

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE COMMITTEES

Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to talk about the strategic initiative committees Building Our Future, Maximizing Opportunities, Managing This Land, Reducing the Cost of Living and Refocusing Government. In general, I actually like the concept of these committees. I like them because I believe that they are a way that we can actually start digging into government and changing the way we do business. I do share some of the concerns that Members on this side of the House also share. I think they need a little bit more tweaking here and there, but in general, I like the concept, and I'm glad they exist, and I'm hoping that they're going to do good things.

However, as a Member on this side of the House, I do have one fundamental problem with them. To explain that, I'll just go back a little bit. In October, 18 Members decided who would be the Cabinet Members. We gave those Members a hard job. They are responsible for taking our direction, and that is all 18 Members' — not just the 11 on this side but all 18 Members — ideas and concepts and implementing them through the public service, which basically means taking the strategic direction of this House and putting it into practice. So they run and manage the departments, which is hard and takes a lot of time.

The strategic initiative committees are about strategy. They are about strategic initiatives. I feel and believe that Regular Members should be included in those committees, given that it is strategic direction. It is not implementing our strategic direction. This is actually setting some strategy and setting some direction and selecting some activities that are going to go forward in business plans. I believe, as Regular Members, we deserve the right to be involved and cooperate and collaborate in setting that direction.

Then Cabinet will be able to take that direction and implement it within their own individual departments. That is the job that we've given you, and is the job that you've accepted. I really would like Cabinet to take long hard think about the fact that these are strategic initiative committees and think about actually allowing us to

participate as active, full members on these committees. Not all of us — maybe one or two of us per committee, maybe one per committee — but someone who could certainly be a liaison between the 11 of us and Cabinet on each of these strategic initiative committees.

Thank you.