



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Community Services

Monday, June 23, 2008
1:07 p.m.

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Standing Committee on Community Services

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Hehr, Kent, Calgary-Buffalo (L), Deputy Chair

Benito, Carl, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)
Chase, Harry B., Calgary-Varsity (L)
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Bill 18 Sponsor

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Philip Massolin	Committee Research Co-ordinator
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Monday, June 23, 2008

[Mr. Rodney in the chair]

The Chair: Well, welcome, everyone, to the first ever Standing Committee on Community Services. It is a PFC, is it not? People keep calling it FPC, but policy field committee is correct. So it's the CSPFC, starting every one of you. I want to thank people both in person and those who might be closer to their home office for being with us here today.

I would like those on the phone, though, to identify themselves first. Just for the record your first and last name and your constituency, if you would, please.

Mr. Hehr: It's Kent Hehr from Calgary-Buffalo.

The Chair: Welcome, co-chair.

Who else do we have on the phone?

Mr. Chase: Harry Chase, Calgary-Varsity.

The Chair: Okay. If we can start perhaps over here.

Mr. Johnston: Good afternoon. Art Johnston, Calgary-Hays.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Good afternoon. Naresh Bhardwaj, Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Mr. Benito: Good afternoon. Carl Benito, Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Mr. Mason: Brian Mason, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Ms Dean: Shannon Dean, Senior Parliamentary Counsel, Legislative Assembly.

Dr. Massolin: Good afternoon. I'm Philip Massolin. I'm the committee research co-ordinator, Legislative Assembly Office.

Ms Friesacher: Melanie Friesacher, communications consultant, Legislative Assembly Office.

Ms Sales: Tracey Sales, communications consultant with the Legislative Assembly Office also.

Mr. Johnson: Jeff Johnson, Athabasca-Redwater.

Mrs. Sarich: Janice Sarich, Edmonton-Decore and parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education.

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk with the Legislative Assembly Office.

The Chair: Thank you very much, colleagues and friends.

Just a couple of housekeeping items. You know him and you love him, but he does look different than the actual member of the committee. I'm referring, of course, to our friend Mr. Brian Mason. According to Standing Order 56(2.1) to (2.3) he's substituting for Rachel Notley. I thank you for being here. Give our regards to Rachel, if you would, please.

Folks, we have different kinds of meetings. Sometimes the microphones are on; sometimes you have to turn them on. For a meeting such as this *Hansard* has total control. We don't need to touch a thing. They've got things taken care of remotely.

You've probably noticed, colleagues, in meetings that if you do have your BlackBerry close to a microphone, it will create a slight amount of havoc. So if you would either turn them off or slide them a little further away from the microphone, that would be appreciated by *Hansard* and by other colleagues here and perhaps Albertans across the province who happen to be tuning in or listening in at a later date.

The first thing that we should do, ladies and gentlemen, is, of course, approve the agenda. I wonder if I might have a volunteer to move that the agenda for the Monday, June 23, 2008, meeting of the Standing Committee on Community Services be adopted as circulated. Okay. Janice Sarich. We've passed it, but I will ask around the table and over the phones if anybody sees any need at all to make any alterations to the agenda. I think they would have spoken up by now if they had, so we're good on that although we did not vote. Again, I'm over the lunch hour mode of helping friends on the phone. All those in favour of the motion? Any objections? All right. That's carried.

Mr. Chase: Did you see my hand go up, David?

The Chair: As a matter of fact, I felt the energy, and it was very warm and positive, so I'll ask you to continue in that vein, Mr. Chase.

Kent, you otherwise indicated, didn't you?

Mr. Hehr: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Point 3, Orientation, (a) Mandate. I'll read a paragraph for you, folks, and we'll continue. Included in your briefing materials for today's meeting was a document outlining the mandate of the committee. It includes references to relevant standing orders and a copy of the motion referring Bill 18 to this committee for review. The mandate for this committee is set out in temporary Standing Order 52.01(1), where it identifies the following subject areas as falling within our purview: "culture and community spirit, education, housing and urban affairs, municipal affairs, and tourism, parks and recreation."

We'll move right on to (b) if there are no objections: Powers, Rights, and Privileges of Committees of the Assembly. I wonder: Shannon, would you like to make a few comments on the powers and rights and privileges of the committees with perhaps questions at the end, if you so desire?

Ms Dean: Sure.

The Chair: In the meantime, I was missing this. I was going to make a comment, but it's not fair if people aren't here. We are very happy to welcome someone who might want to identify herself and give her trademark welcome. Well, you take it away, if you would, Ms Blakeman.

Ms Blakeman: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, especially because I'm not on this committee. My name is Laurie Blakeman, and I'd like to welcome everyone to my fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre. A beautiful summer day. Thank you all for coming.

The Chair: See? It was worth it just to hear that, and it is a gorgeous day. But we have much work to do, so over to Shannon Dean, please and thanks.

Ms Dean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be very brief because I'm sure a number of members have already heard this summary of powers, rights, and privileges of committees of the Assembly.

This is a committee of the Assembly. The privileges and immunities of the Assembly flow through to you and this committee. Most importantly, you enjoy the benefits of parliamentary privilege, the key element being protection from defamation throughout the proceedings of this committee. I would like to refer members to section 13 of the Legislative Assembly Act. This provides that a member cannot be subject to a civil action or prosecution by reason of any matter brought by the member before the Assembly or a committee of the Assembly or by reason of anything said by the member in the Assembly or any committee of the Assembly.

As members are aware, this is a codification of the principle of parliamentary privilege. It traces back to 1689, to article 9 of the English Bill of Rights, which provided that the proceedings of parliament cannot be questioned anywhere else.

Finally, I'd like to highlight one of the key powers of this committee, and that is the power to summon witnesses. Now, to date, as far as I'm aware, committees in Alberta have not had to resort to this power. Instead, the approach that has been used is that the committee simply extends invitations requesting that officials or other witnesses appear. Usually departments co-operate. Of course, if this did not occur, the committee could issue a summons through a warrant from the Speaker. This power is spelled out in section 14 of the Legislative Assembly Act.

I'll leave it there, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to answer questions, but I can appreciate that we've got a lot on the agenda right now.

The Chair: Sure. Not that it's a point of preference, but, gentlemen on the phones, often you can't hear the phones when there are people here live. Did you have any questions or comments for Shannon Dean?

Mr. Chase: Not for Shannon specifically, Dave. Were you looking for overviews, impressions at some point on the bill in general before we got into specifics, or were we going to go sort of line by line, clause by clause?

1:15

The Chair: Oh, indeed. We'll be examining with a fine-tooth comb but in due time. As you may or may not be aware, each of the five committees has an organizational meeting in and around this time. We'll be getting down to nitty-gritty specifics starting at the next meeting.

Mr. Chase: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. I expect your attendance at that, Mr. Chase, and your input, please and thanks.

Anyone else? Either Kent Hehr on the phone or colleagues around the table: questions for Shannon Dean? No? Of course, we have incredible resources, including yourself. We thank you for your time, and we will promise many more questions as time goes on.

Just to touch on some of the other duties assigned to the five PFCs under the temporary standing orders, the committee, of course, does have a bill referred to it, as Mr. Chase has alluded to, but the scope of our committee far exceeds just bills referred by the Legislature. For example, under the temporary standing orders the committee has the option to conduct public hearings on any bill or regulation or prospective regulation under review and to hold public meetings on any matter within our mandate. We may also choose to review the

annual reports of any departments or agencies that fall within our mandated subject areas. Any task referred to the committee by the Assembly, such as the Bill 18 review, would of course take precedence over any other inquiries and reviews.

On to the next item, Review Process/Role of Department, of course focusing on the task in front of us. The Film and Video Classification Act, Bill 18, was referred to us by the Assembly after first reading under temporary Standing Order 74.1. The review of a bill by a committee is different depending on whether it has been referred after the first or second reading. I see some colleagues nodding their heads. They know this, and I must say this for the record. As Bill 18 has received first reading but not second, the Assembly has not agreed to the principle of the bill, and this allows for a broader scope of review by the committee as we consider the overall subject matter of the bill as opposed to the specific wording it contains.

Mr. Chase, you're still able to hear us nice and clear on that?

Mr. Chase: Yes, I can. Thanks very much.

The Chair: Okay. Good. We'll just continue.

Assuming that the committee recommends that the bill proceed – assuming that – our report can be much more descriptive in nature than what would be appropriate after second reading. So we have the opportunity to communicate the committee's ideas and concerns related to the bill as opposed to proposing specific amendments to its content. An example of such a report was tabled in the Assembly already during the fall of 2007, containing the result of the review of Bill 41 by the Standing Committee on Community Services.

Committee report. We're not just meeting for the fun of it although it's a whole heck of a lot of fun, especially on a day like today. With regard to our work on this bill, the Assembly has directed the committee to report on its review of Bill 18 no later than the last week of October. So if Halloween has come and gone and we haven't filed a report, we have a problem. Based on the directions of the committee, the support staff will design and write a draft report for our consideration, and once approved, they will make arrangements for the report's printing and distribution.

Again, this is all preliminary organizational, so I'll just continue: point 4, Committee Orientation, 4(a), Committee Support. A name that you recognize but a face that you may not see here at the moment is Corinne Dacyshyn. Very well known to colleagues and friends in the Legislature, she's our committee clerk assigned to the committee, but thankfully we have a wonderful replacement at the moment, Jody Rempel. She will be with us this meeting and at our next meeting as well. You might know that Corinne, or Jody in her absence, will provide administrative and procedural assistance to the committee and is the primary contact for committee business. So, folks, if you have inquiries or correspondence regarding committee business, it would be either to Corinne or Jody.

Jody, did you have any comment on that? Your contact information would be forthcoming; I guess we don't need to get it on the record. We know how to get hold of you, don't we? Thanks again.

Rhonda Sorensen is the manager of communications services for the Legislative Assembly Office. She'll work with the committee and use her expertise and experience to help us ensure that we employ and implement an effective communications strategy. Rhonda's schedule doesn't allow her to join us today. Again, with it being organizational, we'll be able to utilize her as a resource more as we go forward, for instance in our next meeting.

We have the able assistance of Melanie. Melanie, how do you say your name?

Ms Friesacher: Friesacher. Just like it's spelled.

The Chair: And Tracey Sales, communications co-ordinator to the meeting from the office of the Clerk. Thank you and welcome.

Shannon Dean we've introduced. The Senior Parliamentary Counsel from the Legislative Assembly Office will of course be providing legal advice, as we've mentioned.

It says Philip, but I think it's Dr. Philip. For the record could you pronounce your name so we get it right in the future?

Dr. Massolin: Sure. Massolin.

The Chair: Just like that: Massolin. He's our committee research co-ordinator. His staff is here as well to provide nonpartisan research services to the committee and to assist in the drafting of committee reports.

Folks, I'm doing a lot of talking. Hopefully this is the most talking you'll ever have me do at one of these. But, again, we're simply laying things out so that everybody is on the same page and understands who's involved.

Again, we'll be moving forward here. Some folks are really quite interested in the next item. That's the budget, and I'll just continue with that: Approved Committee Budget 2008-2009. It is in the amount of \$144,000. A copy of that was distributed on the committee's internal website. It covers the following: pay to members, travel expenses for meetings, and hosting during the meetings. The largest portion of the budget, however, I may draw your attention to, not really to warn or caution but just to inform you that it is actually advertising.

Any questions on the advertising budget? Tracey or Melanie, I'm sure, are aching to answer a question, aren't you? Go ahead sir.

Mr. Benito: Yeah. About the advertising, Mr. Chairman, where does this \$73,000 go? What kind of advertising will we be doing in this committee?

The Chair: Would you like to outline the possibilities, ladies?

Ms Friesacher: Yeah. Essentially, we base our communications plan around your decisions. What we can do: if you choose to have public hearings, if you would like public input, we can place advertisements in weekly papers or daily papers, news releases. If you've done any sort of advertising, you know that's quite an expense, so a big chunk of that is spent with newspaper advertising. Again, based on your decision on what type of input you'd like, that's what we base our plan around.

The Chair: Gentlemen on the phone, questions? Comments?

Mr. Chase: Just in terms of getting the message out, magazines like *Vue* and *Fast Forward* might be less expensive than traditional papers, and they're more along an entertainment line, just a possibility for reaching out and looking for interpretations.

The Chair: Sure. I look forward to brainstorming.

One jurisdiction has outlawed the use of the term "brainstorming." Did you know that? It's "thought showers" because it may be offensive to some groups. That's not meant in jest. That's actually quite serious.

Mr. Hehr: Mr. Chairman, it's Kent Hehr, Calgary-Buffalo, just asking a question here: was this advertising budget based on any

other standing committee's prior use of an advertising budget, or is this a new item for this committee, or has this always been in and around this range?

The Chair: Jody Rempel will answer your question there, Kent.

Ms Rempel: Sure. As you are aware, we did have the policy field committees last year as well in a very similar format to what we have this year. We did certainly use that experience in setting the budget for this year, as well as just, you know, the input from our experts in the communications area as to what kind of costs we would need to anticipate depending on what kind of advertising might be required.

1:25

Mr. Hehr: How much did we spend last year on advertising?

Ms Rempel: Well, it would depend on the committee because each committee did make some slightly different decisions with regard to advertising. But, by and large, advertising is a very expensive proposition. I seem to recall that we certainly didn't have any left over last year.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you very much.

The Chair: Thanks for the question.

Of course, with this being the first official go-round, at least along these lines, gentlemen on the phone and colleagues, we know this is an evolutionary process. We'll find out if what we have is enough or too much and adjust accordingly as the months and years go on.

Mrs. Sarich: Just one quick question in regard to the budget formulation: should this committee require some additional dollars that exceed the estimates in the budget, what is the process for that?

Ms Rempel: I think I can take that one. Just briefly, it would depend on, you know, the amount of the expenditure. We do also have an overall committees budget envelope that we can borrow from if necessary to cover small amounts of money that we might need. Of course, there is the possibility that in the fall we'll have to go before Members' Services again in the supplementary estimates process.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks.

No further questions for the ladies?

Again, we'll approach and attack potential problems like that if and when they arise. I know that everyone around the table is very cognizant and conscientious when it comes to working within budgets and getting a great return on investment for our constituents and taxpayers.

With your permission we'll move on to Decision Items, point 5. We do have a number of decisions to make today regarding the most appropriate input process for the review of Bill 18. As mentioned, the committee is required to report back on this matter no later than the last week of October, but it's up to the committee to decide on its schedule and procedures.

Welcome, gentlemen. It's great to have you here. Gentlemen, if you wouldn't mind, just for the record, for *Hansard* – and we have a couple of people on the phones – letting them know your first and last names and constituencies, and we'll welcome you to the meeting. Thanks for being here.

Mr. Doerksen: Arno Doerksen, Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Tom Lukaszuk, Edmonton-Castle Downs.

The Chair: Thanks, gentlemen.

Point (a), Technical Briefing on Bills. Again, Mr. Chase has alluded to this. We've already scheduled our next meeting, as you know, for July 28. My first question for you, folks: is the committee interested in inviting government officials involved in the drafting of Bill 18 to attend the next meeting and provide a technical briefing?

Mr. Hehr: I would be interested.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chase: I would very much appreciate the justification of the legislation.

The Chair: Okay. Comments from around the table? Go ahead, Mr. Mason.

Mr. Mason: That sounds grand.

The Chair: Grand. Anyone feeling otherwise? Yeah, I think it's rather a common-sense situation. So with this concurrence, if you're okay with it, folks, I will send a letter to the department, and I'll invite them to make a presentation at the next meeting. I'll have Jody make the appropriate arrangements for that.

Mr. Bhardwaj: What time is this meeting scheduled for?

The Chair: It is July 28. Is it 1 o'clock? We were trying to piggyback for when folks were in town. I know we have a number of Edmonton members, but there is a CPC on Community Services in the morning. Ms Blakeman, is it 1 to 4?

Ms Blakeman: Yes, according to what's on the website.

The Chair: Okay. Perfect. Good.

In conjunction with that, on the public input options for things like written submissions or public hearings or other avenues or venues that you folks might think are a good idea, we have to decide how we're going to communicate with the public and, as was mentioned with the advertising budget, how to utilize that.

When it comes to identification of stakeholders and invitations to interested parties, ladies and gentlemen, I want to turn this over to you. Do you have suggestions about stakeholders that we can identify, interested parties who you believe would be specifically impacted or want to have input about the review on Bill 18? Anyone come to mind?

Go ahead, Ms Blakeman. The floor is yours.

Ms Blakeman: Well, I'm wondering if there's a mechanism to send the bill out and alert – I'm sure they're on top of it, but we should make a formal opening to them for organizations like AMPIA, which is our professional film organization, an NGO organization, in Alberta. As well, there's the Directors Guild of Canada – I'm sort of covering the artistic side at this point – the Edmonton Arts Council; the Calgary Professional Arts Alliance as well; FAVA, the film and video arts alliance, located here in Edmonton; the Calgary media something. The Calgary people would know this better. I'm going to get nailed for not having that one exactly right. And I

would also suggest Egale. I'm just wondering about the human rights angle or commentary on some of the sections I've noticed in here. Is it possible to send the bill to those organizations and just alert them that the next meeting would be on the 28th?

Mr. Chase: Also, if you could add ACTRA to the list.

The Chair: That's a good suggestion, and a lot of people, of course, would suggest that Alberta Film should be involved.

Thank you, Ms Blakeman. I was hoping we could glean from your experience and expertise, in all seriousness, along these lines. I'm glad you're here to suggest that today. I wonder if it fits within the mindset of committee members, though, that we get the briefing on the bill first and then we ask for all of this after that point. We can make decisions on exactly how we advertise, how we invite, and so on at the next meeting. Then they'd have the rest of the summer and then into the fall so that they could perhaps present in September or write in or however we decide.

Mr. Chase: Dave, because of what I see as a very dramatic change, going from three sort of industry professionals to a member of the Legislature, a minister or the minister's appointee, I think the faster we get this information out the better, at least the bill brief. How we get it out beyond the e-mailing and contact with the specific groups that have been outlined we can go into in greater detail, but this is calling for some rather dramatic changes, and I think that the faster people are informed the better. Possibly through the ministry's website would be one way of broadcasting that information as well.

The Chair: Okay.

Did you want to comment, Jody?

Ms Rempel: I just want to clarify that, of course, this is a legislative committee, not a government committee, and we do actually have our own website, where we could make that kind of information available.

Mr. Chase: Just as long as people are aware of the subcommittee's status. I just thought that at least a link with the ministry of culture's website to the specific committee might be a good idea so that we get the broadest knowledge of the proposed bill, so that people can input to the greatest extent possible.

1:35

Mr. Hehr: I see really no reason why these individuals and groups shouldn't be invited to that bill briefing to hear the reasoning, the rationale, and the background. That information, to me, seems important for them going forward on their comments directed to the bill, to have that in their back pocket for discussion purposes.

The Chair: Mr. Mason, you have the floor, and I was wondering if we had further speakers. I saw heads nodding. Go ahead, Mr. Mason.

Mr. Mason: Thank you. Just to comment on the last point. I mean, it seems it might be more practical if we could just have the briefing video and make that available on the website so that people wouldn't have to travel to that meeting to hear the briefing. I don't know if that's a possibility.

Ms Rempel: We actually do stream live what occurs in the committee meetings, so they would certainly be able to listen in from anywhere they're able to get online and hear what was being presented and discussed.

Mr. Mason: Is it just live?

Ms Rempel: It's live, and then it's archived as well.

Mr. Mason: It's archived, so you can get it.

The Chair: To clarify, that would be audio but not video.

Ms Rempel: That's right. We don't have video, like they do in the Assembly, but we do have the audio.

Mr. Mason: I just think that if you could make it available online, it would be much more convenient for people around the province.

I just wanted to suggest, in terms of stakeholders that we might ask, that on city council you would just ask the administration – I'm not quite sure who that is, whether it's the government or the committee staff; I would gather it is the committee staff – to compile a list of potential stakeholders for us for the next meeting based on the excellent suggestions that Laurie and others have made.

I know that this also involves video games, and I suspect that there will be some interest in that. I'm at a loss to come up with names of organizations that might be interested in that, but I suspect that there will be some public interest in that aspect. I think it would just be better if we had a list prepared for us at the next meeting, and then we could operate from that and make the decision at the next meeting.

The Chair: Thanks for that. I know that on this point Dr. Philip has a wealth of information for us.

Dr. Massolin: Thank you. I was just going to offer, as is indicated in the agenda, that, yes, the research staff would be willing to help the committee out by preparing a draft stakeholders list that could be vetted at the next committee meeting. Through your direction, Mr. Chair, we'd be happy to do that.

The Chair: Okay.

Other comments from on the phone or around the table?

Ms Blakeman: I just want to make a plea again that we notify possible stakeholders as soon as possible. They're usually short staffed over the summer, so the more time they have to work on looking at their research or gathering feedback from their members the better. If we wait until after July 28 and then there's an e-mail or a letter going out, it's early August. We're likely going to want feedback by early September, so we've only given them a month at that point instead of potentially two months. It's an aid to them if we can give them more time to react to this and to do a feedback loop through their own membership.

Mr. Chase: Also, summer is traditionally a heavy filming time frame given our wonderful Alberta backdrops. Therefore, you know, it may take a series of e-mails before people connect due to the busyness of the season.

Mr. Mason: Well, you know, there's no reason we have to formally approve a list at the July 28 meeting. Perhaps the staff, working with the chair, could just develop a list and send out the notifications.

The Chair: And not necessarily presentations at the next meeting, but we could see them in September. It would give them an extra five weeks or so to talk to their members, to formulate their thoughts on paper. If we decide to see them in person, we can do so as well.

Ms Blakeman: Yeah. And they can read the *Hansard* or listen to the streaming from July 28 for their own background.

The Chair: Sure. This is going far too well.

Mr. Chase: That's because I'm in Calgary, Dave.

The Chair: Yeah, right. And we'll make arrangements so that you'll be there at the next meeting, too, hon. Chase. Thank you.

Any other comments or questions, ladies and gentlemen? Okay. All-party democracy in action.

We'll move on, then. We had in our notes to consider what has already been decided by committee members, but I'll just get it on the record: that the research co-ordinator compile a draft stakeholder list for review and approval at the next meeting.

Go ahead, Ms Rempel.

Ms Rempel: Yeah. I think that just to clarify – and perhaps I'm incorrect – the research staff will put together a stakeholder list, which will certainly be available to committee members. But in the interim, between now and the next meeting, I will work with the chair to put together a draft letter or e-mail as appropriate so that we can have contact with these stakeholders prior to the next meeting as well. Is that correct?

The Chair: Right.

Ms Blakeman, that meets your satisfaction, then?

Ms Blakeman: Sure.

The Chair: Yeah. Good. Great. Thank you. We'll work with Dr. Philip on that.

Ms Friesacher: I just want to clarify, Mr. Chair: does the committee intend to do any public advertising between now and the next meeting?

The Chair: That could be a source of discussion, decision right now. We, obviously, want to be and will be open and transparent. We also need to be strategic and not get ahead of ourselves.

Comments? Questions?

Mr. Chase: I previously mentioned in terms of inexpensive the weekly publications like *Fast Forward* and *Vue*, and I think there's CityPlus or another sort of entertainment-style weekly that comes out. I have a feeling that based on the importance of this particular bill, we might be able to get a fairly favourable rate, and that might be one of the ways of alerting the groups most affected by this legislation.

The Chair: Naresh, did you care to comment on this?

Mr. Bhardwaj: No. I'm actually good. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.

Other comments or questions? It's good for us to be ambitious, but we also want to make sure that we're advertising what we want to advertise, I presume.

I see you nodding your head. Care to comment, sir, just to enlighten us a little?

Mr. Johnson: What would we advertise at this point in time?

The Chair: Is that a question for Mr. Chase?

Mr. Johnson: Well, I guess for the chair or the committee. If we're talking about advertising prior to the next meeting, what would we advertise?

The Chair: What would we be advertising, Mr. Chase? That is the question.

Mr. Chase: What we would be advertising is the basic format. The underlying principle of the bill, I would suggest, would be one of the key things. The suggestion of going from a series of film producers/distributors/censors to an individual in the ministry and the intent and the explanation behind that decision: that's the basis of what I think we're looking for input on.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks, Mr. Chase.
Over to Mr. Mason.

Mr. Mason: Well, thanks, Mr. Chairman. I don't think we should be spending our advertising money on advertising the content of the legislation. I think we need to make the decision. First of all, I assume that we are inviting submissions, so we need to make decisions about whether it's written submissions or oral submissions or whether or not we're actually going to have public hearings. Once we've made that decision, then we use the advertising to invite people to participate in that process and to let them know where they can find information relative to the content of the bill.

The Chair: I'm seeing a lot of nodding heads, gentlemen on the phones. Any further comment? In other words, Mr. Chase, obviously, we will utilize the advertising budget, but it seems that the will of those around the table is that we focus in on where the bull's eye is at the next meeting before we throw the dart, so to speak.

Mr. Chase: That's fine by me. It's getting the maximum from our stakeholders. Their input is absolutely essential. That's the whole purpose of what this committee is doing, looking for that extended public input.

The Chair: Sure. And in the spirit of that, that might be a great segue to our communications staff. Melanie and Tracey, I wonder if this might be a good time, ladies and gentlemen, for them to guide us through the committee decisions that are required. Based on the decision that we make here, we will develop a communications plan for approval at the next meeting. If the ladies would like to share that with us, that would be great.

Ms Friesacher: Yeah. Essentially, the decision we did need at this point is whether or not you want public advertising at this point or to wait until the next meeting. What we can do is put together a communications plan for the next meeting with stakeholders and areas that we can cover if that's the wish of the committee.

The Chair: I'm hearing a lot of people and seeing them nod. I have a few speakers.

1:45

Mrs. Sarich: Do we not have to just back up a little bit here and make a decision about the public input options before we look at a communications plan around that? I don't think we've really explored that at this juncture. This was brought up by Brian Mason

as well. To me, I think that that would set what type of options we would explore for communications and then help pull together a communications plan to look at at the next meeting. But we're not giving you any direction at this point.

The Chair: I see some nodding heads. Just for the record and for the people on the phone, would you care to comment at all on that before I move to the next speaker?

Ms Friesacher: Based on previous experience with committees, some committees have decided at the initial meeting to just open it up for public submissions. You're absolutely right; you have to decide. Do you want to open it up to the public? Do you want to just stick with stakeholders, certain stakeholders, or do you want to hold a public hearing? So, absolutely, based on your decision, I can come up with a plan or some suggestions for communicating.

Mrs. Sarich: If I may, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Sure.

Mrs. Sarich: So far I think what we've heard is identification of stakeholders, and now I think it's the question of how broad beyond just the key stakeholders, who would be maybe primary in terms of being impacted by this particular bill. Should the committee want the public input, you're quite right: that would also have a second part to a communications plan. I think we need to have a little bit of a dialogue beyond the stakeholders' analysis, and the question, I think, at this juncture would be: are we reaching out to the public as well?

The Chair: If I'm hearing you correctly, Mrs. Sarich, you're suggesting that we give them a little bit more direction than simply: come back with a communications plan. One of the aspects you'd like to see within the plan is, you know, the different targets and the different places that we should go and how it should be advertised. What are you asking them to come back with per se?

Mrs. Sarich: Well, my experience with a communications plan is that it's generally written once committees have decided what directions they'd like to go on these important items. I think what I'm asking, Mr. Chairman, at this point is that it seems to me that we've had a bit of a discussion on the stakeholders. Now it's the question of: how inclusive are we, or how broad are we going to reach beyond the identified stakeholders, with the general public being another stakeholder? I think that if we have that dialogue, then we can provide a little bit more direction for communications between now and the next meeting.

The Chair: Okay. We will attend to that.

To the gentleman on your left, at least physically: is this along the same lines?

Mr. Johnson: Yeah, the same lines.

The Chair: Okay. Go ahead.

Mr. Johnson: I understand what Janice is saying, and I respect her point, but I think that we're talking generally here right now in terms of communication plans and stakeholders with regard to the agenda. I think that the group has gotten good experience with what communication plans have looked like in the past. They can put together a basic template or a foundation for a communication plan.

As we have bills come forward and we get the briefings on those bills, then we can tweak those communication plans because we may want to adjust those, depending on the bill, depending on the stakeholders we want to invite, and depending on the time windows that we have to deal with it. I don't think we need to be that detailed in terms of our direction for them today.

The Chair: Okay. How do you feel about that, Mrs. Sarich?

Mrs. Sarich: Well, I'm anxiously awaiting, Mr. Chairman, any other response from the committee. You know, there are different approaches. I think we just have to identify where we are and how comfortable we feel at this point. We do have another meeting.

The Chair: Indeed, and some have spoken to me apart from this and said: if we were able to get a briefing and then a communications plan to follow, we could make the decisions at that time and, again, zero in on our target.

Go ahead, Shannon Dean.

Ms Dean: I'm speaking not necessarily as a lawyer but just with respect to previous experience and recent experience last week with some of the other committees. I'm cognizant of the committee's schedule. The next meeting is not until the end of July. I'm not sure if the committee is ready now to make the decision as to whether they want to invite public input through advertising. Just keep in mind that if you're delaying the decision with respect to inviting public input until the end of July, you have to take into account that there's time required for the placement of the ad and time required for people to respond to the ad. We're getting into August and September. One of the other committees did authorize the chair and the deputy chair to work with staff to place an ad inviting public input. However, I'm not sure if the committee is at that stage, where they're ready to make that decision. I just offer that to you at this point.

The Chair: Thank you for that information.
Mr. Lukaszuk is next.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Thank you. Public input is always welcome on any piece of legislation that's before the House, and there is a mechanism already in place to solicit public input. That's simply by contacting the local MLA from your riding and telling him how you feel about a given bill. The reason we defer bills to this particular committee and the reason that all bills are not deferred to this committee is because these are bills that would benefit from having stakeholder input, individuals who really know this piece of legislation, who work around this piece of legislation, who are professionally engaged relevant to this legislation, who can really give us bona fide input so that we can make this bill better and then return it to the House for further debate.

Now, all Albertans are affected by all pieces of legislation, and they are encouraged to express their opinions on all pieces of legislation before the House, not to be excluded from this committee but not necessarily to be welcomed to this committee. If they choose to contact this committee, by all means. It's an open process. But that's not the very purpose of this committee. The regular route of influencing MLAs and influencing legislation is still in place.

Mr. Chase: People have to know what bills are out there in order for them to react to them. Dr. Philip Massolin mentioned that he would be preparing a list of very specific stakeholders, primarily of the industrial version: AMPIA, ACTRA, et cetera. It would be interest-

ing within this interval of a month, when those very specific affected stakeholders are contacted through e-mail and whatever other Legislative Assembly website references, to see what input is generated at that point.

Also, through the government's own websites we could put out a public appeal and provide a little bit more information to those people who do subscribe to GOA. I would think that it would be in the industry's interests if they were to fan out that information to their various stakeholders. So we have that month of sort of direct, nonexpensive e-mail/website contact. I'm not sure whether that would be sufficient time to get a sense as to the kinds of responses we would receive within this next month and then base where we need to go further in terms of outreach.

The Chair: Okay. I thought I saw two hands. I want to make sure. Mr. Lukaszuk or Mr. Mason, did you have comments? I thought I saw Thomas first.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, just in response to the comments. Indeed, Albertans know what bills are on the floor of the Legislature. We do not publish lists and describe every bill that's on the floor of the Legislature by way of advertising. I would like to remind this table to be very cautious in using government websites. This bill is on the floor of the Legislature. It is not within the realm of government. This committee has its website, and that's the only medium that you have to use. I would suggest that particularly a member of the opposition would not want to see government websites utilized for the purpose of this committee.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks for that point.

Mr. Mason: I think we're kind of going around the questions that we need to settle. Who are we going to hear from? How are we going to hear from them? How are we going to decide that? I think we need to make that decision. Maybe I'll just try a motion.

The Chair: Please. To be honest, I have one gentleman who is going to speak. I was going to ask after that.

With your permission, Mr. Doerksen, we'll have his motion, and we can debate it.

Mr. Doerksen: Okay.

The Chair: Go ahead and make the motion, please. Thanks.

Mr. Mason: Well, then, I will move that at a meeting scheduled in September, we set aside time to hear from interested stakeholders and members of the public and that an advertising campaign be drawn up for the committee's consideration at the July 28 meeting.

1:55

The Chair: Okay. Are you comfortable with the wording of that?

Do you want to read for us what you have, Jody, just to make sure we capture both halves of what I thought I heard?

Ms Rempel: Okay. Mr. Mason would move that the Standing Committee on Community Services schedule a meeting in September for the purpose of hearing from interested parties, such as stakeholders and the general public, on Bill 18 and that an advertising campaign be prepared for this purpose for consideration at the committee's next meeting.

Mr. Mason: If I could just fit in there – it just occurred to me as you

were reading it back – that the advertising campaign would solicit written submissions as well.

Ms Rempel: Okay. So we'd be looking at written submissions perhaps in advance?

Mr. Mason: Yes.

Ms Rempel: Just maybe for general information for those who weren't involved in the policy field committees last year, we did have some committees take a similar route as far as public input. They scheduled the cut-off for written submissions as August 25, I believe, and then towards mid-September was when they held their public meetings.

Mr. Chase: Can I throw in my two cents' worth? I don't know whether it would be as an amendment, but rather than just a single meeting in Edmonton it would be very nice if we had meetings – it could be on the same date with various committee members present – one in Calgary and one in Edmonton. We could divvy up the province a bit and make it easier for people to attend in person if they wish to provide an in-person submission.

The Chair: May I be the bearer of bad news, Mr. Chase? I've looked around the table, and I'm not seeing anyone nodding their head. I'm seeing a lot of shaking going on, though.

Let's continue with our speakers list if we may. Mr. Doerksen, to the motion or at least indirectly to the motion.

Mr. Doerksen: Is the motion on the floor already?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Doerksen: Okay. Well, I guess my comments were more towards the technical briefing. I would really like to have a fairly thorough technical briefing on the background of the bill. Certainly, this came from somewhere. I expect that department officials could give us a good update on the consultations they've had.

The Chair: In fact, just before you snuck in, we arranged to do that for July 28, so I think we're on the right track in that respect.

Mr. Doerksen: Good.

The Chair: Did you have any thoughts that come to mind with respect to the motion? We will have a vote very shortly.

What you're saying, again, is time set aside in September for in-person presentations – it may or may not be based on written submissions – to be decided at the next meeting, which is July 28.

Mr. Mason: Yeah. That we also solicit written submissions and that an advertising campaign to support that would be brought forward for consideration at the July 28 meeting.

The Chair: Good.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Can we also add in the motion that maybe the advertisement will begin immediately or when it is going to start? How long are we going to be advertising for?

The Chair: Or at least, as has been mentioned, a cut-off date, as an example, of August 25.

Mr. Bhardwaj: That's the cut-off for submissions, but when do we begin the advertisement?

The Chair: Right. Okay.

Ms Rempel: I think that, first of all, if we could just determine if this is, in fact, the route that we want to go, and then from there we can make some decisions.

The Chair: Sure. Yeah. So we would vote on the motion and then get to the finer points.

Mrs. Sarich, please.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a point of clarification or maybe a point of information on this. I'm just wondering, because we haven't had the briefing from the department, whether or not that department has received any type of submissions or information from stakeholders, from the general public, regarding this bill. I would hate to see that the committee is duplicating processes that already may be well in hand.

I'm very respectful of the motion on the floor, but I'm wondering if there's any way we could give consideration to my point, you know, without changing the intent of your motion. You understand, Mr. Mason, what I'm asking?

Mr. Mason: Actually, I'm not quite following.

Mrs. Sarich: The department may have already received information or submissions from stakeholders and the general public. I'm just wondering about that because we're opening up another process for them that they may have already applied a bit of rigour to. I'm not saying that we should not provide an opportunity; I'm just wondering if there's any information that this committee needs to be aware of about those types of activities. I'm looking to you and the chair, maybe, for how we can get that.

The Chair: Well, unless I'm wrong, I'm thinking that in conjunction with research and communications and Jody, when we have that list of prospective stakeholders, we could run it by the ministry and say: have you received from these people or not? We would just go out and do it, and if they have already submitted, then they can just send it to us, can't they?

Ms Rempel: Yes. This would be sort of like a next step. I mean, there very possibly have been some consultations done in preparing this bill, but it was kind of for the purpose of getting this bill put together. We could approach it from the perspective of: okay; they've created this product, and now we're looking at it. But this is separate from the work that the government has done.

The Chair: Yeah, because it is all party. Believe me, they won't mind putting in a new e-mail address and pressing send.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay. I'm satisfied with that. I just thought I would ask the question, you know, to make sure that we're covering all those bases.

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Chase: From an opposition point of view we're big on tabling previously collected information, but I don't see that as an either/or. I see that as in addition to, that it would be great to have any past research or submissions that this committee has previously received.

The Chair: Hon. Chase, it's both/and, isn't it? I'm shocked that you've used the word "opposition." I thought we were all party, hon. Harry.

Mr. Chase: The word "opposition" was mentioned earlier, so I was referring to the vocabulary established by the chair.

The Chair: Fair enough. But to the matter at hand. We have a motion on the floor. I've run out of speakers on my list. Is there anyone else that cares to share before we move on? Go ahead.

Ms Sales: Hi, there. I'm sorry. If I could just pose another option to the committee. In the past what some of the committees have done – and it has worked fairly well – is advertise for submissions, and in the ad we could make mention that the interested parties could identify whether or not they would be interested in orally presenting at a later date. That still leaves that open for the committee, but what it does is that it lets you see what the interest is with the submissions first, and it also lets you see who is interested. So we could also go that avenue as well: do an ad requesting submissions first.

The Chair: Speakers on the subject? There are at least two.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, I would suggest: let's not go there. Judging from experience – and I think many of the members have been here before – usually what happens is that they show up and then they read to us the very submission that they mailed to us three weeks before. It's nice to put a face to a submission, but it doesn't really in any qualitative way enhance the submission.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mrs. Sarich: I would tend to agree with the comments of Mr. Lukaszuk. I appreciate that that's another option to look at, but I think we were pretty close in the direction that we originally put on the table.

The Chair: Okay. Speaking of that, maybe it's time to refresh everyone's memory, and if there are no more comments, we will vote. I will not call for the vote immediately. We're not rushing into this.

If you could read the statement as you have it, please, Jody.

Ms Rempel: Okay. Well, I'm going to just try and summarize this because I think we've added the written submissions as well, so please feel free to correct me. Mr. Mason has moved that

this committee schedule a meeting in September to hear from interested parties such as the general public and stakeholders, that this committee put out a call for written submissions on Bill 18, and that an advertising campaign be drawn up on this matter for the committee's consideration at the next meeting.

So looking at both: the written submissions probably due the end of August and then the public hearings in September.

The Chair: Any further discussion? Do I hear a call for the question?

Mr. Chase: Question.

2:05

The Chair: Thank you, sir. All those in favour of the motion as read? Anyone opposed? That is carried.

The next item I have is Background/Research Materials Required. Dr. Philip, I wonder if you might want to review some of the options that we have in research to be pursued – and you folks know this – at the direction of the committee.

Dr. Massolin: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm tempted to ask you to call me Dr. Phil.

The Chair: Oh, no. I'm afraid we'll require you to grow a moustache and shave most of your head, then.

Go ahead, Dr. Phil.

Dr. Massolin: Thank you for that. In terms of research that the research staff can provide, I just want to give you a very brief overview because I know a lot of members around the table have already heard this. As you mentioned yourself, Mr. Chair, earlier in your briefing to the committee, the research staff provide nonpartisan research to this and other policy field committees and other committees. Of course, you all know what that means: research support to the committee as a whole as opposed to individual members.

I just also want to give you a sense of the support that we provide. As you heard, we'll put together the stakeholder list in conjunction with you, Mr. Chair. Other sorts of things that we can do in terms of the information-gathering component of this committee is that we could put together a cross-jurisdictional comparison, taking into account Bill 18 and what other jurisdictions have done in terms of a comparison. Maybe I'll ask you at the end of this spiel to gauge the committee's interests in that regard.

Another thing that we can do is provide summary information, analytical information on the submissions that come into us both from stakeholders and potentially from members of the public, to facilitate the work of this committee. In addition, some of that can be statistical information as well.

Also, I would like to indicate that we provide assistance in drafting the final report that this committee will table in October in the Assembly.

One other thing is that through the Legislature Library we've set up a news clipping service as well, so any information from other jurisdictions that relates to this particular subject matter will appear on the committee's internal secure website. We haven't had any hits as of yet, but please check that periodically in case there is any additional information.

Now, one point of clarification, Mr. Chair, if I might, about the stakeholders. I understand that the research staff is to work with you in this regard, but is there any sense from the committee in terms of asking stakeholders potentially to present at the public submissions in terms of an oral submission? We seem to have ruled that out in terms of the written submissions, but what about the stakeholders? That's what I'm getting at here. The other question, again, is that cross-jurisdictional analysis. I'd like to see, you know, the committee's direction on that point as well.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Just before we turn it over to Ms Blakeman, in direct response because it's nice to hit it head-on, Mr. Mason, did we actually not take care of that through your motion, that the oral submissions would take place in September?

Is that not what you're asking, Dr. Phil?

Mr. Mason: Yes. That was the intent.

The Chair: So are we okay on that, then, Dr. Phil?

Dr. Massolin: Yes. I just wanted clarification that that included the stakeholders as well as just the public. So thank you.

The Chair: As I understand it, it was. Yeah. A good point.
Ms Blakeman, you had your hand up a while ago.

Ms Blakeman: No. Just two things I want to comment on in this particular discussion. One is that I think we found it most useful and successful in the past that once we'd seen the written submissions, there may be some stakeholders or members of the public that we wished to ask to come before the committee so that we could dig a little deeper rather than just having a regurgitation, an oral presentation of a written submission. That may partly answer your question, that once we see what we're dealing with and what the concerns are – because, frankly, everybody could go: "It's great. Moving on." We don't know what the issues are that are out there, so I would tend to say that rather than seeking oral submissions at this point that the committee look at what we get by way of written, and then decide if we want to invite people to come in to have a discussion with us.

The second thing that I would be interested in – because I'm being asked this question, and I don't quite have the answers – is whether it's possible to get some explanation of how C-10 relates to what we're doing here. Other people are probably getting the same question. It's the federal bill on – well, I don't really know it that well because I haven't read it. It is federal. If there's a way for you to give us some sort of background on how they relate or don't relate, that would be helpful to us, I think.

The Chair: Okay. Other feedback for Dr. Phil on this? I am hearing a call for research. Should we say cross-jurisdictional, or is it simply C-10 that you're interested in?

Ms Blakeman: I think it's both.

The Chair: Both. Okay. Thanks.

I see two hands. Mr. Mason, I believe you were first, and then was it Mr. Doerksen? Okay.

Mr. Mason: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. One of the things that I would like to see – and it's not always applicable, and it may not be, because I haven't closely tried to compare the new bill and the Amusements Act. I've always found side-by-side documents to be extremely useful, you know, when you get into the detail of legislation. If it's appropriate – and sometimes bills are just completely different from one another, and the side-by-side presentation doesn't make sense. But it may in this case, and that's certainly something that I have found very useful.

The Chair: Maybe not a three-column document but two or more, depending on the number of bills at what jurisdictional level would apply.

Dr. Massolin: What we've envisioned, just to give you a sense of this cross-jurisdictional piece, is to take the salient features of this bill and compare them across jurisdictions and as much as possible try to interconnect them, as you're suggesting. I mean, we can certainly, you know, add to that, if you wish, in terms of side-by-side comparisons. It gets a little bit difficult in some cases, especially when you're dealing with multiple jurisdictions.

Mr. Mason: I was actually referring to the old legislation in Alberta and the new act rather than to other provinces.

The Chair: Without speaking for him, I'll ask: is that somewhat easily doable?

Dr. Massolin: We could do that. Sure.

The Chair: Okay. Well, I'm hearing a call, then. I'm wondering if we want to entertain a motion through the chair that the research coordinator would compile a background briefing or any other research materials for the next meeting. Would anyone want to put forward a motion like that?

Mr. Chase: I'll put forward that motion.

The Chair: Sorry, Mr. Chase. My mistake. Mr. Doerksen reminded me that he was next on the speakers' list. I don't know if he wants to make the motion.

Mr. Doerksen: Well, no. My intention wasn't to make the motion, but I'd like to see the two- or three-column comparison, too. I think that would be useful. I'm also interested in what's already been done: what's the history of this, and where did it come from? I have no problem doing further research, but let's not do it a second time if we already have it, you know, through the department or on the record already.

The Chair: I think we have an answer for you right here now, sir.

Dr. Massolin: Yeah, I was just going to offer that now that we're comparing old versus new legislation, I would ask through you, Mr. Chair, that we be given permission to speak with the department in order to talk to them about what some of the important changes are and whatnot and to build on the work that's already been done.

The Chair: Comments? Questions?

Mr. Chase: Just a comment. In part of that sort of background research within the department and the ministry and their justifications and desires for the new changes it would be rather nice to know if other provinces have gone this route and the reasoning behind going that route.

The Chair: Well, I do have a question for members, then. I wonder if we might be crossing a line there in that the department would be coming forward, as we've prescribed, at the next meeting, and we could keep Dr. Phil and his department free and clear to do the all-party, and then we would have both.
Comments?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Again, a word of caution. The department or any bill sponsor has the privilege to come before this committee and present why he or she or the department is putting a bill forward. That's where their involvement, in my opinion, should end. If we require any additional research, it is our responsibility as the committee with our research staff to find that nonpartisan research from other sources, not from the department.

The Chair: All right. I see Dr. Phil nodding his head there. We're good? Okay.

Mr. Mason: I'm just a little surprised at those comments. I mean, obviously the department has done a lot of work to prepare this bill, and there are reasons why they've done it. They probably have looked into the area. I'm curious why that information wouldn't be

available to us. I mean, they'll come, and they'll present, and we can ask them questions. We can ask for it directly when they're here. Why wouldn't they give relevant information to our research staff to help us do our job?

2:15

Mr. Lukaszuk: Mr. Mason, I can give you a brief social studies lesson about the difference between the executive and the legislative branches of government. It's for your protection, particularly as a member of the opposition, that you don't want those two to blend. One day you may be the sponsor of a bill that ends up before this very committee, and I don't think you would want the might of a government department swaying the minds of these committee members on whether they should or should not approve or support your bill. That is the difference. You don't want the executive branch with its fortitude to be able to sway the views of this committee. That's why this committee has its own budget for its own research. It can go wherever it chooses to go and find out the objective answers to whether this legislation is good or bad and not the biased answers of a sponsor, who obviously is supportive of this bill.

Mr. Mason: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm a little bit beyond a social studies lesson from the hon. member. It also seems to me that this committee has the authority to ask government for information. I don't see anything which contradicts the principle of separation between the legislative and executive branches of government in doing that. I'm having a hard time understanding.

Mrs. Sarich: Mr. Chairman, I guess a point of information. Could you please clarify what is an appropriate requisition of information by a committee like this? I'm new to this committee. I'd like clarification as to what is proper protocol or what would not be proper.

The Chair: In fact, we're all new to the committee since this is our first meeting.

Mrs. Sarich: I'm wondering if legal counsel or any other resources that are here today could provide that information, or do you have to go away from today's meeting and report back?

The Chair: Shannon Dean, care to comment?

Ms Dean: The committee has general power to request documents. If I could just go back to the specific request for what I would characterize as the two-column document. If there was something available that didn't violate some sort of privilege held by cabinet, I believe Dr. Massolin is looking for permission from the committee to request that on its behalf and share it with you rather than duplicate the effort with respect to putting together a document. I just offer that to you.

The Chair: Okay. Did I see another hand over here? Mr. Lukaszuk, did you care to comment further?

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, I'm just concerned. You know, it was welcome news, I think, by all Members of this Legislative Assembly to have this committee in place because it provided a vehicle for any and all pieces of legislation to be vetted outside of the House independently by all members in a nonpartisan view. Obtaining information from departments and from cabinets is the easy way out because you're assuming that they have already preresearched. Of

course they have preresearched, but they have preresearched with a certain outcome in mind. They are the sponsors of the bill. If we want easy information as opposed to, perhaps, accurate information, sure, shoot off a memo to the department, and they'll give you all their answers to your questions, but they may not necessarily be the kinds of answers you want. I suggest to you that it's important to maintain this committee independently as a legislative committee. I think we have the means of finding our own answers to our own questions.

The Chair: Mrs. Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much for the clarification from Parliamentary Counsel. If it is what you're saying, that asking the department for that level of information, the two-column document, is appropriate for this committee, I don't see any harm in having the permission to go forward to get that information to help us understand a little bit deeper, peeling back some extra layers here regarding the bill that we're going to be looking at. I'm satisfied with the answer, and I'm satisfied with the request.

Mr. Chase: On July 28, when the members of the ministry, the department, come before us, if we have those questions or qualifications, we could certainly ask for that background in greater detail if necessary, and they can let us know whether it's available or not. I mean, the ministry responsibility in the FOIP Act provides an awful lot of power and discretion. I would suggest that we ask those questions if we feel they're necessary on July 28, when that briefing is provided for us.

The Chair: Well, I wonder if Mr. Chase just answered our question there, did he? It's funny: I was going to say, just before you jumped in, Harry, that I'm kind of thinking that's exactly the kind of thing that the department might be telling us. We're free to ask them any question we want on July 28. In keeping with the spirit of the all-party committee and being kind of a third party, I wonder if research should feel free to go ahead and do independent research apart from government.

I wonder if we need a motion for that to occur. Anybody want to bring that forward, that Dr. Philip come back to this next meeting with cross-jurisdictional and any pertinent information he can find that he can obtain legally and morally, or words to that effect?

Mr. Mason: I'm not sure I understand that. He asked permission to ask the government for some information.

The Chair: Uh-huh.

Mr. Mason: So would your proposed motion give him that permission?

The Chair: I'm not proposing a motion. I'm the chair. I'm just here to facilitate.

Mr. Mason: Okay. You were kind of suggesting something.

The Chair: Okay. No, he didn't put forward a motion, so he's asking permission, I guess.

What's the will of the committee? Are we setting Dr. Philip free to work with government, or are we setting him free to work independently? That's really the question.

Mr. Chase: I have great faith in Dr. Philip Massolin based on my

experience through Public Accounts, and I would suggest that if we allow him to pursue both internally and externally to help us to draft the best bill possible, that would be a direction. I'm not sure whether it requires a motion but just an approval of the direction for Dr. Phil to go forth and do his good work.

Mr. Hehr: I agree with that proposal, that Dr. Phil go ahead and do his research.

Just a comment on the last discussion that was held. You know, we're all big boys and girls in this room, and when we're going to hear a presentation from government or receive some of their sources, you know, we're all intelligent enough in this room to see the reasons, ask our questions. I believe we should have any and all information that we can get, whether the department would be willing to come in and discuss this, all of that stuff. I'd agree with what Mr. Mason said, that we can all see what direction things are coming from. I don't think that's going to really make us any less impartial to evaluating this bill on its merits. Those reasons the government gives may be legitimate reasons; maybe they're not. But it'll give us an opportunity to evaluate them.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hehr.

Over to Naresh Bhardwaj, please.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you. The technical briefing we're going to be getting from the government is going to explain their perspective as well as their point of view, whoever is sponsoring the bill, so why don't we do our research independently? Whoever is sponsoring the bill, from the briefing notes and the technical briefing we already know what they're thinking and along the lines of, you know, their train of thought. I think it would be most beneficial, instead of going back and forth – we already know that – why not just do our own research, see what the public is thinking, what the stakeholders are thinking, and what we as a committee are thinking instead of bringing in government officials, questioning them? We already have it in front of us. We're going to know that anyways in terms of our technical briefing. I think it's redundant to do it two or three times.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks.

2:25

Mr. Mason: I would like to propose that we request that the department, when it makes its technical briefing, provide the committee with a side-by-side document of the legislation that's proposed and the previous act. I think that was all that we're asking for, and I think – do you really want to be called Dr. Phil?

The Chair: Thanks for asking that.

Can we have the official answer to that on *Hansard*? Is it, indeed, Dr. Phil?

Dr. Massolin: Philip is fine, yes.

Mr. Mason: You know, I think what Philip is saying is that rather than spending his time redoing a document that already exists, that is a politically neutral document – it just has the old act and the new act side by side; that's all, right? – if it satisfies members of the committee that we respect the hoary principles of British constitutional law, then let's ask the department for that document. They obviously have it. It's just a matter of photocopying it and providing it for the committee as part of their thing. I think that's the easiest thing.

I will move that we request the department as part of its technical briefing to provide us with a side-by-side document showing the old legislation and the proposed legislation.

The Chair: I won't jump in with opinions. I see committee members with theirs. I saw two hands.

Mr. Bhardwaj: I was just going to say that in the technical briefing I think it's part of our role. If we're making a change or making an amendment to an act or a bill or whatever, we should do our own due diligence and do a bit of research on where we were and where we're going with it instead of asking every single question from the department. There's nothing wrong with knowing where we were and where we're going, but I think that also as members of this committee it's our responsibility to read up on whatever we're going to be discussing and take a look. I agree with Mr. Mason that there's absolutely nothing wrong with knowing where we were and the direction we would like to go, but I think that instead of asking every little detail, we should be able to look at it and figure it out. It's not that hard.

Mr. Chase: Please add me to the list.

The Chair: Okay. Did I see Mr. Doerksen's hand up before you? Mr. Chase, you'll be after Mr. Doerksen.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

Mr. Doerksen: I'm sensing that we're maybe watching time pass here. My first comment about asking for a technical briefing: I think we decided that's what we're going to do. I would see all of this information being well within the chair's and his assistant's direction, to get that information for us. We probably don't need any more motions. Let's just ask for a good, thorough comparison and technical briefing at the next meeting. That's maybe the chair's job on this committee anyway, to get that for us and move on, rather than to deal with more motions. Really, is that not routine for a matter like this?

Mr. Mason: If you promise to get me a side-by-side document, I'll withdraw the motion.

The Chair: I can't promise that, sir. I just wonder – and this is a question – whatever the group is, if we're telling them what to present or how to present it, if that's unfair to the group presenting, whether it's government or any of the stakeholders that might submit written proposals and/or oral presentations after that.

I do see two hands up. Mr. Lukaszuk, followed by Mrs. Sarich, please.

Mr. Chase: Harry Chase gets in here somewhere.

The Chair: Okay. You're in the soup.

Mr. Chase: I was after Doerksen, I thought.

The Chair: Sarich is on deck.

Mr. Lukaszuk: You can make that undertaking, Mr. Chair, and promise Mr. Mason a side-by-side document, and Dr. Phil can create that document.

The Chair: All right.

Mrs. Sarich: My comment was that when we were initially discussing exactly the identification of the parameters of the research, I thought I heard that there would be perhaps a cross-jurisdictional comparison or analysis, a little bit federally – that was Ms Blakeman’s point – and also Mr. Mason had asked about the past legislation and where we are now. To me, I thought that we already more or less had some common understanding that that’s the direction that we’re moving in. I’m a little bit puzzled as to why we’re kind of repeating that one aspect because I thought it was already decided.

The Chair: Others? Sorry, Mr. Chase. You wanted to speak?

Mr. Chase: Yeah. Just about 20 minutes ago our legal individual, Shannon Dean, mentioned that the two-column document was quite within the realm of request. I don’t care who produces it, but it is very helpful to have the old and new if there is a comparative situation. Obviously, if things don’t match up, we’re going to just have one column and a lot of space on the other. I know that previously when I’ve dealt with bargaining contracts, having the old and new side by side made for some improved understanding. With the due diligence that was brought up by a former member, the point of this committee is to be spotlighting as much as possible, so having that two-column document I think would be very helpful, rather than us each creating our own version. That’s a waste of my time, personally.

With regard to how far Dr. Philip researches, I just wanted to give him free range. They are two different issues. The two-column document is one of the things, one of the tools that will assist us in understanding the ministry’s desire with Bill 18. I’m sure that will be very helpful. But I would like to think that the committee would wish Dr. Philip to go far and wide – federally, provincially – to help us with our decision and formatting and amending the bill.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chase.
Dr. Philip has a response.

Dr. Massolin: Yes, Mr. Chair. Thank you. I can certainly undertake to provide that comparison document, the new and proposed legislation, in addition to the cross-jurisdictional analysis if that’s the wish of the committee.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks. Obviously, there’s a spirit for research to come forward in some sort of report for the benefit of all members. It’s an all-party committee, and we want to respect that.

We do have a motion on the floor, do we not? Folks, we’ll have to vote on this. Unless there are other speakers, I will have our clerk read the statement, and we’ll have the vote.

Ms Rempel: Mr. Mason moved that
as part of the technical briefing provided by the department, they include a side-by-side document illustrating the old and the new legislation.

The Chair: Okay. All those in favour, please raise your hand or otherwise signify. Okay. Gentlemen on the phone, in favour or against?

Mr. Chase: I don’t care where the document comes from as long as it comes.

The Chair: But I care whether your vote is yes or no, sir.

Mr. Chase: I guess, then, that if Dr. Phil feels free to go, I will say no because it’s going to happen anyway.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Hehr, are you still with us, sir?

Mr. Hehr: Yes. I vote no as well.

The Chair: Okay. Those against the motion? So that motion is defeated.

Have I got this right, though? Dr. Phil will be coming back with all sorts of information, including a cross-jurisdictional analysis and so on.

Dr. Massolin: Yes. Just to reiterate, as I understand it, Mr. Chair – maybe you can confirm this – I am to undertake a cross-jurisdictional analysis which includes reference to the federal legislation and, in addition to that, to provide a document that compares existing legislation with the proposed legislation on this bill.

Mr. Mason: But you have to write it yourself even if there’s one in existence. The committee just decided that.

Ms Blakeman: I just want to clarify because C-10 is not existing legislation. It’s proposed federally, but I think it would have impact or that it’s of interest to us to have the comparison.

Dr. Massolin: Yes.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Good.

The Chair: Dr. Philip has outlined rather eloquently the direction he believes he is to go. Are we free to set him free, ladies and gentlemen? Is that the direction you want him to go? Yes? Fly, be free, in the words of our host MLA. Good.

Well, as a result of decisions made here today, it certainly looks as though, ladies and gentlemen, the meeting after our July 28 meeting will be in September. We’ll consider the input we’ve received on Bill 18 and begin the process of drafting a report for the Assembly, to be tabled at the latest near the end of October.

2:35

Point 6, Other Business. Is there any other business that you people, our committee members, would like to raise at this moment in time? No?

There’s one issue that needs to be brought forward at this point. Not that it needs to be debated, but it should be brought forward: public presentations on matters not referred by the Assembly. As discussed earlier, the committee does have the authority to hold public meetings on any matter within its mandate. Again, that’s not necessarily a subject for debate, just a point of information. If there is no further debate on that, then I’d like to simply remind everyone that I really look forward to seeing you or hearing you on July 28 at 1 o’clock.

With that, I would ask for a motion to adjourn. Is that why you raised your hand, Ms Blakeman?

Ms Blakeman: Well, are we able to set any of the dates in September? I’m just thinking that if we’re doing a report, you need at least two meetings there. One is to look at the draft; a second one is to approve it. Backing up from the required dates for the Assembly, those could be in early October, but I’m beginning to think we’re looking at a meeting almost every week in September. If that’s the case, maybe we should be booking them.

The Chair: Thank you for that suggestion. You may have been reading my mind there. I wonder if, as is often common practice, we could have our clerk poll members to make sure that we have all sides represented and that we can guarantee the highest number of people in person. Would you be okay with that, Ms Blakeman? We could have her do that very soon.

Mr. Chase: If I could just put it on the record how grateful I am that Ms Blakeman is attending this particular meeting. Whether or not she is a voting representative, she has probably the greatest direct background and knowledge on this particular topic. I'm very grateful for her contribution to today's meeting. She may be called upon by either of the two Calgary representatives to be an official delegate with voting privileges in upcoming meetings.

The Chair: Sorry. You said any of the two. I think we have more than two Calgary representatives here, including the chair.

Mr. Chase: Oh, sorry. The two with which I am most familiar.

The Chair: Think all-party here, my friend.

Just before we go, I'll see if there's anyone else. I saw at least one other hand in the meantime.

Mr. Bhardwaj: I was just going to ask him if he's getting any brownie points for this.

The Chair: We might have to save some of these questions for after the meeting, folks.

Mr. Mason: Well, I was just going to say, Mr. Chairman, that in the all-party spirit maybe Ms Blakeman could represent herself at the next meeting.

The Chair: Maybe. We might have to have a motion in that respect. I don't know if that's in order or not.

Ms Blakeman: Get out of here. Go home.

The Chair: Oh, she just wants to host us, and she wants us to go home.

Along those lines would someone please – and I said “please” – mercifully move to adjourn? We have that motion from Mr. Mason. Mr. Chase echoes it. All those in favour? Anyone opposed? We'll look forward to seeing you soon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you so much again for being here in person or on the phone.

[The committee adjourned at 2:39 p.m.]

