

Standing Committee on The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act

Monday, September 28, 1981

Chairman: Dr. Reid

1:30 p.m.

MR CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I suppose the committee had better come to order. It's a little late. I'd like to make some preliminary remarks before we get into discussing the actual report. First of all, I still have several pieces of information that were distributed by ministers. I have several copies left which some members of the committee have presumably not got yet. I'd appreciate it if, at the end, people could come and look to see if they have these various pieces of information for their own files. Unfortunately, we didn't keep a record of who picked up what, when. That's the first item of business.

The second thing I would like to do is remind members that we did ask for when people would be available for further meetings next week or the week after. Shelley tells me that she's had a reply from Mr. Notley and Mr. Little. I understand even those two replies are not quite compatible, and I suppose the problem will get worse. So could you please get that information to Shelley so I can try to arrange meetings? As has been said, it's extremely unlikely that we'll get through all the recommendations next Monday and Tuesday.

The third thing is the visit to Kananaskis Country. The itinerary has been given to you. I've had some further advice that if you have any warm underwear you should take it with you. Unfortunately, mine is in Hinton, and I guess some of the rest of us have the same problem. If anybody has any warm clothes, they should take them with them.

MRS FYFE: May I offer some extra pantyhose for those members.

MR CHAIRMAN: In case you didn't hear, the member is offering her pantyhose. Extra ones.

Before we get on to discussing the report, the only other item I would like to bring up is that we have requested information from several ministers. I think most of it has been distributed, but the Member for St. Albert has brought to my attention that she has not yet got back information from the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower regarding the scholarship foundation. If any other members can think of anything else, I can follow it up with the ministers so we have that information before we review recommendations next week.

MR NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, have you had a chance to contact the Provincial Treasurer vis-a-vis our discussion last time about the debentures?

MR CHAIRMAN: I have had conversations with his office, and it would appear to be absolutely impossible to get him. He has to go to Ottawa for a meeting of finance ministers at the end of this week. He's not available next Monday, and by then we're into the recommendations. What I was wondering was: if the Provincial Treasurer could arrange to have his department send us detailed

information, if the members could think of it and give to me tomorrow what detailed information they would like, subsequent to his report and what the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources said last week, perhaps we could at least get it in written form. In the time frame we're now working within, I think it's going to be very difficult to get the Provincial Treasurer back. That's another problem we have.

I think the main purpose of this afternoon's meeting is to discuss the format we should take for the report of the committee this year, in view of the fact that it is the fifth year of the fund, it's the fifth report we have reviewed, and this will be the fifth report of the committee to the Legislative Assembly. Other matters may come up that have more to do with the form of the report than its detailed content, but they may spill onto the content of the report.

MR PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I guess this relates to both form and content. I would think that because we've had five years of this now, in my view it would be worth while for the content perhaps to have a listing of the committee's recommendations over the past years and the record of implementation. I think that would give the committee, firstly, and then the Legislative Assembly an opportunity to make some sort of assessment of what we've been doing and how well our words have been heard. So I would like -- and, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that that might come under your aegis -- to have the recommendations of previous years listed with some sort of score box on them.

MR R CLARK: That score box might be a little bit like what happened in Ottawa this morning [inaudible] question.

MR NOTLEY: That is true that there are going to be a number of ones where there would be some legitimate differences as to whether action has been taken or not.

MR CHAIRMAN: Is the member suggesting this is a sort of rollover status report? I don't think I could give answers the way the Provincial Treasurer has done in the past in his status report. Is this with reference to items that might not be included in the status report, which I think only applies to the last two years?

MR PAHL: Mr. Chairman, it might be worth while just simply either to implement it or not and, as that draft comes back, our debate can occur as to whether we've agreed with that or not. But I would think that it would be worth while for the Legislative Assembly to see, in summary, the findings, if you will, or at least the output of the committee and some indication of what's happened to that output.

MR NOTLEY: The five status reports we've had already.

MR PAHL: This will be the fifth year.

MR CHAIRMAN: I think there are status reports for '79 and '80, because it was a 1978 recommendation of the committee, I think, to have the status report initiated. So it would mean digging back further for the two previous reports, I guess it would be. Is that agreeable? I'll try to get the information into written form so you can have it next Monday for the discussions on recommendations.

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR MACK: Mr. Chairman, is it realistic for you to be able to gather that information by Monday, with the substantive amount of work that would be required? Is that a realistic time frame for you?

MR CHAIRMAN: I think what I'll do is initiate the request to the Provincial Treasurer's department this afternoon, and we'll see what comes back by later in the week. It may have to be done over the weekend or on Monday morning. Obviously, if it's going to have the optimum value, it has to be here for the time of discussing the recommendations people are going to bring by Friday noon. I'll just have to try.

Do people have any other suggestions about what we should do with the report, other than the suggestion by the Member for Edmonton Mill Woods? I have a little difficulty reading over previous reports. The detail in the ministers' presentations and the questions and answers have varied quite a bit. Sometimes it has been more full than others. There are transcripts available downstairs in the library. There are the minutes of the meetings which are distributed to members. It seems that on occasions the report has just been a further precis of a precis. If that's satisfactory, I can attempt to do it and bring it as a preliminary body of the report to a subsequent meeting. I imagine that's how it has been done before. Are members happy to have it done on that basis, so that the report is a precis of the minutes?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: It seems I'm asking all the questions this afternoon. The recommendations in previous years have been brought in their entirety to the committee. Last year there were some 50 recommendations, I think. This year we don't know how many we'll get yet. I haven't received any yet, but I imagine they'll come flooding in at 11:55 on Friday.

If there are multiple recommendations which are very similar in nature, for the sake of trying to amalgamate those, would it be agreeable with the committee if I were to try to put those into joint recommendations, which may be well put forward by two or three members of the committee? The reason is that we have a bit of a time squeeze on our hands if we are going to present the report in adequate time for the estimates on the capital projects division, which have to go through the fall sitting of the Legislature. We've lost two weeks because of the surface rights committee being away in Europe, which has added to the time constraints this year.

MR NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I guess the normal [inaudible] is that the chairman takes the recommendations and, where there are similar recommendations, there is no point in dealing with them at two different times in two different ways, so we put them together.

MR R CLARK: If the chairman could just put the names of who sponsored them beside them, that gives them a chance to try to convince the committee first.

MR CHAIRMAN: That's what I was going to suggest, that we would put the multiple authorship beside them.

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: Are there any other matters members would like to bring up about this before we all adjourn to collect our winter woollies?

MR NOTLEY: [Inaudible] question the Provincial Treasurer, there's no other date he would be able to come, Mr. Chairman? I gather we're going to take a crack on the 5th and 6th. Have we made any decision? Oh yes, you asked for members to indicate their time frames.

MR CHAIRMAN: That's the problem I have. That's why I would like to get that. There's not much point in having the Provincial Treasurer available the day only two members of the committee can meet with him. That's why I would like to get the information about members' availability as soon as possible, so I can give some alternative dates to him.

MR NOTLEY: That's fair.

MRS FYFE: Did we consider October 8 as a possible date?

MR CHAIRMAN: I gave people several suggestions: evening meetings; Wednesday, October 8; Tuesday, October 13, which is the day after Thanksgiving and the day immediately preceding the opening of the Legislature; or later on. We have a difficulty. Surface rights -- and perhaps the Member for Olds-Didsbury can give me the details -- is meeting on Thursday, October 8, I think.

MR R CLARK: Yes, the evening of the 7th and all day on the 8th. Isn't that right, Eric?

MR MUSGREAVE: We were meeting then, but I have been advised there is a question mark about both of those days. I have them in my calendar, but they both have question marks after them.

MR R CLARK: I thought we had made a tentatively firm decision.

MR MUSGREAVE: That's what I thought too.

MR CHAIRMAN: It sounds like we're going to be making the same kind of tentatively firm decision pretty quickly. It looks to me as if the chairman is going to have to take the prerogative of looking at the individuals who are available on certain dates and calling the committee on those dates. Then I'll see if it's possible for the Provincial Treasurer to appear at one of those. If not, if you can give me details of the information you would like, perhaps we can at least get it in written form. It's the time constraint problem that's really causing the difficulty.

So I take it that's all the business for this afternoon. Everybody can send home for their insulated underwear, and we'll meet tomorrow morning, either at Calgary airport or at the Edmonton airport, for the airbus.

MR PAHL: Mr. Chairman, on that. Will somebody be meeting us at the airport, off the airbus? Is that what I'm to . . .

MR CHAIRMAN: My understanding is that they're going to divide us into three groups. Two will be travelling together to Kananaskis by road. The third group will be starting their air tour right from Calgary airport, to enable people to see as much as possible in the one day.

MR PAHL: I see it here. It says to meet at the PWA terminal, so we look for people who look like mountain guides, I take it.

MR CHAIRMAN: I think that's a pretty fair description. Are there any more questions about the K Country trip? I think we'll declare the meeting adjourned and we reconvene next Monday at 10:30 a.m. to consider the recommendations.

The meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m.