

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act

9:30 a.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Dunford]

THE CHAIRMAN: Just a couple of housekeeping items. There are meetings going on behind us here, so if you want to leave the Chamber, please use this door. Water is available over on the opposition side. Oh, no. Jon Havelock's over there too. Oh, okay. Well, I guess my statement stands.

MR. SAPERS: We don't want him.

MR. HAVELOCK: All right; I am throwing away the research questions I was going to . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, are you?

Well, first of all, I want to welcome the new members to our committee. Moe Amery. Welcome, Moe. Debby Carlson. Welcome, Debby. Yvonne Fritz. Hi, Yvonne. Sine is not here. We'll welcome Sine anyway, and we'll welcome also Mark Hlady and Paul Langevin and Peter Sekulic. Welcome, Peter. And Shiraz Omar Shariff. This is Diane Shumyla. I'm sure that you've been receiving all kinds of important information from Diane.

As this is an organizational meeting, just a number of items to go over. I just want to make sure that I remind members of our mandate. The committee's mandate is to review the '94-95 annual report of the Provincial Treasurer on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act – you have a copy in your binder – and make recommendations with respect to existing and potential investments.

Now, those of us that were here last year are aware that we actually made a recommendation to disband this committee. A round of applause was noted. But we will have to continue these meetings until such time – it's the Legislative Assembly who created us, and they will have to take it away from us. So we have to meet until that time. You're aware from the schedule, then, that we'll be meeting with the Premier, the Provincial Treasurer, cabinet ministers, and the Auditor General.

As far as recommendations to the Legislative Assembly, we'll hear presentations of course from the Premier and the cabinet ministers and others who may be invited before the committee. Then the committee members make recommendations. Now, you can do this anytime. I'll try to stick to a procedure that we've developed by asking for recommendations at the start of the meeting and at the conclusion of the meeting. Then it's just a simple matter of your reading it into the record and then handing a written copy to Diane so that she can circulate it. Then Diane will try her best to keep us updated with an ongoing list of recommendations.

Of course, at the end of these proceedings then we will draft a report. We will present it to committee members at a meeting called for that purpose, and then it will be filed in the Legislative Assembly.

A notice of meetings is in the binder. I want to warn you already of a change that we will have to – well, we've made it. Oh, okay. I was looking at an old one in my office before I came down here, but I see now that January 26 or 25 – I forget what it was – has been changed to Tuesday, February 6. So please update your diaries.

MR. SAPERS: The November 22 memo, then, is the most current and accurate list?

THE CHAIRMAN: Is that the date that's on top of it? Okay.

MR. SAPERS: Good. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: We've learned in past years, however, that our schedule is an evolving document.

MRS. FORSYTH: Only pencil it in your diary.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

MR. SAPERS: Is that because this committee is such a high priority?

THE CHAIRMAN: That's because this committee is such a high priority that, you know, items come up momentarily that have to be dealt with, and so we revise our schedule.

Gee, I had an excellent point I was going to make, and then I got sidetracked. It'll come back to me, I'm sure.

The format of the meetings. Of course when we have the Premier or a minister in front of us, I'll ask them to provide us with some opening statements, but we'll try to confine that to 15 minutes. That will allow us, then, ample time, I think, for questions. We have scheduled each participant for – is it two hours, Diane? Two hours. This doesn't mean that you have to take the full two hours, but it's certainly there if you wish.

I would like to make sure we have an agreement to follow our past practice of members asking one question with two supplementaries, and these are not necessarily related to the main question. We've provided a fair amount of ability for members, when it's their turn, to ask basically three questions. Our mandate is working on the '94-95 report, so I anticipate that the questions would relate directly or if it is indirectly, in some manner, then, to that report. If you have a desire to go far afield, you may find that your chairman, who is really such a nice person, may bring a little chairmanship to the meeting. We'll try, as we have in the past, to provide as much flexibility to members as we can. Ordinarily, we start with a question from the opposition side, and after those three questions then we will revert to anyone from the government members' side, and then we'll just proceed back and forth until I no longer have anyone on the list wishing to ask questions.

If there's any voting at the committee meetings, there's no seconder required on motions. Members cannot abstain from voting, so if for some reason you wish not to vote, you must leave the Chamber prior to the vote being called.

I've already mentioned that I will, as far as recommendations, ask for recommendations at the start of the meeting and at the end.

A date that you have to be aware of. It's been our practice to not accept recommendations after the last hearing that we have with a minister or someone present, so that means, then, that the deadline for recommendations will be January 24.

Now, you'll note that we have scheduled a recommendation meeting. At that meeting sponsors of recommendations have the opportunity to amend their own recommendations. Committee members are invited to withdraw or to make suggestions for combining like recommendations. At previous meetings members did not amend the recommendations of others. The original intent of amending recommendations was simply to fix the wording, not to change the complete intent of the recommendations. So once you make a recommendation, it's only you that can amend or change it formally. Others may provide you with some recommendations or perhaps a different perspective, but it's up to you to change your own

recommendation. Once we've established, then, what that recommendation is, the debate can begin. Again talking about a past practice, committee members were allowed to speak more than once on each recommendation if necessary, but the member introducing that recommendation can only speak upon opening the debate and then gets the opportunity to close that debate.

When we vote, it is a show of hands. I won't be asking for aye or nay. I'll simply be asking for a show of hands in order that Diane can record both the support and the opposition to it.

I've made references to Diane. Also, in our proceedings we tend to be informal in the sense that you may address the chairman as Clint, and the chairman will address you by your first names.

Now, any questions on any of the details? Any other business, then, to come before the committee?

9:40

MR. SAPERS: Will the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research be asked to appear in front of the committee this round?

THE CHAIRMAN: We're working on that, and we have an option right now. You'll note on your schedule that on Wednesday, December 13, we have the Hon. Murray Smith. While his department is not technically responsible, officials of the medical research happen to be in town that day, and the suggestion has been made that they come with Murray. Would that be satisfactory?

MR. SAPERS: It would be okay with me.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. So we'll continue to work on that and attempt to get that to happen.

Any other business? All right. Well, hearing none, we will adjourn until 10 o'clock when we will once again meet here for the Premier.

Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 9:42 a.m.]