

9:03 a.m.

[Ms Graham in the chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, if you'd please take your seats, I'd like to call this meeting to order.

This is of course our organizational meeting for the Standing Committee on Private Bills. I'd like to welcome you all back. As the Member for Calgary-Lougheed I am the chairman of this committee, and the Member for Calgary-Currie, Jocelyn Burgener, is vice-chairman. We have assisting us today, as in the past, Parliamentary Counsel Shannon Dean as well as administrative assistant Florence Marston, who are our table officers.

If you would have regard to the agenda, which is contained in your newly organized binder that you should have in front of you, if you'd have a look at that, I would entertain at this time a motion to approve the agenda.

MR. STRANG: So moved, Madam Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Strang, for moving that. All in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any against? The motion is carried.

The next thing on our agenda is to approve the minutes of our last meeting of April 7, 1998. You should have a copy of those minutes in your binder, and as well, I'd entertain a motion to approve those minutes.

Moved by Mrs. Tarchuk that the minutes be adopted as circulated. All in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any against? The motion is carried.

As this is, I believe, our third session dealing with private bills, I suppose we're becoming more familiar with the procedure. Just to refresh your memory, the purpose of private bills is to allow an individual or an organization to petition the Legislature to seek relief or remedy that isn't otherwise available. Having said that, I'm going to call on Parliamentary Counsel to give us just a brief summary of the procedures that govern private bills.

MS DEAN: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Pardon my back, committee members. It's just the nature of the structure here.

Just to highlight the process very briefly. Yesterday the chair presented the petitions that have been received for private bills in the Assembly. Today we will discuss the petitions, and in those instances where the petitions do not comply with the Standing Orders, the committee will be asked to make a determination as to whether a waiver should be granted.

As committee members are aware, the Standing Orders that outline the requirements of the private bills process are in chapter 8, Standing Orders 84 through 101. In brief, the requirements for compliance are advertising in one edition of the *Alberta Gazette*, advertising for two consecutive weeks in an Alberta newspaper, a petition to the Assembly, a petition to the Lieutenant Governor, a draft bill, and a cheque for \$200.

Also, today the committee will be asked to approve a schedule of hearings for the petitioners.

The process after today's meeting is: first, the chair will make a report to the Assembly this afternoon with respect to whatever the committee decides regarding the noncomplying petition. The

following day the petitions will be read and received in the Assembly, and then the next step is the introduction of the private bills in the Assembly, which occurs prior to the hearings before the committee. At this stage it is anticipated that introduction of the private bills will likely be early next week.

Once we get to the hearing, the petitioners will be given an opportunity to explain the background and reasons for their private bill, and committee members are entitled to question the petitioners. Government department officials may also be requested to attend and offer information or answer questions.

Once the hearings have concluded, the committee will be asked to deliberate and to determine whether the private bill should proceed, whether the bill should proceed with an amendment, or whether the bill should not proceed. Once the committee has made its decisions regarding the private bills, the chair will then provide the committee's report to the Assembly. If the committee's decision is that the bill should either proceed or proceed with amendment, then the bill follows the same process as any other bill in the House, namely second reading, Committee of the Whole, at which time any amendments that are recommended will be put forward, and then third reading.

I'd just like to remind committee members that prior to the first hearing, you'll be receiving the Parliamentary Counsel report, which will serve as background and briefing and will highlight some of the points you may wish to consider and question the petitioner about. We'll also raise any legal issues which we've highlighted from the bill or the petition.

Madam Chairman, did you want me to go further and discuss the three petitions we've received this year?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, why don't you do that, unless there are some questions at this point from members. Please proceed, then, Ms Dean.

MS DEAN: In the organizational memo which I circulated last week you'll note that we have received to date three petitions for private bills.

The first, Bill Pr. 1. Mr. Kenneth J. Burton is petitioning for a bill, the National Bond Insurance Corporation Act, which will incorporate an insurance corporation to provide insurance of all classes except life insurance. This particular petition has fully complied with the requirements in the Standing Orders.

The second petition we've received, Bill Pr. 2. Shaw Communications is petitioning for an amendment to its 1994 private act. The purpose of the amendment is to broaden the definition of "par value shares." This particular petition meets all the requirements in the Standing Orders with one exception, namely the requirement for advertising in the *Alberta Gazette*. We have been advised by legal counsel for the petitioner that this advertising will take place in the March 15 edition of the *Alberta Gazette*. Accordingly, they've requested a waiver for the time being until that advertising does occur.

Lastly, the third petition we've received, Bill Pr. 3. The petitioners are Mr. Howard Goldford and Mr. Randy Hauge. They are petitioning for a bill to incorporate an insurance company called the Consumers Insurance Company Act. This particular insurance corporation is intended to provide insurance of all kinds and classes except fire insurance.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms Dean.

Any questions arising out of that? The only issue is whether or not this committee is prepared to waive the Standing Order relative to the Shaw Communications Inc. Amendment Act. I would entertain a motion to that effect.

MR. THURBER: Madam Chairman, in respect to Private Bill Pr. 2, Shaw Communications Inc. Amendment Act, 1999, I would move that the committee waive Standing Order 89(1)(b) subject to the condition that the committee be provided with confirmation that the advertising has been completed before the committee hears the petitioner.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Thurber.

Is there any discussion? In the absence of any discussion, all in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: All against, say no. The motion is carried.

That brings us, then, to the schedule of hearings for the three petitions we have. You have that proposed schedule of hearings at the front of your binder, and it indicates that we would not meet next week, on March 16, but rather go to March 23, at which time we would have hearings on Pr. 1 and Pr. 3, followed by a hearing on Pr. 2 on March 30. We would not meet during the Easter break, so there'd be no meeting on April 6, and we would deliberate and make decisions if possible at our final meeting on April 13, 1999.

MR. MacDONALD: Madam Chairman, all these meetings will start at 8:30; correct?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Traditionally the meetings other than the organizational meeting such as today do commence at 8:30, and I would propose that we continue in that manner.

Is there a motion to approve the schedule of hearings?

MR. BONNER: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Bonner. All in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: All against, say no. The motion is carried.

Would there be any other business members would like to raise today? There being no other business, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

MR. THURBER: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Mr. Thurber has moved we adjourn. All in favour? All against, say no. The motion is carried and we are adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 9:13 a.m.]