

[Chairman: Mrs. Black]

[10:07 a.m.]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to welcome you to our first session. I assume you have all received your agenda and are prepared this morning to proceed.

The purpose of our committee really is to hear representations from various petitioners. We would like to let you know that we don't make decisions today. We do like to have the opportunity to convene at a later time and have discussions and come back to the committee. We will be reporting to the Assembly at a later date, and we will inform you of our decisions at that point.

We do welcome you. This morning we have gentlemen from the Edmonton Research and Development Park Authority, and they are our first petitioners on Bill Pr. 2. I'd like to introduce to the committee Mr. Glenn Mitchell, the general manager, and Mr. Jim Davies, the solicitor. I understand Mr. Mitchell has some opening comments he would like to make, but I'd like first of all to ask our counselor, Mr. Clegg, to proceed with the swearing in.

MR. M. CLEGG: Madam Chairman, I will present my report on the Bill, and then I will swear in Mr. Mitchell, if I may.

This is my report on Bill Pr. 2, Edmonton Research and Development Park Authority Amendment Act, 1990, pursuant to Standing Order 99. The Bill provides for certain minor amendments to the Act and changes the composition of the authority and the tenure of its members. The Bill does not ask for any powers which I consider to be exceptional, and there is no model Bill on this subject.

[Mr. Mitchell was sworn in]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. Davies, would you like to make some opening comments?

MR. DAVIES: Yes. This amendment Act is simply for purposes of cleaning up the appointments to the board of the authority, to add one power to the authority, and that is to provide services. Mr. Mitchell can speak to the agreement of the various parties that appoint people to the board and explain the practical aspects of why the amendment is necessary.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Mr. Mitchell, would you like to make some comments?

MR. MITCHELL: Yes, if I may. The substance of the amendment to the Edmonton Research and Development Park Authority Act is really to make changes to the legislation which reflect the practice of the authority over the past five to six years. I would like to give one or two examples of that. The original Act calls for the appointment of two representatives from the government of Alberta by the minister of public works. In practice what has occurred over the last, in fact, almost eight years is that we have had one appointment on our board from public works and one appointment from - well, I guess the departments haven't been in existence that long - first, Economic Development and Trade and then Technology, Research and Telecommunications. So we have gone to the minister of public works and said in the past that we suggest the Deputy Minister of TRT be on the board. It was the judgment of the board that the two appointments should be from the minister of technology

or some successor agency. We sought the approval of both the minister of public works and the minister of technology for that change and received their agreement.

In a similar fashion we have always had two representatives on our board from the University of Alberta, reflecting the importance of their research capability and its impact on the start-up of technology firms in the Edmonton area, yet we've only had one statutory appointment. Although we have always taken a member-at-large position and also applied that to a university member, we felt that the president of the University of Alberta should have the right to appoint two members rather than one, even though we have always had two as a matter of practice. In a similar fashion we felt that the Chamber of Commerce should have its appointments increased from one to two, although we have always had at least four or five senior executives from the technology community on the board, et cetera.

In the case of the city of Edmonton's representation we felt strongly enough about the value of political participation in the process of our board that we wish to have two aldermen appointed to our board in a statutory fashion. These modifications to our legislation have been approved by all of the parties: the president of the Chamber of Commerce; the president of the university; the ministers involved; first, the executive committee and then the full council of the city of Edmonton. They simply will result in the board being composed of 12 members, with the mayor being ex-officio. Eight of those members will be recommended from outside sources. Four will be members at large put forward as recommendations from the board to city council, and they may choose those or others, as is their wish.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Are there any questions? Yes, Mr. McEachern.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes, I have a question. Since it's the chairman who chooses four electors, I'm wondering who chooses the chairman. The explanations that we have here don't cover that.

MR. MITCHELL: Yes, the chairman of the board of the Edmonton Research and Development Park Authority - I'd like to refer to it as Edmonton research park from now on, if I could for brevity; otherwise my mouth will get very dry - is selected by the board of directors of the park on an annual basis. There is an annual election at the board. Inevitably, any individuals who are put forward as recommendations to sit on the board are done by the board at large through the chairman and sent to the city of Edmonton council, because they're merely recommendations. The city council has reserved the right in the legislation to make all of the appointments to the board. They have always automatically appointed those individuals who have been recommended by outside parties. In some instances they have elected to appoint people to the board of their own choosing rather than those recommended by the authority.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions?

MRS. HEWES: If I understand you correctly, Mr. Mitchell, this is really formalizing a system that's been in practice for some time.

MR. MITCHELL: That is correct.

MRS. HEWES: Will it, in your estimation, change the voting patterns? Is it going to shift the numbers of votes in any way on the board?

MR. MITCHELL: Not at all. In fact, the current composition of the board will be unaffected by the change in the legislation because of the flexibility of appointing members at large. So there'll be no change in the board in the current year, and since all appointments are annual and subject to annual reappointment, that happens in the normal course of events.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. Zarusky.

MR. ZARUSKY: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairman. Just one question to Mr. Mitchell, and that is: why did you add the services sector to this amendment?

MR. DAVIES: If I may, Mr. Zarusky, just speak to this for a moment. This is the only change to the legislation that has substantive legal import. A statutory corporation such as the authority must derive all of its power from its legislation. It only has the power granted by the legislation; therefore, if a statutory corporation is involved in certain activities that aren't expressly or by necessary implication granted by its legislation, it is simply not empowered to do those things. Mr. Mitchell will explain the services that the authority is engaged in offering, and since under the existing Act it doesn't actually have the authority to do these things, it's necessary to add services so that it has the authority, so that it can do these things legally.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Jim. When the park was originally constituted, its primary product, if you will, other than the goodwill and activities of its board and staff in attracting high-technology firms, was to sell or lease property in associated buildings for them to occupy. In the last three to four years the authority has become much more proactive in assisting early-stage entrepreneurs involved in technology businesses. So, in fact, we have become far more of an aggressive organization in terms of assisting early-stage companies with helping them write business plans, helping them to develop and grow their businesses, putting them into contact with sources of finance, improving their business teams so they're more accessible or more available so they can more easily access venture capital, et cetera. We are in the services business in the sense of helping early-stage companies, and we felt that this should be added to reflect our broader range of activities.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Rev. Roberts.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I have a question which may seem a bit simple but might have some other implications. With respect to the composition of the board is any consideration given to gender parity or how there might be some balance of men and women on the board? Certainly the direction that certain research and technology might take could be affected by the decisions of the board, and if it's like an old boys' club or an all-male outfit, it might be different than if it were of a different composition. I know there's nothing in the legislation. We'd like to do it in a voluntary sort of fashion. Maybe that will come about. But has this been an item of discussion, or is there any way of dealing with it that you've come up with?

MR. MITCHELL: For your interest we have one very capable and strong-willed lady on the board named Lillian Staroszk, who's worth a lot of weight on that board. Her voice carries a long way with the aldermen. And the mayor of the city of Edmonton is also an ex-officio member of the board and is kept very much apprised of our activities. Two better women you couldn't have on a volunteer board of this nature.

I'm not sure how appropriate those kinds of quotas are, but I think the approach our board has used in the past is to seek the best-qualified individual regardless of their origin.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions from the committee members?

I'd like to thank you very much for coming this morning. As I said, we will have our deliberations a little later, and we will be reporting to the Assembly and will make you aware of our decisions. Thank you very much.

The next petition is Bill Pr. 7, and we'll have a representative from the St. Therese hospital, the Grey Nuns, of St. Paul. We'd like to welcome Sister Faye Wylie from the St. Therese hospital.

Mr. Clegg, if you could proceed with your opening.

MR. M. CLEGG: Madam Chairman, this is my report on Bill Pr. 7, St. Therese Hospital (Grey Nuns) of St. Paul Amendment Act, 1990, pursuant to Standing Order 99. The Bill changes the name of the corporation by substituting "Edmonton" for "St. Paul." The Bill does not ask for any powers which are considered to be exceptional, and there's no model Bill on this subject.

[Sister Wylie was sworn in]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Sister Wylie, do you have a presentation to make to us or some introductory remarks?

SISTER WYLIE: No, I do not, Madam Chairman. It's a straightforward amendment of the title of the corporation.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: All right. Are there any questions? Yes, Mr. Drobot.

MR. DROBOT: Sister, in regard to the St. Paul hospital, you no longer have an interest in it. It's a municipal hospital – is that right? – although they use the name St. Therese in recognition of the work that the sisters provided in the past. Is that correct? So therefore it's only logical that it would be amended to "Edmonton" rather than "St. Paul."

SISTER WYLIE: That is correct. The Grey Nuns no longer have the administration and ownership of that hospital, since 1971. The Grey Nuns corporation has been dormant, and we want to use it for another ministry now.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions? Yes, Rev. Roberts.

REV. ROBERTS: Just for some clarification. So I am to understand it is a municipally owned and operated hospital now with a municipal board, and the Catholic Hospitals Foundation is not involved with it.

SISTER WYLIE: Hon. member, the corporation will now be used for a project, a community service here in Edmonton for single mothers. We're not involved with the hospital anymore. The hospital now is the responsibility of the municipality of St. Paul.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Musgrove.

MR. MUSGROVE: I probably missed one answer to a question, but now the St. Paul hospital will no longer be a municipal hospital.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: It is a municipal hospital.

MR. MUSGROVE: Oh, it is.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Yes. Are there any other questions? Yes, Mr. Evans.

MR. EVANS: I presume this goes without saying, Sister, but all of the objects that were contained in the original Act are sufficient to meet all of the objectives that you're working towards with the new project in Edmonton.

SISTER WYLIE: That is correct, sir. We do not need any other amendments.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions from the committee? Yes, Mrs. Hewes.

MRS. HEWES: Madam Chairman, I'd just like: Sister, if you could, describe the project. I'm not familiar with what you're planning to do, and I'd be interested to know.

SISTER WYLIE: We've had what we consider a pilot project here in Edmonton. We have an apartment block with nine suites, and we are using these suites to help accommodate single mothers, especially who are referred to us through Birthright but through any other social service agency. Because we had this dormant corporation that we used to utilize for the hospital in St. Paul, we now want to separately incorporate this ministry here in Edmonton. We thought it was appropriate to take the word "hospital" out of the corporate name and to take "St. Paul, Alberta" out of the corporate name and substitute "project" for "hospital" and "Edmonton" for "St. Paul."

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions?

Well, thank you very much, Sister, for coming before us this morning, and as I said, we will be reporting to the Assembly, and we will make you aware of our decision. Thank you.

If the committee members would refer to their agenda, the next Bill up is Bill Pr. 1, the Sisters of Charity of Providence of High Prairie Amendment Act, 1990.

We'd like to welcome Mr. Lucien Maynard. He is representing the Sisters of Charity of Providence of High Prairie, and we'd like to welcome you here this morning, sir. In our original introductions we indicated that the intent of our committee is to hear representations. We will be deliberating over them at a later date, and we will be making a report to the Assembly at which time our decision will be made known, and we'll make you aware of it at that point.

Mr. Clegg.

MR. M. CLEGG: Madam Chairman, this is my report on Bill Pr. 1, Sisters of Charity of Providence of High Prairie Amendment Act, 1990, pursuant to Standing Order 99. The Bill will change the name of the corporation and authorize a change of location of its head office from High Prairie to Edmonton. The Bill does not ask for any exceptional powers, and there is no model Bill on this subject.

[Mr. Maynard was sworn in]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. Maynard, would you like to make some opening comments?

MR. MAYNARD: Yes. When this Bill was originally passed, it was for the purpose of enabling the Sisters of Charity of Providence to operate a hospital at High Prairie. That is why the original name was Sisters of Charity of Providence of High Prairie. Since then the region has taken over the hospital, but the sisters wish to carry on with their other charitable activities as outlined in their private charter. They could do so better by changing the name, because their activities go beyond the town of High Prairie at the present time. They are interested in carrying on mainly with missionary work. That is why they are asking that the name be changed and the head office be transferred to Edmonton instead of High Prairie.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions from the committee?

Yes, Mr. McEachern.

MR. MCEACHERN: It's not so much a question as just a comment. I'd like to welcome Lucien Maynard back to the Assembly. Of course, he's been a longtime member.

MR. MAYNARD: It's good to be back sitting in the old Chamber, which has changed considerably since my day some 50 years ago.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions from the committee?

MRS. MIROSH: You were 10 years old.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: No other questions?

MR. M. CLEGG: May I ask a question?

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Clegg.

MR. M. CLEGG: Madam Chairman, I would like to ask the witness if there is any property which is registered in the name of the organization which will have to be reregistered as a result of this change?

MR. MAYNARD: There is no property involved.

MR. M. CLEGG: Thank you very much.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?

Mr. Maynard, thank you very much for coming back, and again welcome back, as Mr. McEachern said.

MR. MAYNARD: It's a pleasure to appear before the committee.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Well, committee members, we've gone through our first day of presentations quite rapidly. I presume you've all received your binders. You'll be getting information as more information comes through, so you'll have it ahead of the presentations.

I'd like to thank counsel and Noreen for putting these binders together – it's gratefully appreciated – and the speed at which it was done. It's nice to have the information ahead of time.

Is there anything further to come before the committee today? Yes, Mrs. Hewes.

MRS. HEWES: Madam Chairman, are we going to deal with these today? They're all pretty perfunctory. Unless there's some problem, I think we could . . .

MADAM CHAIRMAN: No.

MRS. HEWES: No?

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Well, I think we'd only set our agenda for the three Bills today, and we haven't petitioners coming forward for the others.

MRS. HEWES: I don't mean that. Are we going to discuss these and make any recommendation?

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Because some of the members have just received their binders this morning, they haven't had the opportunity to review them. So I think we'd want to leave it for another day.

Is there any further business to come before the committee? Well, once again, thank you very much. I guess we'll see you here next Wednesday. Could we have a motion for adjournment, please?

MRS. GAGNON: I so move.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mrs. Gagnon.

[The committee adjourned at 10:30 a.m.]