

Standing Committee on Private Bills

10:02

[Chairman: Mrs. Black]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Could we call the meeting to order. Would everyone take their places.

First of all, I'd like to welcome you to our first Private Bills meeting of this session, and thank you all for coming. We have some new members on our committee. I'd like to welcome you, and I'm sure that you'll enjoy the process. It's quite an interesting committee in that we deal with a tremendous variety of petitions. As you can see from the petitions that were filed yesterday in the House, we have quite a number this session to deal with, and there is quite a variety.

Today I've asked us to come together as an organizational meeting, and I hope you've all received a copy of the agenda for the meeting. We'll deal with a review of the petitions that we've received. We'll talk about some late petitions and then schedule the hearings as to when the petitioners will come before the committee. I'm going to ask shortly that we go in camera to discuss some of the scheduling because some of the petitions have greater complexity than others, and we will rely upon counsel for a brief overview.

Before we get started, we have some new people with us on the administrative side, and I'd like to introduce these people to committee members. They will be with us throughout the duration. Heather is here for the first time. I think all of you have received a binder that is very comprehensive and very detailed, and we appreciate it very much, Heather. We also have Frank with us. He came in last year a bit with us, and he's going to be here again this year. He will be assisting us. Of course, Michael, our counsel, is always there with lots of ideas and advice, so we appreciate having you.

Does anyone have any questions before we get started? I like to handle our meetings in a formal sense, as they are governed under our Standing Orders and we have to follow the procedures of the Standing Orders for the committee. At the same time, we've always prided ourselves in being able to ask as many questions as we feel needed when we're dealing with our petitions, as they are unique, each one. These are petitions that are not able to be handled in our regular legislation and as such create their own Act. There are some different situations from the norm.

Michael spent a tremendous amount of time preparing a private Bills kit for all this, and I hope you've all received it. It's a detailed description and itemization of the process that the Bills go through. Everybody's holding one up, so I gather you've all received it. Thank you for clarifying a lot of the procedural things for us. I'm sure that it will make everyone's job a little easier to be able to have that available to answer questions.

Michael, do you have anything to add before we start with the agenda?

MR. RITTER: Madam Chairman, just to reassure committee members that they're not going crazy when they see that the dividers in the binders have absolutely no correlation whatsoever with the numbers of the Bills. We decided to go green in this committee and just use a whole bunch of discarded dividers. They were going to be thrown away, so we put them to good use.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Okay. Counsel, can you give us just a summary of the petitions you've received to date, and then we'll go in camera for discussions.

MR. RITTER: Sure. Madam Chairman, of those that made the deadline and the advertising, we've got 14 private Bills to consider this year. There were originally 17, but three of them were so unacceptable in their application and were highly complex. They were kind of rushed together by the law firms involved, so I bounced them for this session and decided that when they got their act together, they could come to us again next session.

The ones that we have now -- there's a lot of adoption Bills. In every case, at least where I'm aware of the facts, they're fairly straightforward. I've only got one that's complex and a couple that are moderate. So even though there's a large number of Bills, I feel that the nature of the content is such that the committee shouldn't be too tangled up in a long-term hassle over any one of them.

MRS. HEWES: Madam Chairman, I move that we go in camera for an in-depth discussion of them.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: All those in favour? Thank you.

[The committee met in camera from 10:08 a.m. to 10:35 a.m.]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: We've had some discussions as to scheduling of our petitions and the petitioners to appear before our committee. Could we have a motion as to the scheduling?

MRS. HEWES: Madam Chairman, I don't know if you want all of these incorporated, but I can move

that we commence the sessions of this committee on April 29 at the time of 10 o'clock, the meetings to be held from 10 to 12 on each subsequent Wednesday . . .

and the scheduling to be as the chairman had suggested. Do you want it read in, Madam Chairman?

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Yes, please.

MRS. HEWES:

Bills Pr. 1, Pr. 2, and Pr. 5 on the first occasion, Bills Pr. 3, Pr. 7, and Pr. 8 on the second occasion, Bills Pr. 4, Pr. 10, and Pr. 11 on the third occasion, Bills Pr. 6, Pr. 12, and Pr. 13 on the fourth occasion, Bills Pr. 9 and Pr. 14 on the fifth occasion.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

All in favour of the motion? Carried. Thank you.

I think, counsel, that that's all the business we have to come before the committee today.

Yes, Mr. Cherry?

MR. CHERRY: I'll move we adjourn.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

All in favour of adjournment?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: We're adjourned. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 10:36 a.m.]

