

[Chairman: Mr. Kowalski]

[2 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We can reconvene this meeting. As I recall, on Wednesday, August 10, 1983, we had appearing before the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund the Hon. Allen Adair, Minister of Tourism and Small Business. At that time, Mr. Adair had with him two of his officials: Mr. McDonald, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Small Business, and Mr. Parker, managing director of the Alberta Opportunity Company.

The meeting that we held on August 10, 1983, adjourned at the agreed-upon hour, without full opportunity for all members to raise the number of questions they wanted to with Mr. Adair. We agreed at that time that Mr. Adair should return to meet with us. The date we finally zeroed in on was the afternoon of October 3.

I might also point out that at the August 10 meeting, a request was made that the annual report of the Alberta Opportunity Company be made available to members as soon as possible. Mr. Adair agreed to make that an undertaking. He circulated the report several weeks ago to all Members of the Legislative Assembly. I have additional copies here in the event that members may not have brought a copy with them this afternoon. If there is a need for additional copies, perhaps Mr. Hyland can assist us, and they can be circulated.

Mr. Adair, welcome again. Perhaps, sir, if you have opening comments that you might want to bring us up to date on with respect to items that may have developed since August 10, please proceed now. If not, we will go to additional questions from members.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to be back, on behalf of the members that I have with me. On my immediate left is Roy Parker, managing director of the Alberta Opportunity Company, and Al McDonald, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Small Business.

When we were last before you, we went through a number of questions that in fact were answered to some degree by any one of the three here. I think I should point out that in the interim, from August 10 until now, the only thing that I can respond to you, sir, is that there has been a firm proposal received by the receiver. I should again point out that it is in the hands of the receiver and, therefore, we are not in a position to comment much beyond whatever the receiver may want to comment, because he has accepted that proposal. It is my understanding that he will be presenting it to the courts, I believe this Friday, for judgment by the judge that he appears before.

A number of other things have taken place. Obviously there was some interest at that time in the interest shielding program, the amounts paid out to successful applicants for that program and the number of applications we received from both the farm and business sectors. Of course, one that has been of interest to me and was of interest at that time is the development of our involvement with the Olympic committee relative to the ski facility development in Kananaskis Country. That is progressing, Mr. Chairman.

I will leave that now for any questions you may have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Adair. When we last met, I had four members on the speaking list. My notes from that meeting indicate that Mr. Martin, Mr. Notley, Mr. Alexander, and Mr. Musgreave wanted to raise additional questions. Thus far today, both Mr. Notley and Mr. Musgreave indicated to me their intent to raise a question.

Mr. Martin, would you like to begin, or should we go to the second person?

MR. MARTIN: I'll wait.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That will then be Mr. Notley. Mr. Alexander, do you want to follow Mr. Notley?

MR. ALEXANDER: I'll wait.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, then we'll go in the order of Mr. Notley and Mr. Musgreave.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Adair. Without getting into the question that will soon be before the courts, I just want to cover a couple of things subsequent to our last meeting. Last August IPSCO indicated that they were not interested in purchasing Ram — at least that is my understanding of the press reports. My question to you, Mr. Adair, is: between August and the date on which IPSCO made an offer, was there any consultation or discussion between any officials of the Alberta government — AOC, your department, Mr. Planche's department, Executive Council, any member or official of the government of Alberta?

MR. ADAIR: What was the date period you were referring to?

MR. NOTLEY: Subsequent to our last meeting?

MR. ADAIR: Our last meeting was August 10. That's the period you're talking about?

MR. PARKER: Any discussions between, say, myself and IPSCO people?

MR. ADAIR: Or any other proponent.

MR. NOTLEY: Or any other officials of the Alberta government. I want to include the minister's department, any official of the department or the government of Alberta, because as we went through our questions that were submitted at the end of the spring session, we found that there were meetings at which Mr. Hobbs and various other people were present last fall. My question now is: subsequent to what appeared to be a position by IPSCO in August that they were not interested in making an offer — now we have an offer — was there any discussion between any officials of the government of Alberta?

MR. PARKER: Some of my colleagues and I have met on a number of occasions with representatives from IPSCO, from the receiver, and from the Canadian Commercial Bank, in the process of reaching the stage where we are now, where there is an offer that is going before the courts on Friday.

MR. ADAIR: I think it also should be pointed out that we've had a number of inquiries as to what in fact was necessary, and that should not be overlooked. I want to correct something that at least I sensed was being inferred; that after the last discussion, you suddenly found out there was a meeting. How did you word that particular issue? You mentioned Mr. Hobbs' name.

MR. NOTLEY: I'm just talking about last fall, the response to the question on the Order Paper, where there had been meetings involving a number of officials, including Mr. Hobbs.

MR. ADAIR: And that, in fact, was identified in the response to the questions that were answered here as well. I think it's important, though, for us to recognize that once we were involved as the department and also as the company working with the receiver, we were interested in anyone that may be interested — and that was the point we made at the last meeting we had — that might come forward with a proposal that would satisfy

the directions given to the receiver and, from our particular standpoint, the company's position with Ram Steel Company.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, perhaps as a supplementary, then, could the minister outline in a little more specific way what kind of consultation took place? Mr. Parker indicates there had been some discussion. Would that involve meetings with the board of IPSCO, for example, or the chairman of the board? To what extent were there meetings between August 10 and the announcement by IPSCO that they were going to make an offer?

MR. ADAIR: I might indicate, too, that I can't get into detail of any conversation that may have been held between a proposed group that may come forward. Any inquiries were made relative to what the process was, who in fact was the receiver, and how do they get in touch with him. Those kinds of things did take place. I had one telephone conversation with the president, Mr. Phillips, and indicated that he should be in touch with the Alberta Opportunity Company, and he was.

MR. NOTLEY: As part of that question, could I ask Mr. Parker to outline the types of meetings that AOC held?

MR. PARKER: It's largely a matter of working with all interested parties — the receiver, IPSCO, Canadian Commercial Bank, and ourselves — to arrive at a mutually agreeable offer that would satisfy the needs of all parties and be satisfactory to IPSCO. For clarification, one thing I might put forward is that it's my understanding that the question asked of the IPSCO official was, do they want to buy Ram Steel? They said, no. And they are not buying Ram Steel; they are buying the assets. This may be a fine line, but that was the reason for that as far as my understanding is concerned. They're not involved in purchasing the shares of the company; they're purchasing certain of its assets and will reactivate the plant if they're successful.

MR. NOTLEY: The final supplementary, to either Mr. Adair or Mr. Parker. Again, subsequent to the 10th we have to go on reports. I note a report of September 29 that talks about the AOC getting its principal back under separately agreed terms satisfactory to IPSCO. Now, trusting that this is not something which has to be dealt with by the courts, could either one of you gentlemen indicate what that means? Are we going to get our interest or what?

MR. ADAIR: I wonder if you might identify the comment "we have to go on reports". What report are you referring to?

MR. NOTLEY: I'm referring to a report in one of the newspapers in Alberta, a press report. With both of you gentlemen here, this is the time to sort of move beyond press reports and get facts.

MR. ADAIR: Would you repeat that, please?

MR. NOTLEY: The report is with respect to a separately agreed term involving the \$8 million, satisfactory to IPSCO. I found that rather puzzling. It could have been a misinterpretation by the reporter, or it may mean something that perhaps members of the committee would be interested in.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, first of all I would have to say that I assume that any information that was in the press resulted from a discussion that took place with that particular reporter and the receiver. Therefore, any position that may be judged as to

what one or the other said is somewhat difficult for us, not having been there.

As we said earlier, and as I said to start with, the difficulty I have in responding in detail is the fact that there is a firm offer that has been made through the receiver. The receiver has accepted that offer and will be presenting it in detail to the courts on Friday, October 7. Until that has been accepted or rejected, whichever the case may be, we're not in a position to talk about detail on it.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I want to get away from Ram. I want to talk about the Olympic development, if that's all right. I heard you on the radio some time back explaining to the Indians why you hadn't talked to them on their proposal. I just wonder if you could bring us up to date and tell us where you are. There are some concerns in the city that if things don't start fitting into place, we may be running into problems as far as being ready for the Olympics.

MR. ADAIR: I guess the best way I can respond to that question, Mr. Chairman, is that last Tuesday evening I met in Calgary with two of the three chiefs that were involved in the discussions that appeared in the Calgary press — Chief John Snow and Chief Bill Ear Sr. and some of their staff, along with Al McDonald and my executive assistant Joyce Ingram. We met with them in Calgary to go over what our position has been from day one relative to the development of the two separate projects, the Ribbon Creek alpine village project and the Mount Allan ski development project.

It should be pointed out that there was some confusion in the reports by the press that they were one and the same. They are not; they were two separate proposals. I identified for them where we were in the order of negotiations. Both projects were in position to be negotiating with a development proponent — one for parcel A of the alpine village, and one for the Mount Allan ski facility — and that if they were interested in participating in that, I would like to see the proposal that was referred to in the press. If they had that, if they would send it to me so I could respond in writing or, secondarily, if they were interested in either parcel A or Mount Allan that they would indicate by giving me a letter of commitment and the financial capacity necessary to ensure that they could develop it and then operate it. That's what we have asked all the proponents, whoever they may be. That's not any different from any other particular private-sector proponent.

One of the questions I also asked was why, at this particular stage, we hadn't had a response from the chiefs to any of the five or seven advertisements, dating back to February 7, 1981. They indicated, quite rightfully I think, that they were busy doing other things as recently as spring of this year, when they were working on the Constitution and their rights within that Constitution, and therefore didn't submit bids.

The difficulty we had was that we were in the process of having given commitments to someone in the private sector to enter into negotiations, and we were in those negotiations. Therefore if they should cease for any reason, I would like to have their letter of intent that they were interested so we could then contact them at that particular stage. That's exactly what I have said in the past to any other private-sector developer that there may be.

MR. MUSGREAVE: A supplementary, Mr. Chairman. One figure I've heard the Indians mention specifically is that they have \$34 million available. I was concerned. Are they talking roughly within the ballpark of what the projects might need in the way of investment money?

MR. ADAIR: It's a little difficult for me to answer that, because I'm not sure what the private sector may propose as the final figures. But as I understand what I read in the newspapers relative to their proposal, the \$34 million, as they had suggested, was for them to build parcel A, B, and C at the alpine village — in other words, the entire three

units of the village — plus the recreation ski hill and the day-use facilities. The figures that have been used in the past were some that came from the original proposals for the development of Mount Allan by the private sector. That was anywhere from \$15 million to \$20 million. I haven't got a ballpark figure on the village at this point, but I would say that's probably fairly close if you took all the pieces and put them together.

MR. MUSGREAVE: My last question, Mr. Chairman. Would the federal government department concerning native affairs be involved in the administration or development with them, or is this separate?

MR. ADAIR: Not to my knowledge. I don't know. I haven't seen their proposal; I've asked for it. I've been quoted as having refused to see it, but I haven't received it so I have some difficulty responding to it.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to tie up some loose ends in dealing with Ram Steel. As Mr. Parker said, there were meetings that his department held with IPSCO. Could Mr. Parker tell us approximately how many meetings were held in that period of time?

MR. PARKER: From August 10 on? At least half a dozen, maybe more. All the same people weren't meeting all the time. I was involved in some; some of my colleagues were in others. I just don't have that figure, but certainly more than half a dozen.

MR. MARTIN: My supplementary question to the minister. I recognize that this will be in court, but I think the figures are clear about what we're going to get: \$17.7 million, subject to Court of Queen's Bench approval. I think we can recognize that the two secured creditors will get most of that. Certainly AOC is one of them, and the Canadian Commercial Bank.

I understand the workers are still owed about \$83,000. I wonder if the minister is taking any measures or looking into what he can do to see if the workers would in fact get the pay that is owed them.

MR. ADAIR: I think I read the same news article you're referring to, and the only response I can give to that particular one is that my assumption all along has been that those were part of what are considered to be the liabilities and unsecured creditors, and that the receiver in fact has recognized those particular costs and, to some degree — again, only quoting from the paper. It says in one of the articles that some of that has already been paid, but it's listed as an unsecured sum. So I can't respond beyond that at this particular point except to say that we're always extremely concerned relative to any back wages, if that in fact is back wages or moneys owed through employers to employees for whatever it is they may be doing.

MR. MARTIN: Just as a point of clarification, it's my understanding that you're correct; \$53,000 was paid in regular pay. But I believe there's some \$50,000 in vacation pay and \$33,000 in employment expenses still due. That's the \$83,000.

Let me move on to the other players: the other unsecured creditors, the small investors. I expect a number of them are small business people in the central Alberta area. Is the minister seeking ways to reinsure their investments? I think he would be concerned here. A lot of people bought into this partly because of AOC, because with the government being involved they saw it was probably a good deal. Is there any thought about how you would deal with them? From what Interprovincial Steel & Pipe Corporation — it's clear that there isn't enough money to deal with all these people.

MR. ADAIR: I think it should be pointed out just for clarification that the shareholders,

whoever they are, were involved before AOC's involvement and were the ones that approached AOC as a result of the difficulties they were encountering at that particular time. I think that should be said, because there was an inference that they became involved after the government's involvement with the project. They were in fact the company, and had proceeded in that particular course.

We are concerned for their well-being as well. Obviously, two things are involved in their participation in the project: their original initiative in putting the company together and getting it operating in the central Alberta area, which in fact did meet the basic suggestions we have made about diversification and the movement of manufacturing into areas other than just the metropolitan areas.

To respond directly: yes, we're concerned about their involvement and have been in discussions with them, both individually and through their lawyer.

MR. ALEXANDER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister or the director. At the previous meeting, in which I objected to the process of examining in detail the decision-making process of the company and details of its meetings — with whom, and so on — the group agreed that that was in fact a proper line of questioning under the terms of this committee. One of the comments made at the time was that

the process that we [may] amend, enhance, or degrade at this point certainly gives terms of reference to Mr. Parker and his group. That's our responsibility as a committee.

I wonder if either you, Mr. Minister, or Mr. Parker could indicate whether from the Ram Steel experience and our examination of your decision-making processes, there is any sense in which you may have amended your procedures or any way in which you will proceed differently in the future to examine the kinds of loans such as this one.

MR. ADAIR: I might start, and Mr. Parker might want to add to that: no particular major change in direction. I think one of the changes that did occur, and one of the things that I think we must be consistent with, is that as times change we should be flexible enough to adjust with them, keeping in mind we're a lender of last resort. Having said that, we did indicate, either at the last meeting or the one prior to that, that we had looked at adjusting — if that's the right term, Mr. Chairman — the role of AOC in looking at refinancing, because we were getting quite a number of requests from small business people who were in some difficulties for some reason or another. We as a government directed AOC to look at refinancing, keeping in mind, one, that it was not to be a bailout and, two, that there was to be some financial capacity to be able to repay that; and then, of course, also keeping probably the right perspective, the area of competition. We highlighted that, because if we were going to get into that, it did serve a major purpose to make sure that the company recognized its position relative to competition.

MR. ALEXANDER: A supplementary to that would be: specifically in the event that a former political figure or someone connected somehow or other with the political process were to approach AOC looking for a loan which would meet the parameters you have described, is there any sense in which, having gone through the investigations we had in the spring session and in this committee, you would reject such a proposal because of the connection, let's say?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, my first reaction is as a normal person in the business field in the province of Alberta. Any person has the right to make an application to the Alberta Opportunity Company, having first been turned down by the private-sector lending institutions that are in place. The applications are then judged on their ability to perform, repay, and keeping in mind the lender of last resort comment.

Mr. Parker, if you have anything else to add to that, I'd certainly appreciate it.

MR. PARKER: No. That's our position, that everyone in the province, regardless of his background, is eligible for consideration, and we will continue to do that.

MR. ALEXANDER: Good. My final question, Mr. Chairman, has to do with the 1983 annual report and the managing director's report within the report — and thank you for getting it for this meeting. The comment is made in paragraph four:

Unless changes are made in A.O.C. funding we may expect to face increased annual losses and a growing deficit.

I'm not sure whether there's an implied suggestion there or what kinds of changes might be contemplated in AOC funding. Are such changes contemplated to avoid increased annual losses and a growing deficit, or does this imply that annual losses and a growing deficit will continue to be the result as an outcome of the lending policies now in place?

MR. PARKER: As you can see from within the tabulation — I'm trying to find the right page — last year the cost of our money was 93 per cent of our income. This has grown continually over the years, due to the fact that at one point we did have an equity base and it has since been removed, although we do have a grant from the department of \$4.95 million per year. However, as the level of outstanding debt grows and the proportion without the benefit of equity or assistance of some sort also grows, then the squeeze comes on and our operating expenses will continue to exceed by a larger ratio the net income, the difference between income and cost of money. There have been some discussions in recent months to look at a way to take care of this problem and, hopefully, they will be dealt with and concluded in the very near future, if not already.

Maybe the minister could comment.

MR. ADAIR: My only comment, just to add to what Mr. Parker said, is that we've had a series of ongoing meetings, particularly with Treasury, relative to the position that the Alberta Opportunity Company finds itself in when it's buying money at a high rate and lending money at a low rate. Not too many businesses have succeeded at any point in time doing that. I am sure you will agree with me on that. So we highlighted that as a difficulty that we are experiencing, albeit we hope it's in the short term; it may not be. Therefore we have had some major ongoing discussions with them.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I would like to get involved with this AOC annual report. It appears to me that some members complain from time to time about the diversity of the economy of the province and suggest that the government make more high-risk loans; yet when that happens, we get complaints about various activities in lending that money.

As a lender of last resort, as you've already indicated, I'm just wondering how we can try to better diversify the economy of the province by encouraging entrepreneurs that have some high-risk thoughts, or otherwise, so they can get off the ground to get their companies started. In the case of Ram Steel, how would they be able to create jobs without sufficient government support to encourage that employment?

MR. ADAIR: I guess I should respond to two things out of your comments. In the life of the Alberta Opportunity Company, going back to its inception, one of the key principles in mind was to provide a lending facility that was a lender of last resort, not in competition with the private-sector lending institutions that were out there, that would afford the opportunity to the small business man in small town Alberta, primarily, to be able to utilize the services of the company. We think the company has in fact met that. Certainly if you look at the cumulative totals to March 31, 1983, where roughly 3,000 loans have been made for some \$326 million, that's one thing. The distribution of those dollars to the various regions in the province is probably more significant. In other

words, 28 per cent of that has occurred in northern Alberta, where \$91 million, in round figures, has been lent to the private sector; 27 per cent, or roughly \$86 million, in central Alberta; and 24 per cent, or \$79 million, in southern Alberta.

We have, on almost every occasion that we have been before this committee, had some difficulty explaining to urban members why the 10 per cent in Edmonton or the 11 per cent in Calgary was somewhat lower than the amounts provided in other areas. We have answered that, and I continue answer that, by saying that the principal role of the company is to provide services where other lending institutions aren't filling that gap. We felt at the time that the metropolitan centres of Edmonton and Calgary were well served by private-sector lenders. We weren't excluding them. But there was a factor in the base rate as it is struck, with it being as low as 2 per cent below the base rate to small towns and small businesses in Alberta and as high as 3 per cent above that to the metropolitan centres of Edmonton and Calgary. In the past, that historically has been very close to the conventional lending rates that were in fact provided by the private sector.

I guess the only other area that I could comment on is the distribution of that to new businesses or to businesses that were expanding or, in essence, the change of ownership of a business. They have primarily been the three areas of direction.

MR. NELSON: Following along the lines of the Alberta Opportunity Company — and of course Calgary and Edmonton do not have a great amount of moneys being loaned in those two areas. I am just wondering aloud here, I guess, and possibly you could assist us. Where the AOC does not participate, either purposely or otherwise, in those communities where you have many small businesses that in many cases need help — because the larger lending institutions treat many of the small businesses like a piece of garbage in many cases, as far as what I've been seeing of late. I am just wondering if there is some manner in which the government can — and I think I've thrown this to you once before — offer another program to those areas and possibly include, in a less significant way in the rural areas, an opportunity for a development bond for small business, where the government would support an interest rate to allow growth of small businesses in those areas, similar to that which was offered by the federal government at one time, which has now been depressed, where a small business either starting or growing could get a reduced rate.

MR. ADAIR: I guess in the broad sense, we're interested in looking at any opportunities or programs that may be able to provide a service to the small business community. I was just asking Mr. McDonald whether the small business development bond concept was still in effect, because for some reason I thought it had been extended by the federal government. It is still there, but they have narrowed down the use of the money. That's the point I was just getting to.

At one point it was almost an open opportunity for someone in the small business sector to utilize that instrument, if I could. In the recent change where they extended it, they narrowed it down to primarily research; not only that, I believe it was to a business that was in trouble. There was a word they used that we were having some difficulty with.

I guess the principal point is that albeit the numbers and the amounts of loans made out to and through the Alberta Opportunity Company to the two metropolitan centres are small — roughly a total of \$68,700,000 — they are made in fact on the basis of applications from the private sector to and through the Alberta Opportunity Company, after having proceeded through the normal lending institutions. I can recall one in Calgary, Westmills Carpets manufacturers, that received one. There are others, obviously, with the amount of dollars involved there. But from the Department of Tourism and Small Business' point of view, our concern is that if there is some vehicle out there or some other suggestions that you or anyone in the private sector may have



that we should be looking at — because we have been and will be looking at the development bond concept from the standpoint of Alberta's needs. We're looking at possibly considering something like what is occurring in Ontario, where they have small business development corporations, and the success of that, whether it may be applicable to the Alberta scene or the likes of that. We are looking at those right now.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Minister, through the Chair. You would feel reasonably good, I guess, about a concept of a development bond, or something similar to that aspect, to encourage more development of small business, either by growth or new business, so that we can encourage job creation within the province.

MR. ADAIR: Without question, Mr. Chairman. I think it should be important also to state that anything that we can do to better the ratio of heavy debt reliance that the small business sector has had to rely on in years gone by and the lack of equity capital, which in essence would be assisting the small business sector, would certainly be ones we would be very pleased to work with. That's in essence where we're trying to go right now. We have had quite a number of discussions with many people in the private sector as well as interdepartmentally within government to see what might be done in that area.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, just a couple of questions for clarification. Mr. Adair, you indicated you had had one meeting by phone, or called the president of IPSCO. Mr. Parker indicated that there were at least six, possibly more, meetings with IPSCO officials between August 10 and the present. First of all to Mr. Parker, were there any meetings prior to August 10 between IPSCO and the Alberta Opportunity Company?

MR. PARKER: Before I go onto that, the six-plus meetings I referred to related to meetings with IPSCO, with the Canadian Commercial Bank, with the receiver, and not all of them were present at all times. Sometimes IPSCO would be there, sometimes it wouldn't. So I don't think I can say we met with IPSCO officials on six or more separate occasions.

With regard to prior to August 10, there were meetings and telephone discussions. I think it was the end of June or early July when I first met with the IPSCO people. There were several discussions after that, which led to the meetings which took place in August. I can't give you a number or timing, because I don't recollect either.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, I think there were a number of meetings that occurred with any number of people who may have been suggested to us either by the shareholders of Ram, as they currently are, or by people who had expressed an interest to or through a receiver as to what in fact our position was relative to the loan that had been publicized, so that when they were putting together their position — if it were a position to make an application to purchase — they in fact had the best information available to them at the time. So any number of phone calls or meetings have occurred. I should correct if I left the impression it was phone call. I had one of each. I had a meeting with Mr. Phillips after a phone call discussion with him about an expression of possible interest.

MR. NOTLEY: Could you tell us, Mr. Adair, whether to your knowledge any other minister or senior person in the government — deputy minister or person of that standing — would have held any meetings with IPSCO from July 1 to the present time?

MR. ADAIR: I would ask my deputy to respond on his behalf, because I know he did have some discussions with them. Keeping in mind that all of our discussions were in essence doing what we as a department could do to protect our interest in the loan to Ram Steel — our interest being the Alberta Opportunity Company's interest and that of the Department of Tourism and Small Business on behalf of the government — we were not

letting any stone be unturned to try to find someone who may express an interest.

MR. McDONALD: Mr. Chairman, I did have a number of phone calls and meetings with officials of IPSCO.

MR. NOTLEY: Just a final question, Mr. Chairman. Could you give us some indication of when the meetings with IPSCO began? Would that have been prior to or subsequent to the adjournment of the spring session?

MR. McDONALD: I would think, Mr. Chairman, subsequent to the spring session and before August to a great extent. I have had very little to do with them since August 1.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That concludes my list of members who've indicated their intention to raise a question with Mr. Adair or one of his officials. Are there further questions forthcoming from members of the committee? There being none, Mr. Adair, Mr. Parker, and Mr. McDonald, thank you very much for returning to meet with us again. Thank you as well for having the annual report of the Alberta Opportunity Company provided a little earlier in the month of September.

Members of the committee, we'll now adjourn until tomorrow morning at ten o'clock.

[The meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.]