

10:06 a.m.

Wednesday, May 15, 1991

[Deputy Chairman: Mr. Cherry]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Good morning, everyone. I want to call the meeting to order. This morning we will be discussing Bill Pr. 5, An Act to Amend the Calgary Convention Centre Authority Act. We have with us this morning legal counsel Mr. Brand Inlow from Calgary, and sponsoring the Bill is Mrs. Mirosh.

I would just like, Mr. Inlow, to familiarize you. I know you've been here before. This is an all-party committee of the Legislature which will hear the hearings of this Bill this morning. It will follow its way through the Legislature like any other Bill does.

With that, I would ask Mr. Ritter if the legal counsel has been sworn in.

MR. RITTER: Yes, he has, Mr. Chairman.

Pursuant to Standing Orders, all members have a copy of my report before them. Very briefly, for the record, all advertising, declarations, and fees as required by Standing Orders have been complied with. There are no model Bills on this subject matter, but the Bill is so simple in its content, I would suggest that any model Bill would not be of much assistance in this case anyway. I have rated the complexity of the Bill as very simple.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I'll just leave it open to you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Ritter.

I would ask Mr. Inlow if he would like to make some opening comments regarding the Bill.

MR. INLOW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm here representing the city of Calgary, because this Bill is, in fact, an initiative of the council of the city of Calgary rather than the Convention Centre Authority. It was the result of the work that took place in early to middle 1990 under the name of the Committee on Committees, which I know sounds like the ultimate in bureaucratic structure. It was designed to look at the workload particularly of aldermanic representatives on council, on various committees in which they were required to serve. It looked at some 95 committees that have been struck in the city of Calgary, of which aldermen sit on 75. That report went to council in July of 1990 and suggested that those commitments be reduced and that aldermen would only sit on 45 committees, and the number of aldermen on certain committees was also to be reduced.

The result of that was then a formal report that went to the organizational meeting of council in October of 1990. That meeting resulted in an instruction to amend the necessary legislation as a result of the requirement of that committee report to reduce the number of aldermanic representatives on the Convention Centre Authority from two to one. There were some other aspects of that report, which we will come to in a moment.

Now the position of the Convention Centre Authority. I have been in touch with the chairman of that authority on a number of occasions with respect to the progress of this Bill. Their position was formulated at a meeting of the authority in September of 1990, and the position of the authority was communicated in writing to council prior to the organizational meeting. Their position, basically, was that their preference was that they would like to retain the two members of council on the authority, but they recognized that council had an agenda that

they had to deal with in terms of rationalizing the workload and said that if that was not possible, what they would like would be to replace the one alderman that was being dropped with an elector of the city of Calgary. So the number of electors moves from seven to eight. This enables the same quorum to be kept and maintains, basically, a balance between total membership and the quorum. As I indicated, I've discussed the Bill with the chairman of the authority, and subject to what I have said, they are of course aware of and in support of the initiatives that have been taken.

That deals with two portions of the amendment, which basically are to reduce the aldermanic representatives, or the members of council, on the authority from two to one and to increase the number of electors from seven to eight.

The third change that was made, which was somewhat more subtle, was in section 7(b). It previously read that "the Commissioner . . . responsible for finance and administration" had to serve on the authority. Obviously, as part of reducing the aldermanic representation on these various committees, the city felt a need to fill the gap, in essence, by assigning senior administrators at a greater degree to serve on these boards and committees. In order to retain the desired flexibility, council simply wished to be able to designate which of its four commissioners would serve on the authority, and as a result requests that the designation of "the Commissioner . . . responsible for finance and administration" be dropped and simply "a Commissioner . . . appointed by resolution of the Council" be substituted for that.

Mr. Chairman, those are our submissions with respect to the changes that we have asked, and we hope for a favourable decision from this committee.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Inlow. I will now turn attention to the members if they have any questions.

MR. McEACHERN: I guess the original Bill had, you know, very specifically that there would be the mayor and two members of council appointed to the commission. So now you've had to trot all the way up here to change from two commissioners to one commissioner, and I'm sure there isn't anybody in the Legislature of this province that really cares whether you have one or two or three on the committee. I mean, obviously we would want you to have somebody on it. It is the council's responsibility in Calgary, but they are an elected council and they can decide for themselves how many they want on this particular commission. I wonder why you didn't find some way to word it in a more general manner, because five years down the road a new council might decide that they need more representation on more committees and decide to have two again, and we'll have to go through this same business again of changing legislation.

The wording of the amendment could surely have been, you know, "at the discretion of the council" sort of thing, or something like that, right from the start and would have saved a trip up here for you. If they didn't do that last time, it's too late to change that, but this time you're now specifying again exactly how many people there will be. If anybody decides to make a change, then you've got to trot back up here and change the legislation again. It seems to me a bit of a waste of time. Why don't we just give more authority to the council to decide how many people they want on the committee in the legislation and let it go at that? They can change it themselves.

MR. INLOW: Well, Mr. Chairman, the point's well taken in the sense that the Bill has been amended on several occasions since inception in 1974. I think the problem that's raised by that is if we leave that area loose, then there are a number of other consequential changes that we would have to make to the Bill with respect to quorum and mechanical things like that that would change if there was a radical shift in the number of, say, aldermen that were appointed. I think our desire at this point was simply to keep the changes as simple as possible. I acknowledge your point and realize that we have had to trot up here, so to speak, in the past. In all honesty I can't make any assurances that it may not change in the future.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, I would just suggest, then, that if it happens another time, you ought to change this particular clause, that the next time you think of a looser wording that would allow more autonomy to the council to decide for themselves. Obviously, we're not going to tell Calgary council that they've got to have, you know, the mayor and two people instead of the mayor and one person. If you allowed at least some leeway, I'm sure you could find some way to cover it. There's obviously no reason not to pass this legislation.

MR. INLOW: That's fair enough, Mr. Chairman. As I've indicated, your point is well taken.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Mrs. Mirosh.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, at the onset Parliamentary Counsel said that this is a simple Bill. We want to keep it simple. That's our motto in Calgary. We like Calgarians to come up and visit us here. It's nice for an MLA to be able to represent the city periodically. I think that, basically, if they want to compose their board the way they feel is necessary, then there shouldn't be any problem with this committee.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Mr. Ewasiuk.

10:16

MR. EWASIUKE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have any questions either. I just wanted to make a comment. I think the Bill is perfectly fine the way it is. I can appreciate the council doing what they're doing. I'm sure the aldermen sat down and said, "Gosh, we're sitting on so doggone many boards; let's find a way to get off some of them." They've made the right decision here, I think; one alderman is probably sufficient. Probably more importantly, they've added an additional citizen component to the authority, which I think also is a good move.

I have no difficulty with the Bill and am prepared to support it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Anyone else?  
Mr. Inlow, would you like to give closing comments?

MR. INLOW: Mr. Chairman, I really haven't anything more to add other than to say that the Convention Centre Authority is in effect controlled by a budgetary process in the city, and they do report through a standing committee, so there are a number of basic controls in place beyond what you see in the Bill which have been operating for many years without any problems.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Mr. Ritter, you have some comments.

MR. RITTER: Just on the record, Mr. Chairman, for the benefit of the members of the committee, when consideration of this Bill comes before the committee, I'll be recommending we delete sections 1 and 4 simply because they're outmoded drafting styles. I've discussed it with Mr. Inlow, and he's quite agreeable to it. So it'll in fact be a two-section Bill.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Ritter. Any comments from the members?

All right; I want to thank Mr. Inlow for coming out this morning, and I want to thank the members for coming out. I know the busy schedule that all the members have, and I'm sure that you have too, sir. So I would ask for a motion to adjourn.

MRS. HEWES: So moved.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mrs. Hewes.  
All in favour.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Carried. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 10:18 a.m.]