

[Chairman: Mr. Oldring]

[12:45 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, we'll call the meeting to order. While we're waiting for the minister to appear, there are a couple of things I'd like to take care of. I've received a request from the Member for Calgary Buffalo to submit 11 recommendations on his behalf, so I would ask the committee's approval to have me read these into the minutes on behalf of the Member for Calgary Buffalo.

AN HON. MEMBER: Sure.

MR. PAYNE: Before I vote, could I see how long they are?

MR. CHAIRMAN: A page and a half.

MR. PAYNE: A page and a half. Carry on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If that's agreeable, his first recommendation is that the deemed assets of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund not be included in the financial statement but be listed separately.

Recommendation 2 is that all loans to Crown corporations be reviewed in order to ensure that the income of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund is not overstated and that the AHSTF should allow Crown corporations to redeem the high interest debentures purchased from AHSTF. It makes no sense to inflate the income of the AHSTF by receiving high interest payments from Crown corporations, while at the same time these Crown corporations are incurring losses paid for out of the General Revenue Fund of the province.

Recommendation 3 is that the conflict-of-interest guidelines for all government appointees to AHSTF boards, agencies, and Crown corporations be reviewed to ensure that no conflicts of interest are allowed to exist.

Recommendation 4 is that the fair market value of the assets of the AHSTF be reported in its annual report.

Recommendation 5 is that greater use be made of Alberta Treasury Branch facilities and offices to reduce the operating costs of the Alberta Opportunity Company.

Recommendation 6 is that all investment and expenditure decisions made by the investment committee, Executive Council, be reviewed by

the provincial Legislature.

Recommendation 7 is that the annual reports of all Crown corporations holding debentures from the AHSTF be available within six months of the end of the Crown corporation's fiscal year. They should be made public regardless of whether the Legislature is sitting. Even if final reports are not ready, a limited report containing all available financial and other data should be made available to the standing committee. During hearings this year the committee had only the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation report ended March 31, 1985, which provided information 18 months out of date.

Recommendation 8 is that the AMHC report and other annual reports should more clearly reflect the net realizable value of its loans and assets. The division in the AMHC financial statement between corporate and mortgage insurance funds is confusing and obscures the true state of the corporation's holdings. It should be remembered that this and other Crown corporation reports are supposed to enlighten citizens and are not prepared simply for investors, as are reports of normal public corporations.

Recommendation 9 is that the agreements entered into by the province of Alberta with Financial Trustco Ltd. and any other companies relating to the construction and developed of the lodge and hotels at Ribbon Creek be made available to the standing committee.

Recommendation 10 is that where public funds are used to directly finance and support developments, as in the case of Ribbon Creek lodge, the province should participate in some of the profits.

Recommendation 11 is that as the fund is now 10 years old, there should be a fundamental review of the purpose and structure of the fund. A task force should be appointed and public hearings should be held in order to address such basic questions as: one, should there be a fund; two, should it be limited to savings and investment, with social goals and diversification being addressed in other ways by the government; three, should there be an independent board of trustees to supervise investment decisions; and four, should there be an advisory council of experts to advise on diversification and economic development projects.

Those are the 11 recommendations forwarded to me by the Member for Calgary Buffalo.

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Chairman, I have a recommendation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before we go into that, the minister is here now. I know she has only an hour that she's squeezing in. Perhaps we can bring the minister right in and deal with the last of the questions.

MR. CHERRY: Can I read it in while we're waiting?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure.

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Chairman, I have a recommendation that the capital projects division continue to be limited to 20 percent of the fund's assets and, further, that the current expenditures on capital projects be slowed down.

MR. KROEGER: I didn't sign this or put a name on it. Do you need it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We need it, but we don't need you to sign it. We'll put your name on it.

MR. KROEGER: I can put my name on it. The motion recommends that legislation or regulation be changed to allow for conversion of active treatment beds in our hospitals to auxiliary beds where necessary and desirable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's a pleasure to welcome back, due to popular demand, the Associate Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Shirley Cripps. We appreciate your finding time in a very busy schedule to be with us for an hour today, and we'll try to get straight to the questions, if that's agreeable to you.

MRS. CRIPPS: I thought you'd have lunch for me.

MR. McEACHERN: I've got one sandwich left. Are you hungry?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Do you want half an orange?

MR. PAYNE: Alex still has an apple.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I might point out that they weren't going to share as much as a bite with the chairman of this committee, but as soon as the minister walks in, they're tripping over themselves offering lunch.

MR. McEACHERN: It depends who asks, you know.

MRS. CRIPPS: Thank you. I appreciate it.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, I understand that Ridley is behind in its interest payments to the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Is this information still correct at this stage?

MRS. CRIPPS: Ridley?

MR. McEACHERN: The company that's involved in the grain terminal at Prince Rupert.

MRS. CRIPPS: I don't believe the grain terminal in Prince Rupert has . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would be a question for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

MRS. CRIPPS: That would be for Larry Shaben, Economic Development. The Ridley terminal isn't through ADC.

MR. McEACHERN: I can ask Mr. Shaben that when he comes tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. McEACHERN: Okay. I'll reserve this set of questions for that and pass to somebody else.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All you members who wanted the associate minister to come back . . .

MRS. CRIPPS: I would prefer dinner anyway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No questions? The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: In the review process of the AADC, what is the specific mandate of that review committee? There wasn't a description of that. Could you be more specific about what your committee is going to be looking at as it travels through the province?

MRS. CRIPPS: What was the first part? You said something about "specific."

MR. PIQUETTE: I'd like to have the specific mandate of the committee.

MRS. CRIPPS: I outlined the specific mandate in the Legislature when I appointed the committee. I guess the terms of reference are to review the original purpose and intent of ADC: have the programs and objectives been met since its inception? You realize that it was implemented in 1972, so we have 14 years of changing circumstances in this province. Is the original purpose and intent applicable today in our lending and financing? Review the current agricultural lending programs available to Alberta farmers from other sources: Farm Credit, banks, Alberta farm credit stability program, et cetera. Three, assess the current financial status and needs of the industry. Four, review the corporate structure, administration, and program delivery. Five, review the new and innovative mechanisms for financing agriculture; i.e., equity financing, production credit concept, et cetera. And six, make recommendations.

Now, there are some formal objectives that are over and above that, areas I would like answers to. The terms of reference are pretty broad, and I personally believe number 5 is probably as important as any of the other terms of reference. The overall review of the needs of agricultural finance is also important.

MR. PIQUETTE: Will your committee be looking at the possibility that the Treasury Branch can administer the loan program available now through AADC as opposed to having a separate government bureaucracy handling the situation? Is the lending program part of the mandate?

MRS. CRIPPS: That's not a specific directive of the mandate, but I'm certain that's something the committee will look at, as I'm sure it will be raised. But it's not a directive.

MR. PIQUETTE: Our task force heard a lot of farmers indicate that perhaps it would be better administered by the Treasury Branches because they're much closer to the farming community and could probably make better financial decisions based on what they know of local

conditions, as opposed to an outsider who may not know the farming situation coming into a community. I would heartily recommend that we look very seriously at that recommendation.

MRS. CRIPPS: I've heard arguments on both sides. That's why I said that I'm sure the committee will take a look at it. I'm sure they'll have those kinds of representations made to them, probably on both sides, and will have to weigh the pros and cons and make a recommendation to me.

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions?

MR. GOGO: I note with interest that the review committee has been in Lethbridge. I understand that a record number of people appeared before that committee. I want to say how important I feel it is that in your role as minister responsible for financial matters you've taken the initiative to find out from Albertans what they feel is important in the role of ADC. I would assume that the primary objective of the government hasn't changed; that is, survival of the family farm. I do sense, though, and I think you should be aware, that there is the feeling that at some point, unless there are reasonable chances of success of that family farm, it's probably prudent and wise for someone to advise some of these loans that are in default of a terminal date. Frankly, I think you'd be helping everybody.

MRS. CRIPPS: I thank the hon. Member for Lethbridge West for his comments. I know that the hearing in Lethbridge had a record number in attendance. I understand that the presentations made to the committee were excellent and wide ranging, by the way, again on both sides of the issue.

I confirm what the member suggested: that the family farm is very important to the future of agriculture in Alberta and that we will do everything in our power to ensure the viability of the family farm. But as I said in my comments last day and as the member quite rightly pointed out, if there is a point of no return, then I think a judgment decision has to be made. One of the reasons we've hired peer counsellors as opposed to accountants or somebody from outside is to have input from

somebody who understands agriculture, understands the risks and the possibility of the operation being viable in the future. I can't think of anything more heartbreaking than to continue in an operation hoping that it will be viable. I think there is a certain hardship in continuing in a position from which there is no hope of making a recovery.

MR. GOGO: Chairman, if I could have a concluding comment. For example, we the Alberta government continue to give consideration to those areas in this province that are affected by disasters, sometimes termed acts of God. I think we have to bear the same thing in mind — I'm not saying Mr. Reagan is God — when external forces impact the Alberta family farm in a negative way. There has to be some compassion and consideration by government to see them through. So it's not all the chartered accountants' way of doing things; I appreciate that.

MRS. CRIPPS: No, that's right.

MR. GOGO: I'm sure all members here would agree that the route to go is to use that compassion, with the uppermost thought being the survival of the family farm.

MRS. CRIPPS: Speaking of the survival of the family farm, I've been speaking all over the province, Mr. Chairman, and I've been emphasizing four programs. The farm credit stability program: it is long-term interest at 9 percent. The red meat stabilization program: people in the red meat industry have to know what the bottom line is. The western grain stabilization program: again, if people produce a product, they have to know what the bottom line is pricewise. The hail and crop insurance program: that program has to be responsive to varying conditions all over this province and to differences in the needs and in the crops in the province.

I've also said that once those programs are in place, the people in agriculture have to decide whether or not to access them. If they want to protect the bottom line and build in a safety net, they must consider the cost of those programs as part of their input costs. Government has to get out of ad hoc programs. It just won't work. Frankly, I've been to a lot of places and talked to a lot of

groups, and I'm finding that the people in agriculture are agreeing and in fact directing the government to continue with that position.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before the Chair recognizes the Member for Edmonton Kingsway, followed by the Member for Little Bow, I am remiss in not having the minister introduce the staff person with us this afternoon.

MRS. CRIPPS: I'm sorry. Bob Spiller is here from ADC.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Welcome, Mr. Spiller; it's nice to have you with us.

MR. McEACHERN: With your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to get into a semirelated area. Because there was talk a minute ago that ADC could be rolled into the Treasury Branches and that the loans from ADC would be reduced, and I believe have been, to 9 percent . . .

MRS. CRIPPS: Yes.

MR. McEACHERN: . . . to match the farm credit stability program loans and also because the legislation setting up the farm credit stability program allowed the government to borrow that \$2 billion either from the heritage trust fund, banks, money markets, or wherever it seemed most convenient, the question I'd like to ask your indulgence in answering, if you know, is: has much of the heritage trust fund money been used for that program? I know it's not ADC's in particular.

MRS. CRIPPS: For the farm credit stability program?

MR. McEACHERN: Yes.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Chairman, it's outside the parameters of this, but my understanding is that there has been no Heritage Savings Trust Fund money used directly in the farm credit stability program. We have used the strength of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund as collateral in making lower interest loans so that we can make that money available.

MR. McEACHERN: The guarantees are partial guarantees this year, a little more next year, that sort of thing, are they not?

MRS. CRIPPS: You're talking about the small credit stability program now?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was something the Treasurer addressed when he was here. If it's still not clear, perhaps we can bring it up with the Treasurer again when he's here.

MR. McEACHERN: Okay, thanks.

MRS. CRIPPS: No Heritage Savings Trust Fund money has gone directly into it; I'm almost sure I'm right on that.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I just want to comment to the minister that in that list of four items, the one thing we'll have to be able to ensure as farmers is the price of the product as well as just the yield through the Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation. In your consideration I think that should be remembered.

The question I have is with regard to guarantees under the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation. Is consideration being given to more guarantees for this winter in terms of the operating moneys for farmers? I hope there are not too many capital guarantees under the present circumstances, but in terms of operating moneys, is any consideration being given to extending that program for some of the young farmers that are already with ADC?

MRS. CRIPPS: My understanding of the guarantee program is that it's working well and for the most part the requests are being met, given some reasonable hope of success in the operation. But my understanding is that that isn't a problem area in ADC. I don't believe we've utilized all the funds, have we? There are still funds available.

MR. R. SPEAKER: In terms of debentures, will the request be somewhat similar in the upcoming year as in the current fiscal year or will it be higher? Is the demand from the farm groups higher at this point? Do you see changes emerging from these hearings that would impact the debenture requests on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund?

MRS. CRIPPS: I don't see any major changes. Again, we're off the topic of the review of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

MR. R. SPEAKER: No, we're not.

MRS. CRIPPS: You're talking about next year, though.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I'm asking whether you are going to ask us for some more money; that's all.

MRS. CRIPPS: There are two aspects. I'm not sure whether I should get into budget. Anyway, I expect the amount of money for lending over the next year to remain constant. It seems to have remained constant in the last couple of years.

MR. R. SPEAKER: That's capital assets.

MRS. CRIPPS: Yes. But depending on what the committee recommends, we may be making changes in how the losses are financed. We've been doing it on a yearly basis out of general revenue. That may not be the best mechanism, and I expect the committee to make recommendations on that.

I want to go back to your point on moving them over to the Treasury Branches. You spoke as if that's a foregone conclusion and it's not.

MR. McEACHERN: No. I just said it had been raised; that's all.

MRS. CRIPPS: I just don't want it to be left here as a foregone conclusion, because the last thing I want to do is prejudge the committee's recommendations.

MR. McEACHERN: On that point, if you did put them into Treasury Branches, you could do so under the same kinds of terms as the 9 percent loans under the other program. Actually, it would be just the mechanism.

MRS. CRIPPS: I agree, but I don't want to prejudge that committee's recommendations.

MR. McEACHERN: Oh, no. I wasn't intending to imply that.

MR. R. SPEAKER: In terms of the guarantees to assist farmers for operating loans, that plan came in two years ago and there were very few applications that came in the first year or were approved. I understand the numbers increased last year, which includes this current year. Is

an increase in applications expected?

MRS. CRIPPS: What have we got in applications this year? Do you know, Bob?

MR. SPILLER: Not a significant increase, even when the program was turned over to the banks to directly approve the loans, and a significant change is not anticipated.

MRS. CRIPPS: We'll meet the needs.

MR. R. SPEAKER: We'll meet the needs, but it's not going to be increased significantly. Okay.

MR. PIQUETTE: In the whole foreclosure of AADC farm properties, a number of farmers have raised the issue that they feel that in terms of sale, when the land goes back on the orderly market, they should have the right of first refusal to lease or buy the existing home quarter. I would like you to react to that recommendation, whether it would be feasible in the future. Instead of farmers being completely forced off the land, they would at least have a chance to rebuild their equity in their farming operation as opposed to completely removing it from them.

MRS. CRIPPS: What that really amounts to, though, is a write-down of the loan, and at the present time we have a policy that does not allow us to write down the loan. The farmer in question has an equal opportunity, along with any other purchaser, to purchase the land. If it goes out to tender, he can make the purchase, but he doesn't have the first right of refusal; that is, if somebody else puts in a higher bid for the land, he won't get it. But if it goes to tender or if bids are submitted and the present owner has the highest bid and can obtain his funding elsewhere, he can buy it. So he has as much opportunity as anyone else to purchase it, but at the present time he does not have the first right of refusal. That's something that the committee may make recommendations on.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, on my way to the meeting this afternoon, I got the transcript from our previous time with you, and I'm just trying to identify the questions on the research programs. I guess that basically falls under Farming for the Future. One thing I've

been trying to sort out in my own mind with the different departments that have come in to talk about the capital projects division of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund is how the spending in that division relates to similar spending they ordinarily do through the ongoing operating of their department. I was wondering if you could take just a minute or two and outline for me what makes the funding for agricultural research under the Heritage Savings Trust Fund different from or complementary to what is already being done through ongoing research programs in your department. I'm trying to sort out how one project gets funded under one umbrella as opposed to another to ensure there's no duplication and just to understand what criteria are used for the two kinds of programs.

MRS. CRIPPS: As far as the research goes, that's more Peter's responsibility than mine, but you're right when you say it's complementary. The research funding through the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund — for instance, Farming for the Future or, for that matter, the medical research — is complementary, in addition to the normal funding that would be done through either our department or Hospitals and Medical Care. Farming for the Future has a special committee which allocates the funding. It's made up of either one or two MLAs, people from the agricultural sector, and some people from the department, and they allocate those funds.

One of the points you made might be on repetitive research, and I believe that's one of the reasons the minister is so interested in setting up this research institute, which would be a co-ordinating body for all the research done in agriculture. That way you would ensure there wasn't duplication of research, and the research funding would probably be more effective because it would spread farther.

One of the things we've tried not to do is fill in the gaps. For a few years we were filling in the gaps left by federal cuts in research in this province, and last year LeRoy said, "Absolutely no more." I think Peter's and my commitment is "absolutely no more" also. As a result of that, the federal government intended to cut back 10 or 12 positions in southern Alberta, I believe. They've reinstated those positions, so we're really pleased with that.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Does the same apply to

the Food Processing Development Centre? Is that completely different from anything that is being done in your department, or is there some complementary aspect to ongoing research or ongoing work?

MRS. CRIPPS: The Food Processing Development Centre is complementary. It's especially complementary in that we work with the private sector in Alberta to get from an idea stage to a marketing stage, where a product can be put on the market and hopefully successfully increase the impact of agriculture in Alberta through value-added processing.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Would that be something that might fall under this research institute the Minister of Agriculture has been speaking about and which you alluded to a moment or so ago? Would the Food Processing Development Centre, Farming for the Future, and your own department's research all fit underneath that umbrella?

MRS. CRIPPS: I'm not positive about the research centre at Leduc, because that's designed for a specific area that is different from the other research projects that I think you're talking about. But there's no reason it couldn't. I would expect that the overall body would know what was going on at the Research Council. In fact, they would probably direct some research there that could be better suited to that kind of facility than other research funding that might be more visible.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to follow up on some questions from the Member for Little Bow and your answers to them. I suggested a minute ago that we might roll the AADC into ...

MRS. CRIPPS: You keep suggesting that.

MR. McEACHERN: I keep going back to that. Okay. We just said that if we did, we could do it in a manner similar to the farm credit stability program. If I remember right, the farm credit stability program has loaned out some \$1.5 billion, so we'd then be looking at \$3.5 billion.

More specifically, you didn't think there would be any less need for capital or for borrowing under the Agricultural Development Corporation next year than this year. I can't help wondering why that would be the case.

MRS. CRIPPS: We were talking about the operating loans.

MR. McEACHERN: The operating loans out of the present ...

MRS. CRIPPS: ADC budget. Mr. Speaker asked me about the operating loans, which are the guaranteed loans.

MR. McEACHERN: I see. I guess I didn't quite catch the question.

MRS. CRIPPS: What I was responding to was operating loans.

MR. McEACHERN: Okay. I guess I'll just ask the question independently of his questions then. Would the need for new money under AADC be less next year because of the farm credit stability program? I was thinking that you'd said it wouldn't be, but you were talking operating not capital. How about capital?

MRS. CRIPPS: It might be, but it's pretty hard to make a judgment at this time on whether or not that would be the case. I think ADC is more responsive to the needs of new and younger farmers, and I believe the equity requirements are lower than with the traditional lending institutions. There's a void there that ADC fills, and I would expect it to continue to fill that role.

MR. McEACHERN: Another way to say that would be that perhaps the farm credit stability program has been taken up more by established farmers. They have the equity base, and the bankers are of course going to lend to those people who are most stable and able to pay back. Since it has not quite done the job, then ADC is still going to be important.

MRS. CRIPPS: Not necessarily, but that's a possibility.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, they have had people along that line.

MRS. CRIPPS: I guess what we've established through the farm credit stability program and through ADC is a wide enough spectrum of lending in agriculture to pretty well cover all circumstances, right from the beginning farmer to a more established farmer who needs to roll over that credit into long term. Our big concern was that the current operating loans could actually tumble some pretty viable operations. Through the farm credit stability program, I think we've been able to alleviate that concern by rolling it into long-term debt, as much as I have a major concern about rolling operating capital into long term.

MR. McEACHERN: I just had some feedback that a lot of the loans under the farm credit stability program were basically going to established farmers who didn't really need them and who in fact could have operated on 10 or 12 percent, and it wasn't really rescuing those people. So perhaps you're right: AADC may be needed.

MRS. CRIPPS: Frankly, I'm not sure any part of agriculture can afford 12 percent loans. You're saying that some people can afford them. With the commodity prices and the input costs, I think 9 percent is a far more realistic figure.

MR. McEACHERN: For anybody.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, one question to the minister. Of the 85 percent of loans out of the farm credit stability program that were used to refinance bank loans, et cetera, do you have any idea what percentage of that money was used to write down the loans where individuals were involved with ADC loans?

MRS. CRIPPS: Not ADC. You must mean FCC.

MR. HYLAND: The ADC portion, where if you qualified for one, you couldn't qualify for both.

MRS. CRIPPS: I see. Actually, 89.9 percent -- it's so close to 90 percent it's incredible -- is the amount of loans that have been rolled over into the farm credit stability program. Very few ADC loans were rolled over into the farm credit stability program. Basically, that's because we lowered the interest rate on the ADC loans in advance of the farm credit

stability program coming into effect. In fact, someone with ADC really benefitted from the farm credit stability program. When we made the decision to come out with the farm credit stability program, we also made the decision to lower the ADC loans to 9 percent. That was effective immediately, so they actually got about five months' jump on anybody who went into the farm credit stability program.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Madam Minister, for once again appearing before our committee.

MRS. CRIPPS: Thank you for giving me time to go to lunch.

MR. R. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, is it open now to read recommendations into the record?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed.

MR. R. MOORE: Then I would like to read this recommendation: that funding be made available to convert senior citizen lodge beds to nursing home beds wherever such a change is indicated as a responsible utilization of facilities. Copies have been provided to all members of the committee, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GOGO: Do you want to justify why we should even consider that?

MR. R. MOORE: If you have a half hour, I could do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're not here today to debate; we're here to hear them. We'll certainly have an opportunity for debate in the near future.

Any other recommendations that need to be brought forward at this time?

MR. PAYNE: I think Alan Hyland had some.

MR. GOGO: Could someone read his?

MR. R. MOORE: Yes, he had two to read in. If I could, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to read these two recommendations on behalf of my colleague the Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair recognizes the Member for Lacombe.

MR. R. MOORE: Capital projects division: that section 6(2)(b) of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act be amended to allow the capital projects division to contribute up to 25 percent of the fund's assets.

The second recommendation is under land reclamation: that land reclamation under the capital projects division be continued for an additional five-year period, the amount of funding to be determined as moneys become available.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further recommendations at this time?

MR. McEACHERN: I'm afraid ours are in for a final typing. They're not ready today but will be tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good. We're up to 27 recommendations now, and we'll have an opportunity to receive more recommendations tomorrow.

The Chair would like to discuss future meeting dates at this time. We had already agreed to a December 11 meeting date, but in light of the number of recommendations we've received already and anticipating more to come tomorrow, it appears that we're going to need additional time to discuss recommendations. I know it's certainly not going to be agreeable for everybody, but we have to start somewhere. I would like to suggest the first week in January, from January 5 to 9.

MR. R. MOORE: Agreed.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I have something on the 5th, but the other days are okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I thought we would start on the afternoon of the 5th and, hopefully, conclude by the morning of the 9th. Perhaps we can even conclude earlier.

MR. R. SPEAKER: John, are we in Lethbridge at the university on the 5th? Is that in the morning?

MR. GOGO: The 4th, isn't it? Saturday.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Oh, is it the 4th? I thought it was the 5th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The 4th is a Sunday.

MR. R. MOORE: We'll hold your recommendations until you're here.

MR. R. SPEAKER: There may be more than one of us.

MR. GOGO: It involves five of us. Could I make a phone call and advise the committee in the morning?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure. But can we tentatively set that? If there are any major problems, perhaps members can get back to me directly or we can discuss it further at the meeting tomorrow.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Are you suggesting that we tentatively book two until four on the Monday and ten to twelve, two to four for the remaining days?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I think our thing is on Monday the 5th.

MR. McEACHERN: We could start Tuesday morning if we had to. I think you said something about December 11 as a date for the return of the Premier or the Treasurer?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. We're still going to see if we can't have the Premier or Mr. Johnston on that date.

MR. McEACHERN: It is perfectly fine to go ahead with that, although I am on holiday until the 12th. If it was inconvenient for them, if the Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday on which this committee is planning to go to Prince Rupert would be better days, I would like to suggest that this committee consider cancelling the trip to Prince Rupert, in view of the . . .

MR. R. MOORE: To accommodate you?

MR. McEACHERN: No, in order to show that we're concerned about restraint. The Premier announced the idea of restraint the other day. If that goes ahead, then I think we should say

that only a few members go. Each caucus could decide: one from our caucus and two or three from yours or something. In other words, to help save a little money, send a delegation rather than all of us going. I'd like to put that idea forward as an alternative. If there is trouble getting the Premier or the Treasurer on the eleventh — I know you've set that date, and by all means go ahead whether I'm here or not — Monday or Tuesday of the following week might be as convenient, if those dates became free, if you take my idea that a delegation going to Prince Rupert instead of all 15 of us would make sense.

I should have suggested this sometime ago. Probably half the arrangements are made.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was going to say that all the arrangements have been made, at both this end and that end.

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Chairman, everyone isn't going. I'm not going, my colleague isn't going, and I don't know how many other people.

MR. McEACHERN: Okay. Leave it the way it is and see how it turns out. I just brought that forward with the idea that . . .

MR. NELSON: Some have already been out there and seen it. If you don't want to learn something, don't go.

MR. McEACHERN: We will send Leo as our delegation, because he's the agriculture person. [interjections]

MR. GOGO: I understand. And we're there to watch Leo. [laughter]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair would also point out to the Member for Edmonton Kingsway that -- I don't have the figures here, but I did make some substantial recommendations for budget cuts in this committee's budget for next year.

MR. PAYNE: On that cheery note, Mr. Chairman, could I move an adjournment motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion at this time? If not, there is a motion by the Member for Calgary Fish Creek to adjourn until tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

[The committee adjourned at 1:30 p.m.]