You know, from the people that I speak to, they do have very good questions about the technicalities in the acts. They've read the information, and they want to contribute. So I think a combination of the two, perhaps listing the acts and then directing to a website, might meet the needs that we're all talking about.

Thank you.

Cortes-Vargas: Yeah, absolutely. I love to talk about plain language. I grew up with a speech pathologist in my household, and I think that making sure that communication is something that is received is critical to the communication process. I think that we experience it every day. I very much enjoy this conversation in how to get the message across to Albertans that we are soliciting input and that we're soliciting meaningful input and that we're soliciting input about things that truly matter to them. It has been expressed to us on multiple levels that democracy and the involvement of how their politicians act is something that is critically important. I mean, the suggestions that the members across the way made, Mr. Starke made about what to include in there could be useful suggestions. So I think, you know, we should be open to discussion on what exactly this communication looks like.

Also, I am wondering what the social media advertisement looks like. Jeanette, would you be able to expand a little bit on the social media aspect of it?

Ms Dotimas: Sorry; are you talking about it in terms of cost or just the campaign?

Cortes-Vargas: Like, what's going to be on social media for the public to see?

Ms Dotimas: Okay. There are a couple of things. First of all, obviously, on Facebook there are very small boosts that you can do. We can have our designer look at some very small thumbnails, if you will, and those will click through to the website. So if you're talking about in terms of making it more engaging, that in itself would probably be one of the better ways to have that engagement

done. In terms of the campaign, it would obviously mimic the duration of the print campaign, so if we're doing it for a week, we would do it for a week or two. It is a very low-cost option as well. It would mimic basically what you would see on the print advertisement so that there's some consistency that people across the province will see either in print, in online advertising on Facebook or however it is that they receive their information in order to participate.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. I do agree that we can spruce up the launch of the campaign to a certain degree, utilizing an effective spokesperson for the committee to be essentially bringing awareness to Albertans that the campaign has begun for receiving input from all people throughout Alberta. Now that we are deciding to possibly not travel the province, we need to try and engage all corners of the province. Print media is fine, but I also think that in the first week or two of the launch of the campaign to get feedback, it's really necessary to have the lead – and may I suggest it probably be the chair of the committee – engaging in radio and television type interviews to try and bring awareness of the activities of the committee.

The Chair: Thank you.

Members of our committee, to move forward with this, understanding that I still would very much like to get this started in early January rather than calling another meeting, I'm just asking: if we passed a motion around the idea of the chair working with LAO and circulating a new draft by e-mail, the chair can then approve once we've received feedback? What I'm picturing and can discuss with our team is that rather than having the first paragraph be so formal, perhaps more plain language – “Are you interested in how we elect our MLAs?” and some of those topics – leaving in the listing of the acts and potentially adjusting some of the content at the bottom. That's to be worked on. Would that be reasonable? What are our thoughts on this?

Dr. Starke: I think that it's the more reasonable way to approach it. You know, I don't think that there's any other feasible way if you want to go on those timelines, which I think is what should be pursued. We do have to move forward. You're right. Cobbling advertisements by committee is a daunting and unproductive exercise. You work with the communications people, send out a few drafts, we'll get back to you on some suggestions, and then fire the thing out. It'll never be perfect, but don't let very good get in the way of perfect.

The Chair: Okay. I am going to ask for a mover to a motion that the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee authorize the chair to approve news releases and other communication, after seeking input with all committee members, to invite written submissions regarding the review of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act, the Conflicts of Interest Act, the Election Act, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act, and Bill 203, Election (Restrictions on Government Advertising) Amendment Act, 2015.

Loyola: I so move.

The Chair: Moved by Mr. Loyola.
A comment?

Ms Dotimas: Sorry. I just had one quick question for the committee and for you, I suppose. The budget or the cost for all of this: I just want to make sure that I have a clear direction in terms of how that approval process works. Like, do I need to propose it to you, and that can be circulated by e-mail as well? Do you want to know the base costs now?

The Chair: Actually, that's a really great comment. If you could let us know the base costs of the advertisement at its current size. That way, by making it any bigger, we'll at least be aware of what the cost implications might be of that. We can include that information when we circulate and get feedback by e-mail.

Ms Dotimas: Okay. In terms of the daily newspapers we're looking at approximately \$8,500. For the Alberta weekly newspapers, which goes to approximately 115 editions throughout the province, we're looking at a print run of about \$25,000. This does not include any of the online initiatives that might be initiated as well.

10:30

The Chair: That is the advertisement at its current size?

Ms Dotimas: At its current size. If it goes any bigger, obviously it will change accordingly.

The Chair: Okay. Further discussion on the motion moved by Mr. Loyola? Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. I think it is important that we formally approve some form of online advertising as well. It sounds like that's currently not in the scope of what you had planned to do.

Ms Dotimas: I do have the costs, however. I was basing it on the written submissions only, but I can certainly provide that to the chair, and it can be circulated once I have them more solidified.

Mr. Clark: Sure. A question: is there something we can pass now that's, I guess, enabling you to move forward quickly without coming back to the committee, especially as it relates to an online advertising component over and above what we've talked about here for daily and weekly newspapers?

The Chair: Thank you very much for the question. In the motion that I've proposed, I've included the language “other communication,” which does empower the chair to begin the online advertising as well.

Mr. Clark: Good.

The Chair: Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Madam Chair. In the motion I believe it stated “news releases.” We do have a budgeted amount for newspaper advertising. We talk about other ways of engaging and getting the word out, but I really want to emphasize that I do believe that with the launch it's critical that, alongside the news releases, any follow-up that can be done to help bring awareness by the committee chair would be very much appreciated.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Our team has already offered to help with preparation, speaking notes, and liaising with media to make sure we can take advantage of every opportunity. I appreciate that thought, and as chair I'm committed to try and bring as much awareness to this committee as we can.

Are there any further speakers to the motion we have on the floor? Mr. Hunter, please go ahead.

Mr. Hunter: Through the chair, I would just like to tell the committee that I think it's extremely important. We've talked about making sure that it's done expeditiously, but I think it's important to remind the committee that a good question is difficult to come by and to get. You know, we need to take our time and make sure that there's no leading verbiage in the questions so that the public is not led to a conclusion. I think that's important to note as we go forward here.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hunter.

When we circulate the revised draft to you by e-mail, please let us know if you feel that there are any leading questions or if you have any suggestions. I appreciate everyone checking their e-mail on Christmas Day. That will be much appreciated.

Seeing no further speakers, all those in favour of the motion moved by Mr. Loyola, say aye. Opposed? The motion is carried.

Thank you, everyone. I look forward to working with you via e-mail to create something that does make sense and will work to engage all Albertans.

The final item on our agenda for today involves the scope of review and research requests. As noted earlier, we have already had our support staff put together a stakeholder list and a crossjurisdictional comparison to assist us with our review of the whistle-blower act. This is something that I think we should be looking at doing for the other three acts within our mandate as well. To ensure we're requesting meaningful information, I think it will be prudent to identify some of the subject areas within the acts that committee members have a strong interest in. Of course, this does not limit our review in the future, particularly in light of the public engagement that we are beginning in January.

What this conversation will do is give staff direction that will be reasonable to prepare stakeholder lists and some crossjurisdictional information for us. As a reminder, the stakeholder list is a series of experts and organizations that typically study the information in the acts that we are reviewing. On top of that, we will have the advertisement to the public. We can send invitations to our friends to elicit their engagement.

To facilitate this, I thought we would have a discussion about each of the three remaining acts, raising issues that are of importance to us. Beginning with the Conflicts of Interest Act, we have already received several suggestions regarding this act from the Ethics Commissioner, but if we can talk about areas of interest to the committee under the Conflicts of Interest Act, that may assist with some narrowing for our research team.

Regarding the Conflicts of Interest Act, do we have any discussion?

Ms Payne: Madam Chair, I'd like to be on the speakers list for this one.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Payne.

Mr. van Dijken, followed by Ms Payne.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. You know, one thing that's in current discussion is a conflict of interest, possibly, with party officials serving in government jobs and how we can tidy that up to bring more clarity as to how that can fit within the scope of conflict of interest. I think, you know, the Ethics Commissioner's recommendations all need to be taken into consideration, cooling-off periods and all of the recommendations based on what's best practice in other jurisdictions, whether they're federal or provincial. I do believe, since we're in the middle of the review process, it's a good practice to take a look at what is occurring in other jurisdictions and where we can do better.

Thank you for that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Payne.

Ms Payne: Yes. Thank you, Chair. Kind of following on Mr. van Dijken's suggestion, I think it would be helpful to also see what other jurisdictions have with respect to political staff as well as staff in agencies, boards, and commissions. You know, we all know that a lot of Albertan money goes towards agencies, boards, and commissions. I think I'd also be interested in seeing a little bit more about what other jurisdictions do in terms of managing conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest at agencies, boards, and commissions.

Another one I'd be interested in hearing more about is how other jurisdictions define financial interest, so the private interest for an MLA or perhaps, you know, the definition of who's included, I guess, and the relationship around conflict of interest. As you know, our current definition is a little small, and I'd be curious to see what other jurisdictions do in terms of defining that.

I'm also interested in learning more about the cooling-off periods that are in other jurisdictions for MLAs, cabinet ministers, political staff as well as senior staff at agencies, boards, and commissions.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Payne.

Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Thank you. First off, I just want to compliment the research staff on the work that you did on the whistle-blower protection act. I think it's tremendously helpful. It's accessible, and it's a great model and a great starting point for us as we learn more about these acts, just exactly what is happening in other jurisdictions. I just want to be clear that I really found this tremendously helpful.

On the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act in particular, I'm very interested in a fulsome review, a comprehensive scope, of how other provinces fund political activities, donation limits. Some per capita kind of information I think is important as well as, for example, where there are spending limits, what the implications of that are, loans that are made available, you know, all of those sorts of things. I think that's a very, very important question for us as we have already made the step to remove union and corporate donations.

I believe there is very likely agreement that we ought to reduce the current donation limit, but exactly how far we go on that is, I think, an important question. Balancing out, ensuring we can continue to allow political parties to operate but ensuring that money does not have undue influence in the political process: that's a delicate balance. I'm very interested to see how other provinces, in particular, have addressed that, and some demographic or per capita kind of information I think would be very, very helpful in that regard.

10:40

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clark.

As we've started to talk now about election financing, the Election Act, just on the topic of conflicts of interest, Dr. Massolin, does the brief earlier discussion give your group something to begin to put together initial materials?

Dr. Massolin: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. It certainly does, and thank you for the input.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Continuing with either the Conflicts of Interest Act or the Election Act and the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act, I'm going to ask Dr. Starke next. I do just want to

mention that with the inclusion of Bill 203 – and this is to Mr. van Dijken’s question earlier – our mandate gives us that as one area of consideration that the research team is aware of.

Dr. Starke.

Dr. Starke: Thank you. Well, first of all, I’m glad to hear that there will be crossjurisdictional research done on all four of the acts. That’s very helpful. But if I could offer one comment on the crossjurisdictional work that was done on the public interest disclosure act, it is that there was a lot of information about what is in the other provinces’ acts. There was a paucity of information with regard to how that has applied in practical circumstance. That may be because in some cases this legislation is relatively new and hasn’t necessarily been applied or seen application in other jurisdictions. But I think that even if there was an example cited as to, you know, “In 19-whatever or in 2008 this resulted in . . .” – you can read what’s there, but what’s a little harder to figure out is: how does that, then, affect the way the law becomes applied? Is there a way to, you know, provide that information?

I know it opens things up a little bit, but when I look at the other three pieces of legislation that we’re looking at, they have in general been around a little longer, certainly the Election Act and the finance and contribution disclosure act. I’d appreciate, just in terms of how a situation – for example, let’s say that the Saskatchewan law is different. You might have a scenario whereby if this came up in Saskatchewan, it would be dealt with this way, but if it came up in Alberta under our current law, it would be dealt with this way. Okay? I know that’s dealing a little bit in the hypothetical, but I think it would be very helpful.

If you want to respond to that. Then I’ve got one other thing about the Conflicts of Interest Act.

The Chair: A response from Dr. Massolin?

Dr. Massolin: Yes. Thank you. Madam Chair, through you to Dr. Starke, I fully understand and hear what you are saying. It’s an excellent point to know the application of these acts. I think these crossjurisdictionals are really only there to set out what the comparative provisions are. You’re talking about a different task, I think, if you’re dealing with hypothetical. I don’t know that we’re capable of actually undertaking that, still bearing in mind that it’s an excellent sort of impulse to understand how the acts actually apply, especially in terms of the judicial interpretation of these acts. I mean, we can do a little bit of that, I think, where it comes in, but I don’t know that we can do it comprehensively, especially given that the Election Act has over – what? – 300 sections.

If I may make a suggestion, Madam Chair, we can, you know, employ our judgment as to whether or not this is possible and come back with something after we look at it. If that would be agreeable, I think that’s the way we might go.

Thank you.

Dr. Starke: Yeah. That would be fine. I mean, I certainly don’t want you to go out and boil the ocean, but I would like to see situations where, you know, there are specific instances and highlights. Let’s not deal with the hypothetical at all. Let’s deal, specifically, with instances in other jurisdictions where: this section of this act came into play in this instance. The practical application of it, I think, is important for us to know. Otherwise, we’re reading, more or less, what the rules are, but we’d like to sort of see how the rules were applied in specific instances, not in every instance but in ones that are a little bit more pertinent or ones that are more specific.

Specifically with regard to the Conflicts of Interest Act, one thing I would really like us to take a look at, and that is MLAs that continue working, after they are elected, in the job that they had,

you know, prior to their election. That’s common. There’s certainly no requirement, once a person is elected, to leave the career that they had previously, but there are instances where working in that career may or may not create a conflict with their duties as a member. I think it would be helpful to have some clarification from the Ethics Commissioner as to what her thoughts are with regard to that and how other provinces handle it because, I mean, certainly some MLAs find it quite feasible to continue working in the career that they had prior to being elected. It’s challenging, I would suggest, but they manage to do it. But in some cases that puts them in a very difficult position, especially if their employer is the government of Alberta or some agency of the government of Alberta. I think there needs to be some clear guidelines around that and how that would then apply.

As far as the others, I’ll just briefly comment, and then we don’t have to come back to me on elections and election finances. I agree entirely with what Mr. Clark says with regard to having a crossjurisdictional discussion about things like donation limits.

The other one I would really like to see us tackle – and I’ve been told that it can’t be done because it’s a federal tax statute, but quite frankly I have always been bothered by the notion that political contributions are dealt with, from a taxation standpoint, more favourably than contributions to other charitable organizations. Why on earth should a person giving a donation to a political party get a more favourable tax treatment than if they’re giving to the Heart and Stroke fund or the United Way or their church or any number of other very deserving organizations? I’ve always had trouble with that. I don’t know if that really comes into play or if that’s within the scope here, but I’d sure love to have that discussion some day because it has always bothered me.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Starke.

Member Miranda.

Miranda: Thank you. I have some questions regarding research for the Election Act. I’m interested more specifically in what legislation there may be that deals with improvement in public engagement and in tools of public participation. I think it might be a little bit early to do this for the Alberta election, but I did notice that they had increased presence in social media this last election period. I’m wondering if they were able to gather some statistical analysis about how effective their engagement was in relation to increasing voter participation and some sort of, you know, metrics about how effective the different communication tools, especially in social media, are in increasing voter participation and whether that could actually be implemented into legislation itself. The objective, of course, is to increase accessibility and turnout by voters.

The other one that I was thinking about was voting-day holidays and whether that is actually practised in other jurisdictions as well as the question of voting age and vouching tools and presentation of ID on election day. I think that’s all that I had.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Dr. Massolin.

Dr. Massolin: Yes. Thank you, again, Madam Chair. Just to respond to some of those considerations, especially the first one, I don’t think that’s one that we would most appropriately field, but the Chief Electoral Officer might have that information. So might I suggest that this committee make a request of that office, and perhaps they can get back to the committee in writing or perhaps orally or both on that issue.

The Chair: Thank you. Would we need to pass a motion, or can we just . . .

Dr. Massolin: No, because I think the committee has already approved a motion to work with that particular office and the other offices that are subject to this review.

The Chair: Thank you. I appreciate the suggestion. Yes, let's make that request.

Dr. Massolin: Okay.

Mr. Nielsen: I might be just heaping onto the pile here. I am curious about how the Chief Electoral Officer, I guess, compares what they're able to do in other jurisdictions compared to Alberta. Are there any roadblocks, things like that? Around the entire accessing of voting in other jurisdictions, have they come up with better solutions for folks to get out and vote? I don't know if that falls under your purview or, again, if I'm just heaping on more to what you had just mentioned from the Chief Electoral Officer's staff.

10:50

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Massolin: Madam Chair, we'll figure that out. Thanks.

The Chair: Okay.
Ms Miller.

Ms Miller: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I also agree with Mr. Clark and Dr. Starke. I believe that donations in kind are a crossjurisdictional anomaly.

Also, corporate and union loan guarantees: are they allowed in other jurisdictions? Inquiring minds want to know. That's all I have.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Other topics or discussion items that might help our research team? Anyone on the phone? Oh, Mr. van Dijken.

Mr. van Dijken: Yeah. I have just one question, and I'm not sure if it's – it appears that we're talking about all three under item 6.

The Chair: We are. We spoke about the conflict of interest, and I think we have a sense of that. If you'd like to add to that, please do. Now we are focusing more on the Election Act and the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act.

Mr. van Dijken: I'm not sure where this falls exactly. With regard to looking to other provinces for some clarification on announcements during elections and ministers making the decision purely for electoral purposes, maybe even outside of election's jurisdiction, I'm not sure if we'd land up in conflicts of interest there. I think it's mostly to do with the Election Act. What are other jurisdictions doing there? It's kind of a grey area that does lead to a difficult ability for interpretation of what's considered electoral benefit as compared to what's considered ministers' duty. It would be good to see if other jurisdictions are considering that and if they've got any guidelines with regard to that.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. van Dijken. I think that touches on some of Bill 203, but your question asked about more outside of election periods as well, if I understood you correctly.

Mr. van Dijken: Correct.

The Chair: Okay.
Ms Miller.

Ms Miller: Yes. I had one more question about crossjurisdictional information on third-party advertising during election periods.

The Chair: Thank you.
Member Cortes-Vargas.

Cortes-Vargas: Yeah. I was just wanting to ensure that the LAO would be preparing a draft stakeholder list that would be including but not limited to organizations working to improve, reform, and modernize electoral reforms in Canada: democracy watchdogs, political scientists, aboriginal leaders, and representative organizations, and other – like, I just want to see a draft stakeholders list, really, so we can all understand who's being requested for information and input.

Dr. Massolin: I think the process for this draft stakeholder list is that we will put it together and the committee will ultimately approve it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Swann: I may have missed it, but in the outline: what research is ongoing with respect to proportional representation as an alternative to first past the post?

The Chair: I believe that there would be no research begun yet, but through discussion here it's potentially included within the research scope.

Dr. Massolin, have I described that correctly?

Dr. Massolin: Yes, I think you have, but I'm not sure exactly what the spirit of this request is. If I could get a little bit more elaboration, please.

Dr. Swann: Well, I hope that we're going to examine the possibility of returning to proportional representation in Alberta, and there are a number of forms of proportional representation: a single transferable vote, for example, preferential ballot, and mixed approaches. I hope very much that we'll have a chance to discuss this as a committee and make some statements about either doing further investigation, proposing a referendum, or potentially having a motion on the legislative floor around one of these alternatives.

The Chair: Dr. Massolin, does that assist?

Dr. Massolin: Yes, I think it does. As a historian I finally, after eight years, get a historical question here. I can respond to the mixed-member system in Alberta. Yeah, I think we can put something together.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Dr. Swann: Thank you.

The Chair: Member Loyola.

Loyola: Yeah. Just going back to the stakeholder list, in the light that we're trying to implement legislation or, better stated, policy recommendations around the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous people as well as the calls to action of the truth and reconciliation, if we could make sure to put in the stakeholder list aboriginal leaders and representative organizations of indigenous peoples here in the province.

The Chair: Thank you.

Are there other speakers who wish to add to the discussion here that might help our support team with research?

Mr. Nixon: Madam Chair, could I be on the speakers list?

The Chair: Mr. Nixon, please go ahead.

Mr. Nixon: I do apologize if I repeat something that was said that I didn't hear on the phone. I'd like to see some research on party officials serving in government jobs in regard to conflicts of interest. I think we talked about cooling-off periods

A discussion on whether the Conflicts of Interest Act allows for secondary investigations when the Ethics Commissioner has been lied to in the first investigation.

Also, under the Conflicts of Interest Act what can the Ethics Commissioner do if they don't believe an MLA's disclosure? What do other provinces do?

Then where are the other provinces at on some of the changes that the CEO has proposed in regard to the Election Act?

The Chair: Mr. Nixon, if I can clarify, would you be asking for a crossjurisdictional comparison on each of the election officer's recommendations? If I recall, there were over 40.

Mr. Nixon: Yeah. I don't think we'd necessarily want to do it for all of them. I think a lot of them are pretty administrative in nature, but I do think that there are some big ones. Maybe we should specify. It would be interesting, for some of the bigger changes, asking how it works in other provinces. I don't have the list right in front of me. I'd have to go back through it. You know, a lot of the changes that have been put forward are: fill out a form this way, or fill out a form that way. I don't think we need crossjurisdictional research on that but on any major changes to the Election Act.

The other one I'd be interested in is: right now our Ethics Commissioner can't confirm or deny if they have an investigation ongoing, and I'd like to hear if that's the same in other jurisdictions.

I think that's it. I think everybody else has gotten everything else I had.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nixon.

It was mentioned at the start of this discussion – I'll repeat it – that this is not our comprehensive list for the entire life of the committee but rather a starting point for our research teams. I'm mindful that we are beginning our public consultation, and there may be ideas or suggestions coming from that that we'll want to continue to review and investigate further as well.

11:00

Mr. Reynolds: Just one thing, Madam Chair. I'm listening, and about the Conflicts of Interest Act and the changes: I just wonder if members are aware that there are two reviews by committees that have been done of the Conflicts of Interest Act, one as recently as two years ago, which contained a number of recommendations. We'll have to check, but the one that Mr. Nixon just suggested with respect to the Ethics Commissioner being allowed to comment about an investigation that's under way, once again subject to checking, I believe, was a recommendation two years ago.

I'm just wondering if there would be any merit in making available to members at least the past report just so that they could see, perhaps, what was done before and, you know, build on that. I know it's not the committee's desire to, as it were, reinvent the wheel with respect to looking at things. It might be a starting point, that we could certainly make available to members, which may perhaps narrow the scope of review or the time that members may ultimately want to spend on this if they know that it's been reviewed by two committees in the recent past.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Reynolds. I think that making that past report available to all members through the committee website is an excellent suggestion.

Okay. Seeing no further speakers, I would ask that a member move that

the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee direct staff to prepare stakeholder lists and other research based on the discussions at today's meeting, December 18, 2015, for the following three acts: the Conflicts of Interest Act, the Election Act, and the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act.

Moved by Member Loyola. All those in favour, say aye. Opposed? The motion is carried.

Other business. Are there any other issues for discussion?

Seeing none, the date of the next meeting. I anticipate that we will meet again in late January. After public consultation has begun, we will have our written submissions from the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act, that we can discuss to determine what our next steps will be on that topic.

If there's nothing else for the committee's consideration, I'll call for a motion to adjourn. Moved by Ms Miller. All those in favour? Opposed? That motion is carried.

Thank you very much, everyone.

[The committee adjourned at 11:02 a.m.]

