

[Chairman: Mr. Kowalski]

[10:30 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. When we met on September 13, at the conclusion of that meeting I indicated that perhaps it would be advantageous for the committee to meet today to discuss "an initial review of the recommendation process." That is what I would look forward to having with hon. members this morning.

Under the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act, we have to provide a written report to the Legislative Assembly during the fall session. That report is required prior to the Provincial Treasurer submitting the estimates of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, 1984-85. In the past, there have been five reports written and filed by previous committees, beginning in 1977 and going through 1981. I might just point out, by way of an historical perspective in looking at previous reports of previous committees, that in 1977, the first year the committee met and submitted a report to the Legislative Assembly, the report contained an overview of the committee meetings. As well, it contained 12 recommendations in four different areas of concern. They were capital projects, Canada investment, the Alberta investment division, and several recommendations with regard to procedural matters.

In 1978 the committee, in addition to the overview part of the report, also contained 17 recommendations in its report, covering five different areas. Those five areas were exactly the same as the previous four I mentioned. In addition, the committee at that time had also visited an urban project in Airdrie and had several recommendations with respect to that field trip. In 1979 the committee, in addition to the overview part of the report, contained within the report 18 recommendations in five different areas of concern. Those were capital projects, nine recommendations; Canada investment division, one recommendation; the Alberta investment division, three recommendations; one recommendation with respect to procedural matters; and four under the category of miscellaneous.

In 1980 there were 18 recommendations in four different areas. In 1981 there were 25 different recommendations in three areas: three under the "general" heading, 15 under the capital projects division heading, and eight under the Alberta investment division heading. In 1982, of course, with the coming of the provincial election, the committee did not submit a report.

That is just provided to you by way of historical perspective and information. A document has been circulated to you by Mrs. Davidson which is just a very, very brief precis, bringing you up to date on some of the points mentioned by members in the committee hearings. The first page basically lists some of the visit recommendations made, and the second page is a brief precis of points that were highlighted. We have provided that to you for general information.

I would point out that there is a very dramatic error contained in the recommendations of the meeting of August 9. Under the name Thompson, where it's recommended by Thompson: "do not pave roads". Of course, that should be "do pave roads", so you should cross out "not". You should add Gogo to "do not pave roads". Of course, that refers to Kananaskis. And the last statement at the bottom of the page is Mrs. Cripps' name, which is mostly blanked out. Her basic recommendation there is to provide more space for individual campsites, and that refers to Kananaskis Country.

That information is simply provided to you as an additional help to save some of the wear and tear of flipping through the pages. I know hon. members will be doing that on their own anyway to extract all the areas they want to advance.

If we take a look at our agenda for the next several weeks, we have a meeting tomorrow with the Minister of the Environment; next week we have meetings scheduled on Monday afternoon with the Minister of Agriculture; on Tuesday morning, September

27, with the Auditor General; on Wednesday, the 28th, with the Minister of Housing; then we have two meetings scheduled for Monday, October 3, the Hon. Don Sparrow in the morning and the Hon. Al Adair in the afternoon; Tuesday, October 4 is an open day; and Wednesday, October 5, we have a scheduled meeting with the hon. Premier.

The tradition we follow in this committee is that if there should be need to reinvite any minister to the committee, we've all agreed that that would be in order. At this point in time, there is only one minister who has been asked to repeat his attendance before the committee, and that is Mr. Adair.

So I really look at October 4 as one day on which to formally get into the debate with respect to the recommendation procedure. But I also note that the Legislative Assembly will be reconvening on Wednesday, October 19. I also note the existence of another select committee that will be continuing to meet in the next several weeks, right through to the middle part of October.

So at this point, I would like to make a suggestion: that we discuss this morning the process we are going to be following and hear views of hon. members. But further to that, I wonder if I can make the suggestion, if it would be in order, that I as chairman of this committee ask that members provide to me, no later than September 30, those specific recommendations they would want to advance before the committee. That weekend of October 1 and 2, we would have them put together in a document, and they would be made available to all members when we meet here formally on October 3. Then on October 4 we have an open date, and we would use the meeting time on that date to begin the process of approval or rejection of various recommendations committee members would like to see brought forward to the committee.

In the event we would not conclude that process on October 4, we would of course have to look at additional dates. One item that hon. members made very clear at the original organizational meeting in June was that one thing we should try to avoid as much as possible is the need for meetings when the Legislative Assembly convenes on October 19. So we somehow have to resolve our work and our business between the dates of October 5, if we're not concluded by then, and October 19.

At this point in time, I would like to stop and hear the views of committee members with respect to how we should deal with this.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, there is certainly another avenue for additional meetings. Rather than spending half a day, or a morning or an afternoon, meeting with a minister or whatever, the other portion of that day could be utilized for additional meetings to discuss recommendations we may wish to put forward. In other words, if we have a meeting with one of the ministers in the afternoon, we could probably express some of these things in a morning session, so as to facilitate that.

The other thing I might add is that if we start doing that after the first of the month, there may of course be ministers we have not heard from. The question may be brought up: how are we going to make certain specific recommendations prior to that time? Probably the suggestion of starting early, and maybe even before the end of the month, to bring forward recommendations at the present time — these could be adjusted or updated after we've heard from other ministers. If we could conclude 80 or 90 per cent of our work that needs to be done before we see all the ministers in October, in my opinion that would certainly enhance getting that report at an early time and give us a little credibility as far as doing our work on time.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I personally will be out of the province from the 30th until the 8th. I appreciate the comments from the Member for Calgary McCall. It would be my preference that if we need extra days — I and I'm sure most members of my caucus will be in Edmonton on the 17th and 18th, and I recognize it may well present problems for Mr. Notley as Leader of the Opposition, with the House opening the next day. But if we need extra days, it would be my preference that they be October 17 and 18.

MR. R. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, I concur with both the previous speakers. I fully believe that when we're in here morning or afternoon, we should utilize the other half of the day for this purpose. We have both government and opposition members on the workers' compensation hearings, which are ongoing. I think that was one of the committees you were referring to. It doesn't leave us too many days. Looking at it, I think we're going to have to fully utilize those days even if it means an eight-hour day, morning and afternoon. On October 17 and 18, prior to the opening, that committee I referred to is not meeting. It's wide open on my calendar; I don't know how that fits with other members. But we're going to look at working longer days, as well as utilizing those afternoons or mornings, whichever are open, when we're in here.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think there's no question we're going to have to look at additional days. If it would be helpful to members to set aside the 17th and 18th, certainly my colleague and I would be quite ready to agree to that. I certainly think we should start on the 4th. As I take it, your recommendation is the 30th as the date for recommendations. So you're suggesting that on Monday, the 3rd, we would meet in the evening and Tuesday, the 4th, we would meet all day. I'm just going over what I think your recommendation was.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, not exactly that way. I suggested that if we could have the recommendations by September 30, then we would put them in a document and circulate to all members on October 3. But on October 3, we already have two meetings scheduled. At this point in time, unless members would wish to proceed that way, I wouldn't look forward to an evening meeting on October 3. But certainly on October 4, we would utilize more than just one meeting on that day.

MR. NOTLEY: Why would we not then look at Tuesday, the 4th, as the day you suggest, and then instead of just the morning of Wednesday, the 5th, we have a session in the afternoon, and then we look at the 17th and 18th — which will give us almost four days. If we have all the recommendations compiled — one of the problems of doing it on a piecemeal basis is that it is just not as tidy. In the past, we have had all the recommendations in; you'll find there will be a number of similar recommendations from different members. What we've always given to the chairman is the authority to bring together resolutions that are essentially similar, so we don't end up spending all kinds of time debating three or four words when you have a simple recommendation. I think that's a fairly big editorializing job for the chairman to do. In past years, I think it has usually taken a good weekend or so for the people who have done it.

So I like your suggestion of the 30th, and it seems to me that with those four days we can make a fairly good stab at it.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, on the 17th there are the municipal elections in the province, and I'm sure we would all like to attend our particular communities to cast our winning vote for our candidates. I would suggest that if we are to meet that day, possibly we meet either early in the morning and conclude early in the afternoon so that we can all attend to those very important activities, or meet late in the afternoon and into the evening so that we can cast our vote during the morning period of that thing. I would rather we met early in the morning so that we can go back to our homes, cast our vote in the evening, and tend to some of the winning candidates' activities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Without any doubt, Mr. Nelson, that's convenient for you, but I don't think it would be very convenient for Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kroeger, Mr. Gogo, Mr. Thompson, Mrs. Cripps, Mr. Moore, Mr. Notley, or Mr. Hyland. However, it's a suggestion.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I think this is probably the most important area of our committee's work. I regret the fact that I haven't been to all the meetings, but obviously I get a lot of the material — the minutes and the transcript — so I have a feeling for the ones I've missed. As I understand it, the Member for Spirit River-Fairview suggested October 5. We on the workers' compensation committee just won't be able to make it. We'll be in Edmonton on public hearings that day. That's my reservation. I would plump — if that's the word — for the 17th or 18th, in that area, if we feel we need it, disregarding the municipal elections.

MRS. CRIPPS: Why wouldn't it be possible to set the 18th as definite and the 17th as possible, if we find it necessary?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's very possible.

MR. NOTLEY: Block them off anyway. If we don't need them, fair enough. But let's block them off.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shall we proceed, then, on this basis. Members provide me with their proposed recommendations by September 30, recognizing that you always have the flexibility of coming forward with additional recommendations after that time, but that would be the first cut. We would then assemble that in a document and have it provided to you on Monday, October 3. Then on Tuesday, October 4, we would schedule a meeting for the morning and afternoon, 10 to noon and 2 to 5. Does that generally sound okay? Then we would retain — the conflict with another committee on Wednesday, October 5, I guess exists as a reality. But we would keep the two dates of October 17 and 18 available. It may very well be that if we were very, very efficient on October 4, the other two days would be redundant. But time will only tell on that one.

MR. NOTLEY: You are very optimistic, judging by past experience.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was always the best side of me. Would that be appropriate for everybody? Do you want me to repeat it again?

MR. MARTIN: Yes, if we could nail down the times, going back to what Mr. Nelson was talking about. When would we have the meeting on the 17th?

MR. CHAIRMAN: My dilemma there is that I think this group is split right down the centre as to what would be preferable on October 17, a morning or an afternoon meeting. Afternoon is fine? Okay.

MR. NOTLEY: You can vote in the advance poll.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's true too. So we have Tuesday, October 4, 10 till noon and 2 to 5; October 17, which is a Monday, 2 to 5; and October 18, 10 till noon and 2 to 5. If I can remember that, I'll be okay. So I'll repeat that one more time. As much as possible, have your recommendations in by September 30. We'll have them available for you in a document on October 3. On October 4 we'll meet from 10 till noon and 2 till 5. On October 17 we'll set aside time from 2 to 5 in the afternoon, and on October 18 from 10 till noon and 2 till 5. Does everybody agree with that?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, with the scheduling you've read out, it would appear to me that if members are co-operative, you end up receiving information on a weekend. I've been impressed with the amount of time you've dedicated to this committee, and I'd like to suggest that if you feel it's necessary to spend those weekends preparing those recommendations — and I have a hunch you're going to have to — I would suggest the committee, with whatever it needs to make it possible, authorize you to work for those days if it's necessary and be paid for those days.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sure the committee will. Thank you very much.

If committee members need copies of previous reports that have been submitted by previous committees — if you don't have them in your files — they are available through Mrs. Davidson in the Clerk's office.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, just one additional thing. I don't know whether we need a recommendation. But it seems to me that in terms of procedure, your deadline of the 30th should be respected by members. I'm a little apprehensive about getting late recommendations in, except for those people who come after the deadline. So I think the recommendations for Mr. Sparrow, Mr. Adair, and Mr. Loughheed would be appropriate after the deadline. But I really think that in terms of courtesy to ourselves, we should not be bringing in recommendations with respect to any of the ministers who have come before the deadline. If we can't get the recommendations dealing with ministers who have already testified by the 30th, I don't think we should come trucking in on October 4 or 5.

MR. R. MOORE: I was just going to say that I don't often agree with the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, but I do on this occasion, 100 per cent.

MR. MARTIN: I'll note that down.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's noted for eternity.

MRS. CRIPPS: The 30th is the deadline, but there's nothing prohibiting members from getting those motions to you prior to the 30th if at all possible, is there?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Is the suggestion made by Mr. Notley generally agreed to by the committee?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're the final board of directors. You can make whatever rules you want. Okay, that sounds very fine.

We have to discuss how we will deal with recommendations when they do come. Generally a member would be asked to speak to the recommendation, then we'd have a discussion with all members and proceed to a vote.

MR. THOMPSON: If it's possible, I would prefer to have the recommendations discussed and have the presenter speak to them. I think we should reserve our final votes until toward the end of the thing. I like to sleep on things; I don't like to make snap decisions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any additional comments or points that members of the committee would like to raise? Well, so be it. I think we can adjourn. We'll see you tomorrow morning at ten o'clock for Mr. Bradley. Information has been provided.

[The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.]

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