

[Ms Graham in the chair]

THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to this organizational meeting of the Standing Committee on Private Bills for the Second Session of the 25th Legislature. I think we have almost perfect attendance here this morning. This marks the first time we've met in this new committee room, and it may be for some of you your first opportunity to meet here. I just wish we had a heavier workload. You all look so anxious to do work. That's great.

You have your binders before you, and you'll see an agenda under the tab, of course, marked agenda. I would entertain a motion for approval of the agenda, provided that meets with your approval.

MR. JOHNSON: So moved.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Mr. Johnson moves the approval of the agenda.

MR. BONNER: I'll second it.

THE CHAIR: Okay. You know what? I guess our procedure doesn't require a seconder for these committees.

MR. BONNER: All right; I won't.

THE CHAIR: But I will call on you for the next motion.

All in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIR: Any opposed, please say no. The motion is carried.

We also need to approve the committee meeting minutes of Tuesday, May 30, 2001, and they are also included in your binder. Unless there are any corrections or additions or omissions, I'll entertain a motion to approve those minutes.

MR. BONNER: So moved.

THE CHAIR: All in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIR: Any opposed, please say no. This motion is carried.

Prior to talking about the one petition that we have received, I'll just highlight briefly for you what private bills are, the purpose of this committee, and the procedure that we follow. Now, I think that most members were here last year and have gone through at least one full process. Oh, maybe one person hasn't.

Private bills are not to be confused with private members' bills, which many of you are taking through the Legislature. Private bills are not public bills, although private members' bills are. Private bills are a plea to the Legislature and the Lieutenant Governor by petition seeking relief that is not available through any other means, through other legislation, through other processes, perhaps the courts. Seeking perhaps the incorporation of a nonprofit charitable organization: that would be an example. Even though there is legislation that provides for same, if additional rights and powers are needed – perhaps it's the incorporation of a college and special rights, again, and powers are needed – then a private bill might be brought for that. Or if there's a need to exclude a group or an organization from the general application of the law, you might bring a private bill.

I don't know; does that help, Mr. Abbott?

REV. ABBOTT: Very much. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

The procedure is a little unusual. The bills come forward by way of a petition by the petitioner to the Legislative Assembly and the Lieutenant Governor, and there are certain advertising requirements, certain rules that must be complied with, which are found in our Standing Orders 84 to 101. Once a petition is received, it is received by the chairman and then presented to the Legislature, and we did that before the Easter break. Then the bill comes back to the committee to determine if it complies with the standing rules. We then report on that, which I will do today because we'll decide on that today. Then it will come for hearing before the committee. We will then meet again to deliberate on what we will do. We can either recommend that the bill proceed, that it proceed with amendments, or that it not proceed. I will report back on behalf of the committee to the Legislature in that regard. It will then go through the processes of first and second reading, Committee of the Whole, and third reading. Now, did I get that backwards?

MS DEAN: If I may, Madam Chair, the private bill will be introduced once your report has been made, which we anticipate will be Wednesday. Then, after first reading, which will occur on Wednesday, the bill stands referred to the committee for its hearing, which will occur next Tuesday depending upon the committee's decision as to its schedule of hearings.

THE CHAIR: So after we've had the hearing and made our decision, it'll proceed to second reading, Committee of the Whole, and third reading?

MS DEAN: That's correct.

THE CHAIR: All right. Would there be any questions about procedure?

All right. I'll refer you, then, to tab one, which is a draft copy of Bill Pr. 1, entitled the Synod of the Diocese of Edmonton Amendment Act, 2002, which is being sponsored by Mr. Maskell. As you can see from a reading of this bill, what is being sought here is a change in the name of the synod and parishes from the Church of England to Anglican. It requests the adoption of gender-neutral language, and it also requests the provision for the prudent investor rules with respect to the investment of the diocese's consolidated trust fund.

A review of the petition indicates that the petitioner has fulfilled all of the requirements in the Standing Orders, and I'll just call on Parliamentary Counsel to further elaborate on the bill for our purposes.

MS DEAN: Sure. Actually, I don't think that there is much I have to add to the chair's comments about the bill apart from what I perceive to be the major amendment that they are seeking, which is the adoption of the prudent investor rules in connection with the trust funds that are held by the diocese. Just for the benefit of committee members, you may recall that last spring we had another private bill that was also seeking to adopt the same rules. In the fall sitting of the Legislature the Trustee Act, which is the general public law of Alberta for all trustees – the Legislature amended the act to adopt these rules, so they are now part of the general law for all trustees in Alberta. What is being proposed here by the diocese is that they bring those provisions into their act.

Just a final point. In terms of the documents that the petitioners have submitted, they've submitted the petition to the Assembly, the

petition to the Lieutenant Governor, proof of advertising in the *Alberta Gazette*, proof of advertising in two weeks of the *Edmonton Sun*, and a draft bill. They've also complied with the requirement of a cheque for \$200, so they are fully in compliance.

THE CHAIR: Yes, Mr. Goudreau.

MR. GOUDREAU: Yes. Madam Chairman, does the diocese cover the whole province of Alberta? It's called the diocese of Edmonton. Is their mandate throughout the whole province?

THE CHAIR: I do not believe so. Ms Dean?

MS DEAN: I don't believe so either, but perhaps that's a specific question that you may want to put to the petitioners when they appear.

MR. MASKELL: I don't know myself.

THE CHAIR: All right. I just noticed that the sponsor, Mr. Maskell, is here, but that's something we can certainly determine at the hearing if not before.

MR. GOUDREAU: I was wondering, as a supplementary if I may: if that's the case, then are they going to come back with all of their other dioceses to ask for the same thing?

THE CHAIR: Again, you know, I think that's certainly a reasonable question, and we can do some investigating on that. It may be. I'm not even certain that all of the dioceses in the province are established by way of private bill. We can certainly do some investigation on that.

MR. MASKELL: Madam Chairman, if it's appropriate, I'll make that inquiry today to answer his question.

THE CHAIR: All right. That's good.

MR. MASKELL: Is that the process then?

THE CHAIR: Perhaps you could work with Parliamentary Counsel on getting that information.

MR. MASKELL: I'll do that.

9:17

THE CHAIR: Thank you. If there are no other questions, then, you will see at the front of your binder a proposed schedule for hearing and committee decision. It is being proposed that we meet next Tuesday, April 16, 2002, for the hearing into this matter. That meeting would commence at, I'm suggesting, 9 a.m. and followed, then, on the subsequent Tuesday, April 23, 2002, for deliberation and decision, again the meeting starting at 9 a.m.

Would anyone care to move that we adopt that meeting schedule? Mr. Abbott, you so move? All in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIR: Any opposed, please say no. The motion to set the hearing schedule is adopted.

Now, do we have any other business for today?

MR. SNELGROVE: Well, you've got quite a plateful of doughnuts and stuff.

THE CHAIR: Well, our thinking was that it would provide an incentive for you all to turn up. It seems to have worked.

MR. LORD: I move that we adjourn.

THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you, Mr. Lord. I'll entertain that.

Before we close, I'd just like to thank Shannon Dean, Parliamentary Counsel, and Florence Marston, our administrative assistant, for their usual support and well-organized materials and presentations. And thanks, Mrs. Kryczka, vice-chair, for being here.

MS KRYCZKA: You're welcome.

THE CHAIR: All right. All in favour of the motion to adjourn, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIR: Any opposed, please say no. We are adjourned, and we will see you next week at 9 a.m.

[The committee adjourned at 9:19 a.m.]