

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act

2:32 p.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Ady]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the meeting to order. I appreciate the attendance of the members of the committee. This meeting has been called as an organizational meeting. We hold it annually.

I'd like to begin by welcoming and acknowledging the new members of our committee. The Member for Edmonton-Calder, the Member for Bow Valley, and the Member for Stony Plain are new members on the committee this year. I appreciate having them in attendance.

For the benefit of the new members, I would remind you that members of the committee are required to vote. You cannot abstain. However, you may leave the Assembly prior to the vote if you choose. For your information, you have each received a binder which outlines the scheduling of the ministers that will appear before the committee. One new minister that will appear this year is the minister responsible for Seniors, the Hon. Roy Brassard, and he'll be the last minister to appear, on October 30.

In reviewing *Hansard* from last year, there was discussion about the preamble from the ministers and the preamble from the members. I know that the Chair committed to endeavour to reduce both of those, and hopefully I met that objective and will continue to either do as well or do better this year in order to allow you time to ask the questions you've prepared and see that the time is not taken up with unnecessary time from the minister or other members.

Last week there were some investigative visits on the part of the committee. I regret I was not able to attend. A subcommittee visited the Prince Rupert grain terminal, and the committee visited the Lloydminster upgrader. Hopefully next week we'll be able to table some reports from those who visited those facilities.

Yes, hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: I don't know when it would be proper to do it, Mr. Chairman, but on the trip to Prince Rupert none of the financial officers of Alberta Terminals were present. Are we going to make sure that somebody will be able to answer for them? They are in the process of trying to renegotiate debentures with the heritage trust fund, yet there was no one out there that knew anything about it. I think we should have somebody appearing before us somewhere that can speak to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then they could come in conjunction with a minister, perhaps with the Treasurer. If the Treasurer can't handle it, he should have somebody.

MR. TAYLOR: Maybe if you would inform -- well, I suppose it's on the record -- the minister responsible that we gained no information. There was no one there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: From a financial perspective.

MR. TAYLOR: From a financial corner. We will want to ask some pretty in-depth questions, or at least I will, and I think some of the other members will too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

One of the things that we agreed to in past sessions of the committee had to do with the manner in which the questions would be asked of the ministers. In previous years each member was

allowed one question and two supplementaries, and then his name would go to the bottom of the list, and if there was time, he would be permitted to ask another question.

The Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: It's worked out well in the past and in other committees, and it's an excellent way to give everybody equal exposure to asking questions, so I therefore move it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Is there any discussion on the motion?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question's been called. All those in favour? Any opposed? Carried unanimously.

The next thing has to do with the recommendations. Again, in reviewing last year's *Hansard* on this issue, the process we approved was that the recommendations for all the portfolios would be in by the date the last minister submitted his except for that last minister, and then we allowed additional time. The legislative clerk has a suggested format for the committee to consider that I've taken the liberty of having her prepare, and hopefully it will meet your approval. If not, we'll discuss it and try to arrive at something acceptable. I'll just give her a moment to pass those out and let you look at them.

Now everyone has a copy. Let's just go through them. This would indicate that we would entertain amendments to the recommendations on Tuesday, November 24, in the morning. At the pleasure of the committee we would then either proceed with debating the recommendations, if there's time left in that session, or we would adjourn that session and begin debating them in the afternoon at 2 o'clock on that date. Wednesday, November 25, would be a date for debating the recommendations, again on Thursday, and then on Tuesday, December 1, we would vote.

Now, just let me back up a little. All recommendations for other ministers prior to the minister responsible for Seniors appearing would be on the date that he appears before the committee, but for his portfolio you could submit recommendations, say, until November 3, if that's acceptable to the committee. Then we would read those into the record, of course, because they must be recorded in *Hansard* the next time we meet after November 3. Is everyone clear on the intent of this schedule?

The hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey.

MR. JONSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman. If you would, perhaps to help myself and members of the committee, just review that for a moment. We have our hearings, our interviews with the ministers, and I understand there is always somebody that has to be last, which in this case is the minister responsible for seniors' programs. Would you review that sequence of events in terms of when amendments have to be in?

The reason I asked the question is that for the ministers we have making presentations I think we sort of look at them as a group, and then after they're through, we have a deadline for making recommendations. Then there's always somebody at the end of the process, in this case the Hon. Roy Brassard, and there's a further extension for him. So I wonder if you'd just review those dates for us. I would like to make a motion in support of what you're suggesting, but I think that should be clarified.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that's a fair comment, because the Chair realizes there is an error in this proposal. With your indulgence, give me a moment.

2:42

There's another item that needs to be explained to the committee about our scheduling. On October 21 there was not a very large number of members who could attend. That was the attempt we were making to hold an investigative visit in Calgary, and the meeting was to be in conjunction the following day at McDougall Centre. So in view of the fact that we were not able to get members on the 21st, we canceled the calendar.

MR. PAYNE: You're doing fine; you're right on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, that's correct. All right. The meetings for October 22 were canceled, and we had to reschedule those members to come in on November 6. That's why you'll find on this sheet the Hon. Ralph Klein and the Hon. Fred Stewart being rescheduled to November 6. Consequently, we can accept recommendations from those two to November 10.

MR. MITCHELL: So we're not going to Calgary on the 21st.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. We're going to go to Calgary for an investigative visit on the 22nd. Okay? We did want to schedule that meeting, and they had gone to a lot of preparation for us to do it. There was a lot of interest from committee members to attend that. The Member for Bow Valley.

MR. MUSGROVE: So the meeting on the 22nd is on. Is that what you're saying?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The meeting on the 22nd will be an investigative visit in Calgary. The 21st is canceled.

MR. TAYLOR: October 22?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. It's not there; it's not printed. You have to write it in. If you turn behind tab 1, the second page, scheduled investigative visits, it's listed there. Okay? All the committee members have it?

MS MJOLSNES: Just a question, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MS MJOLSNES: I'm just wondering. Will November 6 be held in Calgary?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No; it will be held here.

MS MJOLSNES: It will be held here. Okay, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee clear now? The Chair apologizes.

The Member for Ponoka-Rimbey.

MR. JONSON: Perhaps, hon. chairman, just to clarify, first of all tell us the date that we end the hearings with the ministers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With those two ministers that we moved?

MR. JONSON: No. Up until the last two.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. They start October 6. They're the first page after tab 1. Okay?

MR. JONSON: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All of those are as printed, without correction.

MR. JONSON: You're suggesting, Mr. Chairman, that the recommendations with respect to those particular sections of the heritage savings trust fund should be in at what date?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm suggesting that all of them through to the Hon. Roy Brassard would be in by November 6. Those that appear before the committee on November 6 would submit theirs by the 10th.

MR. JONSON: All right. Then as long as we've got it clear, Mr. Chairman, I would like to so move

that recommendations with respect to the responsibilities under the heritage savings trust fund for those ministers appearing before November 6 be submitted by November 6 and those appearing on November 6 be submitted by November 10.

Always trying to co-operate, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Okay; any discussion on the motion?

MR. MOORE: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question's been called. All in favour? Thank you. Any opposed? Voting was unanimous.

There are a couple of other points we perhaps should cover that have been accepted previously.

Yes, Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: I have a question that I'd like to raise at some point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Fine. Okay.

No joint sponsors of recommendations. One member cannot amend another member's recommendation; only the mover can amend a recommendation. I believe that covers the things that may be outstanding as far as handling the recommendations coming before the committee.

Hon. member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, you had a question or a point?

MR. MITCHELL: I was going to ask whether we are going to have the annual report of the heritage savings trust fund for tomorrow. [interjection] Oh, we have it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes; it was delivered Friday.

MRS. DACYSHYN: It was delivered to your office on Friday at 10:30.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any other questions or comments? The Member for Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: If there's nothing else, Mr. Chairman, I move that we adjourn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. All in favour? Thank you. The meeting stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The committee adjourned at 2:49 p.m.]