

1:22 p.m.

Friday, May 10, 1991

[Chairman: Mr. Horsman]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, let's get on with what is not a hidden agenda. This is, as you know, a public meeting. We'll look at the agenda, and we'll deal with the items as listed, unless somebody has something else. On Public Hearings we also have to deal with a change in personnel, so we'll come to that. I'll make a note on that.

Can we look at the minutes of April 19?

MS BARRETT: Yeah. Motion to approve.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any concerns? Are we agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We just need a mover for these. We don't need a seconder, do we?

MS BARRETT: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved, Ms Barrett.

The next item is Public Hearings, administrative arrangements. I'll introduce Joanne Ross to those of you who haven't met Joanne. She's seated next to Garry Pocock, who's working on the administrative arrangements. I'd ask you to bring us up to date on how things are working on the administrative arrangements.

MR. POCKOCK: Well, we've provided the committee with a draft itinerary and would appreciate it if committee members could let us know if they have any difficulty with the particular arrangements outlined in the itinerary. Basically, the idea is to attend each of the centres approximately two hours prior to the presentations to allow committee members time to get to their hotel rooms, have a meeting before the public hearing if they desire, and have time available to meet the press 45 minutes before the beginning of the hearing.

We have currently received approximately 85 requests for an appearance before the committee. I think Louise distributed an update on that for each committee member. The number of calls we've received has begun to increase significantly as a result of the television campaign. We're currently receiving around 30 calls a day - at least 30 - and they seem to be going up. I don't know what the number is, but it's increasing rapidly, and so are the number of requests to appear before the committee. Over the last couple of days the requests have significantly gone up, and we anticipate that over the next two weeks we will receive a lot more requests to appear.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. On administrative arrangements you have, as a separate item, the update with respect to the committees. Any concerns with that? You note the staff that are being assigned. On page 2 we have reference to transportation, hotels, public hearings, and we have to determine, I think, how long each presenter will be granted and how much time will be made available for questions from committee members. That was left blank. The other attachment there - we have a floor plan, which I'd like your comments on. Then, finally, there's a sort of registration form. The term "registration form" bothers me a little bit, because people shouldn't have to register. It's just a matter of keeping a record as to who was there so that we have

their name, address, telephone numbers, and so on, so we can contact them relative to any further information. I think we can just keep that form as is.

With respect to the setup of the room, I'm concerned that we don't want to make it look too formidable for people. Therefore, I thought that if we could arrange this sort of square arrangement, as we have laid it out here, it would make people feel as if they're part of a discussion, rather than having us on the stage with people appearing, looking up, and so on. So they can be seated and have a round table type of discussion. Are there any comments about that particular format?

MR. CHIVERS: I think it's a very good format, Jim.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. With that, any questions... [interjections]  
Sorry. Gary.

MR. SEVERTSON: I see you've got mikes on the floor. What is that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: After formal presentations we're going to ask people in the audience if they wish to come up and make brief statements or ask questions, Gary.

MR. SEVERTSON: Okay. I wasn't sure if they were allowed to ask questions or just the panel members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we'll have the dialogue amongst the panel and the presenters, and then, when we have the formal presentations over, we'll ask people from the floor if they wish to make comments or ask questions.

Yes, Yolande.

MRS. GAGNON: I have some trouble with that. Having had experience with public hearings, I think you can end up adding another couple of hours to your event if you allow just anybody to go to the mike and continue the discussion. It seems to me that if they want to make a comment to the committee, they've got to book themselves. Really. You know, just think of it: it's over, there are a hundred people there, and 50 of them want to talk. It could be problematic.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Perhaps on that point, Fred. Did you want to comment on that?

MR. BRADLEY: Well, I wanted to comment on the floor plan and where the presenters are, and then I'll comment on what Mrs. Gagnon has said.

If you want to make it more intimate, you could just close that table off, the fourth side of the table, and make them part of the table. Just bring them right to the table and make it a little more intimate, maybe, for better discussions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was really the idea, to have it a four-sided table. I think we could arrange that.

MR. BRADLEY: That would bring them a little closer in to us.

On the floor mikes, I think there's got to be an opportunity for the public to comment generally if they wish to. I think we have to provide that opportunity. We're looking at a very open process, and if there are people who want to provide comments to us from the floor, we should make that opportunity available to them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. On that point, Stock?

MR. DAY: Fred covered my remarks there. That's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pam.

MS BARRETT: I think I can make a suggestion that might be useful. It is useful to hear comments from people who might otherwise be a little too shy to come forward and sit at a table. What we could do is look at the clock, or have this preplanned. You'll always go beyond your time on the scheduled presentations – that's my experience from electoral boundaries – but what we did as a group was talk to each other quickly. We'd look at the clock and say, "Okay, how much time do we want to allow for spontaneity?" and we would adjust as we went along. So if we were looking at a big crowd and we could tell that we'd have to allow more time, we'd say, "Okay, now we've got a 45-minute period, so people can engage in dialogue if they just go to the microphone." If it was small, we'd contain it to: "Well, we've got a spare 15 minutes. Is there anybody else who wants to jump in?" I don't know if you'd agree, Stock, but I thought it worked quite well that way. Then we controlled the time, but people still felt able to participate in an unofficial way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. My thought on this was that we would give a set time for the presenters, a set time for questions and answers and responses from the panel, and then, considering how many people might want to get to the floor mike, not give the same amount of time but just say, "If you have brief comments you wish to make or points of clarification you wish to ask, then maybe take a minute or so," rather than allowing them the same amount of time as for a formal presentation. I think we're going to have to play it a bit by ear, because we don't know.

Yes, Garry?

MR. POCOCK: I just wanted to make a comment on that. Edmonton and Calgary is where we anticipate the most pressure for the committee with regards to their time. In the smaller regional centres there will probably be a great deal of flexibility between the number of scheduled witnesses and the time available to ask questions from the floor. We did a brief review as to how many minutes we would be able to allow given the number of presenters in Edmonton and Calgary. We already have requests for, I believe, about 40 in Edmonton – Joanne? – and we're probably looking there at about 10 minutes for formal presentations. That's why you would probably need to schedule specific time if you wanted questions from the floor.

1:32

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, I think if we make it available so people can come to the microphone to make brief comments or ask brief comments, that would be fine. If we find that people are there with lengthy briefs at the microphone, we'll just have to say: "Listen. We're going to be considering how we can accommodate everybody, and it may very well be that we'll have to come back." That's a decision we won't make until June 6, but I do think we should have that. Would it be generally agreed, then, that we would have opportunities for people in the audience to make brief comments or ask brief questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Anything else on the administrative arrangements?

Yes.

MR. CHUMIR: Did I understand the suggestion was that there would only be 10 minutes for presenters in Edmonton based on the 40?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have to come to that issue, and that's on the Public Hearings. We left that space blank, so we'll have to deal with that. On the presenters update I think we need to get that, and then we'll discuss how much time we should try and allocate generally to people who wish to participate.

Okay, so we've got this document which says Public Responses as of May 10, which is today. I see in Calgary that we have 32 requests for presentations: eight organizations, 24 individuals. Now, you say more are coming in, and we'll probably be receiving those over the next while.

MRS. ROSS: It's doubled this week, and I expect it'll double next week.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Attached to that we have a timetable indicating the amount of time that we would have available. On Friday evenings, from 7 until 10, if we allow 10 minutes each, we would be able to get – is that 10 minutes per presenter, including question and answer?

MRS. ROSS: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We could get 10 presenters in between 7 and 8:45. If we allowed 20 minutes, we'd only get five; allow 15, we'd get seven. It's just the logistical analysis of the situation.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. Look at the bottom of the page. Those are the totals, the total scheduled presenters.

You know, if I can jump in, Jim, we might be able to look at this again next week or the week after, depending on Joanne's prediction of the yet redoubling of registrants. It might be too early to make a decision on this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, it may be, but it does indicate the time constraints we're going to be under in terms of the amount of time we'll have to make available to different presenters.

MR. CHIVERS: Well, I think what it's already beginning to show is that the time isn't going to be sufficient. We've already got 36 people in Edmonton and 32 in Calgary, and if the rate of registration is going to double, it seems pretty clear to me that by the time the hearing actually comes, and given the fact that there will be some spontaneous presentations, even if we allocated the minimum of 10 minutes, it's unlikely we would be able to conclude it in that allocated time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Sheldon.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, I agree that we've got a problem. I don't see how you can credibly give people who go out their way to do a presentation just 10 minutes. Even 20 minutes is short, but it's starting to be credible. It may be some presentations are so

simple and basic that they might merit only 10 minutes. We'd have to have people on standby in case an earlier one goes shorter. But I think we're going to need more time, and I'm quite interested. I think we need to give some thought to how we blend what is now starting to look like an overwhelming response in Calgary and Edmonton with a very minimal response, even nil, in some areas. Maybe we need some kind of reallocation in some way, but it's probably not possible if you've been advertising.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think in the smaller communities you're likely to get more spontaneity than you would have in the larger centres; that is to say, more people would come forward just to make a presentation.

Before we go on, you might want to look at the last page of that document. We see public consultation in other provinces, and you see what experiences were there. Now, I don't know from this what rules, if any, the other provinces had regarding the length of presentations. Could you give us advice on that?

MR. POCOCK: The only one I'm really familiar with: I believe the Ontario select committee provided five minutes for each witness.

MR. CHIVERS: And they had nearly a month's hearings.

MS BARRETT: I don't think they went the whole time though.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They heard over 600 individuals and groups, but I know in my discussions with them that there were a great number of short, spontaneous comments they included in that.

Well, I think we're going to have to come back to this when we see a little clearer, but I think we have to recognize that there's going to have to be some time limit on the length of the presentations. I don't think people should expect to come forward and read lengthy, lengthy briefs. We have to avoid that so we're not sitting there listening to an hour-long treatise. If they want to leave that type of document for analysis and review, that's fine, but I think people should be able to present the main points in 10 or 15 minutes and then allow some dialogue to get the main points of their concerns analyzed.

MR. BRADLEY: It seems in terms of our schedule – and this is only for the Edmonton hearings – that on Friday, May 24, there's opportunity for us to actually start earlier if we so wish rather than starting at 7 o'clock. We could fit in some more time in Edmonton on Friday the 24th. Similarly with committee B when they come back to Edmonton on Friday, May 31. As the schedule has indicated, they get back to Edmonton on Thursday night, and they don't commence their hearings on the Friday until 7 o'clock. There's a full day there, so there is some opportunity in terms of Edmonton to schedule further hearings if we so wish. We may wish to get from the presenters whether they could in fact present earlier on the Friday; for example, Friday afternoon.

MRS. GAGNON: There's also May 29, all day free, for group A. We'd be back in Edmonton Tuesday night before we leave Thursday morning for wherever. So there's a whole day there, the Wednesday, when we could be working.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Garry, you had a comment?

MR. POCOCK: With regards to the timing when we begin the sessions, the press release has gone out already indicating the times for the starting and closing, so it still could be done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think what could happen, with respect: once we know – and we will know better even by next week – we could make the change in the time, contact the groups that have indicated their intention of making a presentation, and ask them if they would like to move into an afternoon session. I think we could have some flexibility to do that. I think many organizations and perhaps some individuals would be able to accommodate it, and then we could fill in that extra time that way. Would that be agreeable?

Pam.

1:42

MS BARRETT: Yes. I'd just like to add one other thing. You don't have to start hearings on Friday till even 4 o'clock. Even if we started at 4, it gives lots of breathing room. But one thing we found on electoral boundaries that worked really well and was an incredible time saver was asking three or four individuals or organizational representatives to come and sit at the presenters' tables. We'd hear from each one of them, and then we would ask questions. It was really useful in terms of them listening to each other's presentations and being able to respond to ideas developed within them, and it was really useful for the committee. It was efficient with respect to time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Barrie.

MR. CHIVERS: Yeah. I agree with the idea of expanding the time in Edmonton and Calgary. I think it makes eminent good sense. However, I am concerned about delaying the decision on the allocation of time. It seems to me that it's very important, if the hearings are going to run smoothly, for the presenters to know as soon as possible how much time they're going to have. If they've prepared lengthy briefs and they're going to have to distil them into 10, 15, or 20 minutes, it's very important for them to know that so they can meet our requirements. I would suggest that the time allocation should be about 15 minutes, because it's going to include questions and answers, and we should make that decision today so people can be notified.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. CHUMIR: Jim, I guess I quite frankly can't see why they'd need to be notified so urgently in terms of the difference as to whether they appear for 15 or 20 minutes. I think we'd be better off, with due respect, to take our time to get a focus and a balance as to what's possible. We want to give them as much time as possible, and we may be able to . . .

MR. CHIVERS: My concern, Sheldon, is that people may be preparing lengthy briefs and expecting to have the time to present their entire brief.

MR. CHUMIR: They could be advised of arrangements if it's going to be a fairly brief time. That would be feasible. But I suppose you're suggesting that it's uneconomic to communicate with them many times.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I think presenters are going to have to realize that the demand for time is going to be tight. They

should be encouraged to keep their presentations within a reasonable time limit, but they certainly would be free to supplement their verbal presentations with any written material, which would be analyzed and reviewed. The key is to get the key points of their submissions on the table and allow some dialogue with the panel. The maximum I think we could ever contemplate for any one individual or group would have to be 20 minutes, preferably 15 for the dialogue. We have to be somewhat flexible, obviously.

MRS. GAGNON: I have another concern. For instance, I know it's early days, but if you look at Lloydminster, there are no requests yet. Let's say we have only three briefs. Would we maybe consider asking those people to come to Edmonton, or would we go to Lloydminster anyway? Or should we wait and worry about that next week?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I've had correspondence from people in Lloydminster. Quite a few, as a matter of fact, have written, and I expect they're just a little slow getting off the mark. I expect we'll have good presentations in the smaller communities and surrounding areas as well by the time we're actually there starting two weeks from now.

Can we agree in general, then, that the maximum time would be 20 minutes for presentations and dialogue and that we encourage people to be shorter than that if at all possible? Would that be acceptable?

MRS. GAGNON: And 10 minutes for questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. That would be including. We'll also try to arrange some Friday afternoon discussions in Edmonton and Calgary and do that in conjunction with the presenters who have presently indicated their intention to come, and that will help us in terms of the additional numbers. Would that be agreeable? Okay.

Now, we have out-of-province submissions listed here too. We've had some requests from people from out of the province to come and make presentations. Sheldon has had a conversation with at least one person. I did last night with a group from Montreal. My view is that we should certainly accept the people from out of the province who wish to come and make presentations. Does anybody quarrel with that notion?

MR. DAY: I guess my concern, Mr. Chairman, would be if there was a feeling that some Albertans at any of these given meetings didn't get an opportunity to talk or the hour got too late because some out-of-province people had come. I'd like to entertain the thought of maybe having an out-of-town session, if you want to do that. I'm a little bit uncomfortable, if we're already looking at the time crunch here, with the thought of Albertans sitting at a table, making a presentation, getting around the 20-minute mark, and us telling them, "You're going to have hurry up because there's someone here from Montreal who also wants to present." Maybe we could entertain the thought of having them all at once. I'm looking at how many presentations or requests we're getting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've only had a few, so I don't think it's really going to push us that hard to do it. I think as a matter of principle that we should establish that we will hear people from out of the province.

MR. CHIVERS: I agree. Besides, it would be a real slap in Mr. Parizeau's face if we were to say that we, too, didn't want to hear them.

MR. DAY: I'm not saying that we don't hear; I'm saying that at the meetings we're sensitive . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll have to time it properly.

MR. DAY: If we had a number of requests, we could possibly look at a separate afternoon for them.

MR. CHUMIR: If it became too many, that would be feasible, but I think we very much have to be open to hear the people who want to present to us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, you see, there's a principle here. The Quebec Belanger-Campeau group would not hear presentations from outside Quebec. In Manitoba, when they held their hearings on Meech Lake, they would not hear presentations from outside Manitoba.

MRS. GAGNON: Jim, I beg to differ. ACFA presented to the Belanger-Campeau Commission. Definitely.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, really?

MRS. GAGNON: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We asked about that. I'm sorry if I'm in error there, because I thought we were inquiring about that.

MRS. GAGNON: I'm sure they did.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I thought we were told that . . .

MR. POCOCK: My understanding was that none of the provincial commissions were hearing outside submissions.

MRS. GAGNON: You could check it, but I was quite sure they did. Actually, I read the brief they presented.

MR. POCOCK: Well, they may have submitted a brief, but whether or not they appeared before . . .

MRS. GAGNON: But they went in person, two people, as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, could we say that we will hear people from outside the province but will give preference to Albertans in terms of making sure they get their points in?

MS CALAHASEN: I think this is an Albertan view in terms of what we're doing here. Personally, I don't mind some groups coming in, but I think we're trying to solicit Albertans' views in terms of Alberta and a new Canada. That's a concern to me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Perhaps since it is a matter of policy, we should have a motion to accept presentations from outside the province but with Albertans being given first preference. Could somebody make such a motion? Stock Day. Are we agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.  
Communications update.

MS PARR: Briefly, I hope everyone has had an opportunity to see the television commercial. It has been playing since Sunday. We are, as was said, getting a good response to it. People are phoning the 1-800 line and saying, "I saw this on television." That's been gratifying.

The final print advertising in the weekly papers will be appearing next week. Also, in what are termed the ethnic papers, wherever it has made sense in terms of their own deadlines for the ads for the committee to appear, with the papers doing translations, they'll be appearing as well. There are several that publish seven times a year that we weren't able to get into, but other than that we've managed to place the print ads in all of them.

The final notice advertisements saying that the committee will be, say, in Calgary on Friday and Saturday will be appearing in all the daily papers as per suitable locations several days before the hearings. Those advertisements will be supplemented by radio essentially, with the same message three days prior to the date of the hearing. So if the committee's appearing in a centre on Wednesday, that ad will have run Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday on the radio.

1:52

The media response to date to the news releases has been quite positive. There has been a significant amount of play, particularly in the weekly newspapers as expected but also in terms of radio response and television as well. It's my understanding that, for example, the CBC dinner hour show today is using the committee's commercial as the backdrop to a little piece just announcing that the hearings are on. So the response has been quite good. In terms of preparation for the hearings, the major media in each of the centres will be contacted about a week beforehand to discuss with them what will be happening and just to make sure that they're aware and know a name to speak to when they arrive at the hearings.

As in the little update in your package, over 1,500 letters were sent out early this week, and we are getting response from the individuals and associations that they were sent to. So it seems there's been a good response to that as well. We had posters printed up that contained precisely the same information that appears in the print ads. Over 2,000 of those have been distributed, including copies to all of your colleagues in the Legislature. Those went out today, and they'll be sent to seniors centres, Royal Canadian Legions, universities, and libraries as well. So fairly extensive coverage of that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions?  
Yes, Yolande.

MRS. GAGNON: Yes. The last time we met, you had a kit to be sent to the schools, and I wondered if you'd had any input. We were supposed to have input by Wednesday or something because you had to get on with it. Did that kit change at all from what we'd seen?

MS PARR: It changed in terms of the introduction to the kit . . .

MRS. GAGNON: Yes, I recall Pam's suggestion.

MS PARR: . . . and more clearly explained what process had gone on. I believe that was the most substantive change. It has gone out, and we have had response from schools, as a matter of fact, that they are using the kit and that they appreciate the kit. In fact, all their comments have been positive.

MR. POCOCK: In fact, we've had a request from a Hinton school based on the kit. They would like their class to make a presentation to the committee: 35.

MS BARRETT: Did that go to virtually every high school, junior high in the province?

MR. POCOCK: Yes, every high school in the province, I believe.

MS BARRETT: Great.

MS PARR: Yes. We were advised by Alberta Education that the curriculum was most appropriate from grade 10 on for the introduction of it and prior to that it didn't make a lot of sense as a teaching tool.

MS BARRETT: Oh, yeah. No problem. I just wanted to check. That's great.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If that's gone out to all the schools, and when we consider that these things are just going out, we may end up with many, many more requests than we ever anticipated. In any event, we'll have to see. Everybody is determined that we'll hear everybody and get their presentation, so we may be very busy indeed.

Okay. I forgot to do one thing on Administrative Arrangements when we were talking about our public hearings. I want to just jump back to that if I could, if there are no more questions on communications. You wanted to make some changes. Do you want to put that on the record, as to rearranging some of your membership on the panels?

MS BARRETT: Yes. I have requests from Bob Hawkesworth and John McInnis with respect to their schedules. What they wanted was to switch around their weekend duties. I was able to say yes in advance because it then affected me. On May 24 and 25 McInnis would substitute for Hawkesworth in Edmonton and vice versa in Calgary, and then on May 31 and June 1 I would substitute for McInnis in Edmonton and he for me in Calgary. I'd like the agreement of the committee to that request if I can.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, unless I'm missing something here, could we have just general agreement that there's no problem with people switching back and forth?

MS BARRETT: As long as we're buddied on so that we don't leave a vacancy.

MR. DAY: I don't see the need for us to have to approve things like that.

MS BARRETT: Good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Could we put that on the record, then, by a motion just so we have it there?

MR. DAY: So moved: something like that.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: We need to know for the motel reservations, if you'd let us know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, yeah. You're not to just take anybody by surprise. Our administrative staff are going to have to be informed. But as a matter of policy are we agreed with Stock's motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, as long as it's understood that we're not leaving gaps in one committee or the other. Great. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we understand that. Thanks very much.

Yes, Fred?

MR. BRADLEY: If we have to be absent for a period of time, who do we advise?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can advise me, and I will make sure that it goes to the proper people. Okay?

MRS. GAGNON: Another small matter, just for arrangements. If we have a place to stay in Edmonton, for instance, we don't need accommodation on the Friday night that we're in Edmonton. Some people might and some people might not, so we should let the staff know that kind of thing. In Calgary, you know, a lot of you wouldn't have a place to stay there, but I do, for instance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. There are no hotel arrangements made for anybody in Edmonton, on the assumption that everybody has some kind of residence here. That's understood.

MRS. GAGNON: But in Calgary there would be for some but not all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Exactly.

Now, the next item then we have is Questionnaire, public opinion survey. There are two items, two aspects of that.

MR. SEVERTSON: Jim, do you want to talk about Stan?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, yeah. We just have to see that you are aware that Mr. Schumacher is in the hospital undergoing some tests. He'll be there for another day or two, I understand, and we'll have to see whether or not he's able to continue on in this process. If he is not going to be able to continue on, then we may have to make an arrangement with a motion in the Legislature to substitute, but we will come to that in the next few days when we know with more certainty. That's just a matter of notice at this stage.

MR. POCOCK: Mr. Chairman, may I ask a question for clarification on the public hearings. It's our understanding that for the timing for the individuals and groups we were to allot the same for each. An association would receive the same amount of time as an individual.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think so.

MR. POCOCK: We will not be providing, unless directed otherwise by the committee, American Sign Language at the hearings. We will be able to if we are given notification from the presenters to make the arrangements for that.

The translation into other languages: we haven't made any provision for that either.

MR. CHAIRMAN: First of all, on the American Sign Language. We will, if we have notice, make available that service. Is that understood?

What about the issue of providing simultaneous French/English translation? Should we put that on the same basis ...

MR. CHIVERS: That would make sense.

MR. CHAIRMAN: ... as the sign language so that if somebody gave notice, then we will make arrangements for appropriate translation facilities, rather than take it all over the province with us. Is that agreeable?

MR. DAY: That's meaning an interpreter would be provided?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. DAY: But not the printed transcript.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. DAY: Agreed.

MR. CHIVERS: Would that go into the final advertisements, then, that that service could be made available?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We could do that in the advertisements.

AN HON. MEMBER: Do you have a comment on that?

MS PARR: Yes. It would be very difficult to put it into the weeklies; all of the weeklies already have the final ad copy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, let's see what requests we receive, and if we receive requests, we will accommodate people. Let's leave it that way, then.

MS BARRETT: Agreed.

2-02

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under communications there was one other issue, a media request to travel with the committee. We've received requests for media travel in government aircraft. That is not possible with King Air because there's just not going to be enough room. It would be possible to accommodate some people on the Dash, but I have a problem with that. If we accommodate some - you know, people in the south and not in the north - I think we're going to have problems. So I would say that the media should get there on their own. Would you agree with that?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER: They can travel with *Hansard*.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

Okay. Let's get on with this question there on public opinion. I've circulated a questionnaire which I have used myself, and I'd appreciate any comments. I can tell you that I've received over 650 responses from my constituents on this particular item, and they're being tabulated now. The wording, obviously, is something that members should look at for any concerns anybody has with this. There's no suggestion that it would be required that all MLAs utilize this questionnaire, but it's out there as a suggestion that people might want to utilize. In the end I think we will want to share with each other the responses we get to any of our MLA questionnaires that go out.

Sheldon.

MR. CHUMIR: This is not being proposed as a formal questionnaire or anything?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not as a formal one, no.

MR. CHUMIR: This is simply a suggestion by yourself to other members of a format they might want.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Exactly. But I'm certainly interested in hearing how you think it could be improved or changed.

Pam.

MS BARRETT: We approved in our budget an amount of money for polling, did we not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. I'll come to that.

MS BARRETT: Okay. I would like to make a comment first about the questionnaire and then bridge into that when time allows. That is that if we are using questionnaires as MLAs, I think they need to be uniform, because we can't match results. That's a big response, Jim, 650 people. That is a big response.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Six hundred and fifty households, actually, so that really covers it.

MS BARRETT: Households. Now, did you do postage prepaid?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MS BARRETT: That accounts for part of the volume, but still it's a very big response. When I do postage prepaid I get, like, 400.

But my concern is that we will not be able to compare between constituencies because we would be dealing with apples and oranges if every MLA were doing a survey. I'm inclined to propose a polling style of survey that's done by an external agency that would be uniform or used by all MLAs wishing to subscribe so that we could compare results on an apple-by-apple basis.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, on the polling, yes; we're going to come to that too. But this is an MLA thing, and I thought I'd run it and try it out and let my colleagues in our own caucus know how it shaped up. If you have any suggestions as to how it could be improved upon – the terminology may not be exactly what you may like – then I'd appreciate knowing that, because not all our caucus members have utilized this; far from it.

MS BARRETT: Well, when I looked at it, I sent it over to the university to the population research lab, which is an agency of the university that does polling. I have a copy of a faxed response from this morning that I can circulate, and I know that Barry did a similar sort of thing. It would give an indication of at least the direction that might be undertaken for getting a uniform framework.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, let's have that so we can look at that and see whether or not we wish to pursue this further.

Okay; Sheldon.

MR. CHUMIR: I have some concerns about the questionnaire, but I have equal concerns about the suggestion of uniform framework in the sense that these types of things should form a part of what we're doing officially. I think if individuals are sending things out individually – and I happen to have sent out a poll – I think that should be for our own background and for the background of anybody we care to share it with.

MS BARRETT: That's my point.

MR. CHUMIR: If we're going to do anything that's official, I think it should come through a formal process in which we all agree that the questions are objective, because I have some concerns about this. I think that's academic because I would suggest that this really shouldn't have an official role.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm not suggesting that they do have.

MR. CHIVERS: Jim, that was what concerned me in the letter. It was suggested that it would be useful to integrate this information with the findings of the hearings process, and that's what concerns me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't mean in an absolutely formal way at all. Because these are straw polls. They are not scientific. But we do have to get to a scientific polling process, and that's what I'd like to come to.

MR. CHUMIR: Might I even raise the strongest concern about the innuendo that it will be part of it an informal way. I don't think any response to this questionnaire would be appropriate as being even on part of the side burner in respect of this committee, because the questions in fact have a certain load or slant to them, and I think probably some would say that the way I've written questions has a load or a slant. I just don't want to see the response to this questionnaire being referred to as part of our proceedings, any kind of official statement. I mean, you may want to say to the press that you've done a certain poll, and I should be quite entitled to do that as an individual, but I don't think officially or unofficially this questionnaire should be part of what we're doing.

MR. CHIVERS: I'm concerned about that too, because this kind of statistical data can really skew the process, it seems to me. If we're going to do one, I have no objections to doing a proper questionnaire. I think that might be a very useful exercise we should engage in. But if we do one, it should be an official part of the process so that the statistics that are compiled should be prepared professionally so that they can be useful to the committee, rather than each of us having our own little questionnaire which will be skewed in different directions. It would be impossible to compare and contrast.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, let's get on to the whole polling issue, then. What is being suggested here is that staff will request three companies to submit polling proposals. A survey of approximately 800 Albertans on 40 constitutional questions could be done for about \$20,000. The committee has budgeted \$40,000 for polling, which would allow for a follow-up poll, if desired. The poll could be conducted in early June, with the results available at the end of June, and the formal acceptance of one or the other of the proposals would have to come to the committee. Now, we've mentioned three polling organizations. Which ones do you have in mind?

MR. POCOCK: We were thinking of asking Marktrend Research, who have offices in Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver, Strategic research, which is a Calgary-based company affiliated with Environics, and the third is the Angus Reid group, based out of Winnipeg with an office in Calgary.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who was the first one?

MR. POCOCK: Marktrend marketing research.

2:12

MS BARRETT: I'm not always academically oriented, but I think we may want to include the Population Research Lab. They're noncommercial. They charge, but they're a noncommercial agency that's been in existence for many, many years in the world of polling, and I know ABS has used them before and a number of other organizations do.

Probably of greater importance is the content of the letter of invitation to bid, because what you need to ask, what you need to show in those 40 questions is, "We are looking for people's perspectives on . . ." and just use the most objective words to describe what it is that we're looking for people's perspectives on. Because if a company looking to bid on this thinks that a slant or bias in one direction or another is going to be helpful, then we're going to get into a debate about the wording of the polling itself, and that is not productive. I think what's important is that the committee be able to see the letter of invitation that goes out so that we judge the wording of that. After that, whatever company is chosen, leave it to them to write the questions. I've been involved with enough polling to know that you just debate word by word. It would take a long time to get 16 members to agree to the wording.

MR. CHIVERS: Garry - I'm sorry about jumping in.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's all right; go ahead.

MR. CHIVERS: Have any of the other committees used a poll that you're aware of?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, they all have.

MR. CHIVERS: Do we know what organizations they used?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We could find that out. Well, at least I shouldn't say they all have. I know from talking to the Ontario people that they certainly did. My understanding is that Belanger-Campeau did some polling as well. I'm not certain about Manitoba.

MR. CHUMIR: I'm a neophyte with respect of professional pollsters, but by what criteria does one usually judge the bids that come in? What are we looking for? Is it simply dollars?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think what we have to do is invite proposals. We can certainly add the group that Pam is suggesting. I myself don't know anything about polling organizations except by name. These have been suggested as being professional, competent polling organizations. I don't know how many more there are.

MS BARRETT: Millions.

MR. CHUMIR: I assume there must be organizations which are not affiliated with any political party as an official pollster, because my instincts would be that I would prefer to have a pollster that isn't a . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are any of these officially affiliated with any political party in Alberta?

MS CALAHASEN: A business is a business.

MR. CHUMIR: I'm thinking even less than Alberta. I mean, what about federally?

MS BARRETT: It's true. Political parties do tend to favour certain polling organizations, and Angus would be one. That's one of the reasons I asked to put down the Population Research Lab. They have to answer to everybody there. They have to love all parties equally.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, let's find out something about their official affiliations.

MS BARRETT: Not that an official or even unofficial affiliation need skew their polling questions or results or ability to handle. They've all got reputations to uphold, and they're not likely to jerk a leg, committee around. That's for sure. I'm not worried about it.

MS CALAHASEN: It's always based on what kind of references we give them. I mean, we're the ones who are deciding what the reference is in terms of what we want them to do. So it doesn't really matter whether or not they are affiliated to whatever party.

MS BARRETT: That's why I said it's important that we see the letter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, would we agree, then, that we'll try those four and see what they come up with, and we'll agree upon the letter of reference?

MS BARRETT: That would be good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are we agreed with that?

MS BARRETT: Yes, please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Then the next item we have is . . .



MR. CHIVERS: We don't need to deal with the timing of the polling at this point?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I don't think so. We wouldn't want to do it before the public hearings concluded, I don't think.

MR. CHIVERS: Right. That was the point I was going to make.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I mentioned the early part of June.

MS BARRETT: Yep.

MR. CHIVERS: I just wanted to be clear that you weren't suggesting it be before the hearings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Budget.

MS BARRETT: Didn't we approve the budget already?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. We approved budget estimates, which did not contain estimates, however, for the production and distribution of the final report. That was an oversight on the part of the chairman; I must accept that responsibility.

MR. CHIVERS: Either that or we won't distribute it.

MS BARRETT: Another secret document in the Legislature.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyway, I'm advised by officials that the budget should be revised to reflect the costs, which are estimated at \$50,000.

Garry, would you like to explain.

MR. POCOCK: Judith could probably best answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Everybody's passing the buck.

MS PARR: Well, the distribution could be quite expensive. That's really an estimate because until we know how many copies, the length of it, what sort of distribution is being contemplated, and whether or not the committee wants to do a small amount of advertising in order to promote it. That will cover the basics.

MRS. GAGNON: You're not thinking of a glossy hardcover or anything like that. Just basic.

MS PARR: Oh, no.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those of you who are familiar with the select committee report on Senate reform will know that we've gone to extra printings of that. They've gone out in the tens of thousands.

MS BARRETT: Well, this is what we're supposed to do, right? We're a public committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I need a motion to comply with that.

MS BARRETT: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. All those in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Anything else under Other that anyone would like to bring forward?

MR. CHIVERS: I had a matter I discussed briefly with Garry with respect to when the submissions would be available to us. What I was particularly concerned in getting as soon as possible is the written submissions that are filed and are going to be presented at the hearings. I gather there are over 500 altogether. The ones that I'm concerned about in particular are the ones that are going to be presented at the hearings. Now, I understand that there's going to be an executive summary, but I'd like to have access to them earlier, if that's possible, and I wanted to know whether that would be possible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I think it's fair to say that we'll get all those into your hands as soon as they are received. There's no doubt that we have to have them as long in advance of the actual presentation as possible, and so we will work very hard to make sure that we don't hold everything up and then just provide you with a whole bundle of material. It may be coming to you in dribs and drabs, but as received we will get them out to you.

MS BARRETT: Point of clarification.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MS BARRETT: What you're talking about are the briefs that will be sustained by oral presentation at the hearings. What we need then is just to get some big binders, and as they come in, we put them in. Right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Exactly.

MS BARRETT: Okay. It's a nit-picky item, but we are going to need tabs for the cities in which those are to be presented, because there's no other way to keep them organized.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We'll work that out administratively. The key point - and Barrie is right on. If you get a brief today about something that's going to come up two weeks from now, you might as well have it today rather than hold it up until you get the whole pile of briefs.

MS BARRETT: Exactly. I thought we'd agreed. I don't want a briefing book the day I hit the Edmonton hearings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, one of the things we have done - I don't know if this has gone out to everybody. You've all got some sample of the material that has been coming in. It's quite fascinating to flip through it. It's not definitive in any way, but I think it's representative of the cross section of opinions that we're now receiving.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. It's very useful to have that up front.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That just gives you an idea.

Anything else under Other? Date for our next meeting then.

MS BARRETT: I didn't bring my book. It's too scary a thought.

MRS. GAGNON: Next Friday is the start of the long weekend, and after that we're into the hearings, so we're going to have to meet another day but Friday maybe.

MS CALAHASEN: I think June 6 was identified the last time for a dinner meeting. Has that been canceled?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, that was after the hearings.

MS BARRETT: Is next Friday the start of the long weekend?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MS BARRETT: It can't be. A week today?

MR. CHAIRMAN: A week today is the start of the long weekend.

MR. CHUMIR: Does that mean we're not here on Friday morning?

MRS. GAGNON: Oh, we're here Friday morning, but I'm just saying it may not be convenient to meet Friday afternoon. I don't know.

MS BARRETT: We're going to be in Bills by next week so we can't . . .

2:22

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why don't we meet right after the session on Wednesday the 22nd; 5:45. We're going to have to. I think we can probably deal with it. It will be basically administrative in nature. I would think that by then, of course, we will know far better what's happening. We will give you a report by next Friday of the progress of the submissions so that you know how it's come along in the last week. Would that be sufficient time? By next Friday we'll know what's taking place in the ensuing week.

MS BARRETT: Yes, please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then we'll meet on the 22nd at 5:45. It will be an administrative meeting, so I won't lay on a meal or anything. Is that agreeable?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The committee adjourned at 2:23 p.m.]