

[Chairman: Mr. Pashak]

[10 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I call the meeting of the committee to order.

You were provided with a copy of the minutes of the meeting of July 16. My recommendation would be that we deal with that item of business at least. Is there a motion to approve the minutes as distributed? So moved. Is there any discussion of the minutes themselves? No discussion.

MR. NELSON: It's 10 o'clock. The doors should be requested to be closed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have a motion to approve the minutes as circulated. Is there any discussion on the motion? Those in favour of the motion to accept the minutes?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. R. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, at the last meeting there were certain motions approved, and one of them was changing the day from Wednesday to Tuesday. Since that motion was approved, I've had the opportunity to talk to the members of the Official Opposition on this. It inconveniences them considerably because that's their caucus day. We want to make sure that everybody has a chance to play their role in the various areas. We don't want this committee interfering with the proper carrying out of people's responsibilities. They approached me, and I talked to them about what we can do as an alternative. We realized last week that the government members have caucus on Thursday, and Mondays and Tuesdays are out because we're coming and going to our constituencies. Wednesday seems to be the only day left open, and that is cabinet caucus day.

We have talked it over on the government side, and if it's agreeable, we would consider going back to Wednesday. I talked with the Government House Leader on it, and he said that this was fine; a minister could appear on Wednesdays, but there may be an occasion when something important is coming up in the cabinet caucus and they would not be able to spare a minister on that given day, depending on the urgency of the matter they were discussing.

If there's agreement here that on occasion — maybe it will never happen — there will not be

a minister and we may have to cancel the meeting for that week, then I make a motion that we change the meeting from 10 o'clock on Tuesdays during session to 10 o'clock on Wednesdays during the sittings of the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would like to express my appreciation to the members of government caucus for coming forward with this solution to the problem. It's certainly most welcome by members of our caucus.

In order to accept your motion, though, I think that technically we must have a motion from you to rescind the previous motion. Then we will enter your motion.

MR. R. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, I will make the motion to rescind the previous motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any discussion on the motion to rescind the previous motion? Hearing none, those in favour of rescinding?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed? Motion carried.

MR. R. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, I would make the . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: What's a cabinet caucus?

MR. R. MOORE: A cabinet caucus is a meeting of the ministers.

Mr. Chairman, I make the motion that during session Public Accounts meet on Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You've heard the motion. Is there any discussion? Those in favour of the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed? Motion carried.

As I see it, the last item of business would be to move that the remainder of today's agenda be referred to the meeting tomorrow.

MR. R. MOORE: It would be next week.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, this is the meeting for this week. Okay. Is that your sense of this?

MR. DOWNEY: I move it be a week Wednesday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A week Wednesday. Okay. That would be the next meeting of the committee. [interjections] The motion is open for discussion.

MR. MITCHELL: There's also the issue of not necessarily even having to have a minister. There's the question of determining what departments we will discuss and in what order and that kind of thing. Is that not the case?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I thought we would save the order for the next meeting of the full committee. But I think the first person to appear before our committee as we looked at this was the Auditor General. There would probably be at least two meetings with the Auditor General.

MR. MITCHELL: Is he scheduled for tomorrow?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He was, but if it's the feeling of -- the motion was . . .

MR. MITCHELL: I'd be in favour of [inaudible] person here for tomorrow. I just feel a sense of urgency about costs and management, and I hate to let it go a week.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One way to test it would be for you to move an amendment to the motion that has just been put to amend the next meeting date to tomorrow instead of a week tomorrow.

MR. MITCHELL: I so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's an amendment.

MR. MITCHELL: I so amend.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any discussion on the question?

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, this is a kind of unusual thing, I guess. I was prepared to deal with the public accounts today, and I am still prepared to deal with public accounts today. But I guess somewhere along the line the

government members have given the opposition, in particular the Official Opposition, the opportunity to continue with their caucus on Tuesdays. I have other plans made for tomorrow, subject to the consideration of this being done today. I'm probably like a number of other members who made their schedule a little ahead of time considering the change of venue of Public Accounts day. I'm not prepared to again change my appointments to facilitate this when we've in fact already facilitated a number of members attending their caucus. I think it's unfair to even ask or suggest something of that nature again. If we're going to continue to make these changes -- we need to leave it at one set day per week, which is Wednesday, a week tomorrow. That should be the venue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Personally, I don't think it's unfair for a member to test the sense of the group. I think we've heard the sense of the group.

MR. NELSON: He might want to test the water, but I'm entitled to give my view.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Certainly you are. There's no restriction whatsoever on that.

MR. MITCHELL: I was under the impression that we were going to meet tomorrow, and I had scheduled that. I don't want to make it awkward for the members by any means. I do feel a sense of urgency, and if it could be made a priority in people's minds, I don't see that we shouldn't start tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any further discussion on the amendment, which would be to the effect that we would meet tomorrow?

MR. MUSGROVE: Obviously, there are quite a few members who are not here today because they had some other program for this morning. For us to set up a meeting for tomorrow -- they probably wouldn't get the notice until tomorrow, so I see no way we could hold a meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think other people want to comment on the question.

MR. KROEGER: I wouldn't be able to be here tomorrow because we've scheduled a

commission meeting.

MR. FISCHER: I was going to say the same. We have tomorrow already booked, and it's pretty hard to start making a bunch of changes now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's vote on the amendment. Those in favour of the amendment that we meet tomorrow? Those opposed? The motion is defeated.

Back to the main motion, which is that we will have our first meeting of the Public Accounts Committee a week from tomorrow and that we will continue to meet on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. throughout the session. Those in favour of the main motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed? So that's it. The motion really was to table that item.

A motion to adjourn would be in order at this point.

MR. NELSON: I'll move we adjourn.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The committee adjourned at 10:10 a.m.]

