

[Chairman: Mr. Stewart]

[12:13 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We'll call the meeting to order. You have an agenda before you, and item 2 is the approval of May 4 minutes of meeting. Those have been distributed to each of you, and if you've had an opportunity to review them, I will ask for a motion.

MR. ADY: I've read them, so I'll make a motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Ady that the minutes be adopted as circulated.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed.

A major item for discussion today is the conference attendance, and we've circulated expenditure estimates that Louise has been good enough to compile for us. As you know, our overall budget in respect to travel to conferences is, I believe, \$11,700. The figures that are shown here, on the basis of one individual attendee at these particular rates, come to \$8,230. So we have some scope there. There may be other scope as well through the opportunity to utilize some further discount in rates, bonus points, and that sort of thing.

We've also received an indication from you that four have indicated a preference to go to Florida, two to Canberra, and none to Halifax, although I know Derek Fox would like to go but has the difficulty of staying over that particular weekend because of commitments here. Indeed, he advised me yesterday that it may be that his other duties may prevent him from going in any event. Then Mr. Mitchell has indicated that he is not available to attend any of the conferences. So we have no person designating either Halifax or Montreal on that basis.

With that opening business I would throw it open to the committee to determine, now that you've got this information, how you feel we should go about this.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to make one comment, and I think my colleague John Drobot could back this up. If anybody could get to the Halifax conference, I would certainly advise them to go. Wouldn't you, John?

MR. DROBOT: Yes.

DR. BUCK: First of all, getting to see the maritimes, if you've never been there, is part of being a Canadian, and they just treat you so superbly down there. So if any of the people have not been to the maritimes and think they can juggle their time, I would certainly strongly advise that they do go to that. We were down three or four years ago, John? They treated us very, very well.

At the same time that I'm flapping my mouth, Mr. Chairman, I'm one of the ones — and I've spoken to Mr. Drobot — who would like to go to Canberra. Looking at the budgeting — you know what my feeling is about members from both sides of the House representing us at these conferences. John and I have spoken about it, and we'd both like to go. We think that the budget would really permit us both to go if we so desire. If we really run into a sticky wicket, I do have a small travel allowance in our budget which we could apply to that. But looking at the figures now, Mr. Chairman, I really think that just about anybody will be able to go to just about any conference they

want to, two a side.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask Louise: with regard to Halifax, if someone took their spouse and the hotel for six days at \$125, that might be a \$5 difference a day for a double, I take it. I mean, it wouldn't be meaningful.

MRS. EMPSON: That's right. And the \$125 is actually the maximum, so it could even be a little cheaper.

MR. GOGO: And the meals are a personal matter anyway, eh?

MRS. EMPSON: Right.

MR. GOGO: So if people want to take their spouse, they're probably only looking at the major item being airfare, right?

MRS. EMPSON: That's right.

MR. GOGO: Because you could stay together and so on. I might rethink that. I'm at a thing in Manitoba on July 1, 2, and 3, so I suppose I could go from Winnipeg on to Halifax. That wouldn't be a problem. I'm just basing that on what Walter is saying.

MR. ADY: You'd better take a look at the Saturday night requirement to see if you can make it work, John, to get the seat sale thing. Does that work for you?

MR. GOGO: Well, July 1 is the long weekend: July 1, 2, and 3.

DR. BUCK: July 1 is a Friday.

MRS. EMPSON: That's right. July 1 is the Friday.

MR. GOGO: Second. So I'd have to stay over the next Saturday, obviously.

MR. ADY: Yeah. That's what I was pointing out to you.

MRS. EMPSON: But if Mr. Gogo ties it into the Winnipeg air fare, it doesn't matter if he leaves — as long as he leaves on a Saturday. As long as on that excursion trip he stays overnight somewhere on a Saturday.

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll just have my say. I would suggest that John Drobot and Walt Buck go to Canberra if that's financially possible. I don't see why it's not, looking at the figures. As a matter of fact, that would put us, if we doubled that, at the \$11,000, wouldn't it? What is two times \$3,648? That's for one person, so if we did it twice, what is that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's \$7,300.

MR. GOGO: That would put us at our \$11,000 somewhere, wouldn't it, in rough terms?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. That's assuming that only one person went to the others, though.

MR. ADY: Yeah. That puts everybody else out to put in it yet, to double up on the others.

MR. GOGO: Oh, I see.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've got two that would like to go . . .

MR. GOGO: Well, could I have that list again? There's Orlando — just read it out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Orlando, Canberra, Halifax.

MR. GOGO: No, not that. Was it two members who wanted Orlando or three or what?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. GOGO: Just the numbers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Four, including yourself.

MR. GOGO: Okay. Canberra is two.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. And others did not . . .

MR. GOGO: Montreal for Clegg — he didn't want that, eh?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

MRS. EMPSON: No.

MR. GOGO: Okay.

MRS. EMPSON: See, if no one goes to Montreal, then there's that cost of that trip that can be thrown back into the . . .

MR. GOGO: Yes.

MR. ADY: Nobody wants to go to Montreal?

MRS. EMPSON: No, not yet. I haven't had an indication from anyone, and I don't think Mr. Stewart has either.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So there is that possibility.

MR. GOGO: So just looking — if there are four for Orlando, that's four \$1,400s, right?

MRS. EMPSON: No, three. If you go to Halifax, then it knocks it down to three members going to Orlando.

MR. GOGO: Times three is \$4,200. And \$7,200 if there's two at Canberra. That's our quota. That's it right there, right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, that's it.

MR. GOGO: And if we took one out of there and put one into Halifax, it's still roughly within \$500, isn't it?

MRS. EMPSON: Right. And these are maximum cost, I would say, because there are meals, as you know, that are often supplied at conventions or at conferences that are part of the package. Again, when you're traveling, you're traveling over a whole day. You'll be eating on the airline, so then, of course, the member cannot claim for meals that are supplied to him by the airline.

DR. BUCK: As a matter of fact, about all you pay for is your breakfast. Just about every other meal at those conferences is provided. Louise has overestimated in that she's put in generous amounts for meals.

MRS. EMPSON: That's right. There's room in there.

MR. ADY: Also, for cabs and stuff it shouldn't cost that much. However, we don't have anything for mileage.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you suggesting then, Mr. Gogo, the possibility of sending three representatives to Orlando?

MR. GOGO: Yes. Sorry; John Drobot was . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry, John.

MR. DROBOT: I will withdraw from Canberra. I think perhaps it'll give others a much better chance of going with regard to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You wish to which? I'm sorry.

MR. DROBOT: I will withdraw from the Canberra trip.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, don't do that.

MR. DROBOT: I think it's a much better opportunity . . .

DR. BUCK: No, John.

MR. ADY: I think we can make it work.

DR. BUCK: Well, certainly. And as I say, if we come to a numbers crunch, I have \$1,000 in my travel budget that I can use. So that gives us \$1,000 leeway.

I just feel so strongly about two members going to every conference, and I can't make that more emphatically. I would feel very, very badly if I were the only person going to Canberra, because I would like the Drobots to go. That one is not much of a freebie, because it's going to cost you about five grand out of your own pocket to pay for your wife's airfare and all those things.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

DR. BUCK: The airfare is what basically they're picking up, so you're looking at about \$5,000 maximum as what the committee is paying. Isn't that right, Louise?

MRS. EMPSON: Oh, yes.

DR. BUCK: Using \$2,500 for airfare and miscellaneous expenses.

MRS. EMPSON: It's a very interesting conference as well, from the members' point of view.

DR. BUCK: I don't see why there should be a problem, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I don't think that John should withdraw from it either.

DR. BUCK: No, certainly not.

MR. ADY: If John still wants to do it, then I think he should stay on it.

DR. BUCK: Certainly.

MR. ADY: If he's having second thoughts for other reasons, then that's up to him, but he shouldn't withdraw just to make it easier for everybody else. So in view of that, where are you at, John?

DR. BUCK: I've got his ticket bought.

MR. DROBOT: I've been to a conference at Halifax.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, just one final comment in terms of cost. I see that Florida is cheaper than Halifax.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I was surprised by that too.

MR. GOGO: It's always cheaper to see someone else's country.

DR. BUCK: I'm sure, Mr. Gogo and Mr. Chairman, that if they book those tickets for Halifax about now, you're going to get — what have we budgeted, Louise?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Five seventy-nine.

DR. BUCK: Sure, you'll get there for around that, and then everything is pretty well founded.

MR. ADY: I told Louise that I can get to Orlando for \$376 return.

MR. GOGO: How often does the Greyhound run?

MRS. EMPSON: The airfare to Halifax is a seat sale, so I don't think we can get it much cheaper. Maybe when it's decided who all is going, then we can do it as quickly as possible to take advantage of that seat sale.

MR. GOGO: Although I think I'd opt for Florida and the ethics [conference].

But could we do two for Canberra and four for Orlando? According to this we can.

MRS. EMPSON: Yes, because it's more expensive to go to Halifax.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We could if that's the wish of the committee. It leaves two conferences not attended and four going to one.

MR. GOGO: In fairness, Mr. Chairman, the Public Accounts Committee will have two attend the Conference of Legislative Auditors together with the public accounts [conference], because they're not allowed into the session with the auditors. So looking back, Walter, we were all at the public accounts conference, not at the auditors, because we weren't allowed in.

DR. BUCK: Right.

MRS. EMPSON: That's right.

MR. GOGO: I don't view that as important as, say, the auditing foundation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Do you want to make that a motion then?

MR. GOGO: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would make a motion that two members attend Canberra and four members attend the ethics laws conference in Orlando. I think that's just about exactly on budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just to double check, we'll canvass Mr. Clegg and Dr. Elliott again just to make sure that they are both willing to attend that conference in Orlando.

MR. ADY: I talked to Clegg as recently as last night, and that's what he wanted to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does that settle anything further with respect to the conference attendance? All right; that item is completed.

Any other business to come forward?

MR. GOGO: I was curious, Mr. Chairman, about the request by Mr. Trawick for more funding for the Code inquiry. He made reference to a need for further funds. What's the process? Would he be writing the committee requesting that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I presume he will follow the same course that he did previously, that he would regard that as a special warrant type of request.

MR. GOGO: So then the process would be, if it's similar to last time, that he would write this committee and this committee then, through the chairman, would write a supporting letter for a special warrant to be issued. Is that right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. GOGO: As I recall, the Premier is committed to whatever funds are needed, so there's probably not a problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other business? If not, date of the next meeting. I think we'll leave that at the call of the Chair for the time being. I think the idea was, from the last meeting, that we would perhaps meet with one of our officers, maybe at his location, and have a more in-depth type of session with that officer on the same basis that we did with the Ombudsman. So we will see if we can arrange something along that line and leave it that the next meeting will be at the call of the Chair.

MR. GOGO: As a suggestion, Mr. Chairman, I think that statutorily enumerations must occur this fall. It would be my view that it might be very important for us to meet with the Chief Electoral Officer in July or June to see if he has any specific concerns regarding enumeration that should be dealt with by the committee prior to it taking place.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good suggestion.

Okay, may we have a motion for adjournment?

DR. BUCK: I so move.

[The committee adjourned at 12:30 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Dr. Buck.