

2:07 p.m.

Thursday, September 3, 1992

[Chairman: Mr. Gogo]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good day, ladies and gentlemen. Could we call the meeting to order. This is the inaugural meeting of the Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform as adopted by the Legislature. I'd like to read into the record the resolution adopted by the House.

Be it resolved that

- (1) A Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta be established to consider the current functioning status of the Assembly and review ways of making it more responsive to the needs and values of the citizens of Alberta and elected members within the context of our parliamentary system and traditions.
- (2) The select special committee shall report back to the Legislative Assembly on its deliberations and may make recommendations for change in Alberta's parliamentary system. The select special committee may also provide one or more interim reports recommending immediate action to the Legislative Assembly.
- (3) The Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta shall consist of the following members: Hon. John Gogo, chairman; Halvar Jonson, deputy chairman; Robert Elliott; Brian Evans; Kurt Gesell; Bonnie Laing; Robert Hawkesworth; Derek Fox; and Bettie Hewes.
- (4) Reasonable disbursements by the committee for [all] staff assistance, equipment and supplies, public information needs, accommodation, travel, and other expenditures necessary for the effective conduct of its responsibilities shall be paid subject to the approval of the chairman.
- (5) In carrying out its responsibilities, the committee may, with the concurrence of the head of the department, utilize the services of members of the public service employed in that department and of the staff employed by the Legislative Assembly.
- (6) The chairman and members of the committee shall be paid in accordance with the schedule of category A committees provided in Members' Services Committee Order 10/89.
- (7) In carrying out its duties, the committee may travel within Alberta to hear the views of Albertans and to other jurisdictions for the purposes of consultation and examination of their parliamentary procedures.
- (8) When its work has been completed, the committee shall report to the Assembly, if it is then sitting, or may release its report during a period when the Assembly is adjourned by depositing a copy with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and forwarding a copy to each member of the Assembly.

The committee is struck in accordance with that motion adopted by the Assembly. It's also in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Leg. Assembly of Alberta and in accordance with the sixth edition of *Beauchesne*.

Two minor items before we entertain a motion. One, would members wishing to speak at this committee meeting raise their hands so the Chair may indicate to Doug, the recorder, who is speaking? Two, we have with us some staff that I want members to be aware of because in the days and weeks and perhaps months ahead we will require their services: the Clerk of the Assembly, the deputy minister, Dr. David McNeil, seated at the table; Parliamentary Counsel, dialing 911, I suppose, Mr. Michael Ritter; and at the table we have Louise and Diane and Corinne. For the benefit of those that want to write down the names, I have problems with the spelling but not the pronunciation: Corinne Dacyshyn and Diane Shumyla. Louise, it's not Kamuchuk; it's . . .

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Kamuchik.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was close.

Now, before proceeding, because this is the inaugural meeting, ladies and gentlemen, I do think that in the interests of what we're about to embark on, the special select committee should go into an in camera session to discuss the various items. Could we have a motion to that effect from a member of the committee? Mr. Halvar Jonson moved that the Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform move in camera. All in favour, please indicate with your hands. Opposed? Carried. I now declare this in camera.

[The committee met in camera from 2:12 p.m. to 3:52 p.m.]

MRS. KAMUCHIK: There are two motions you have passed in camera that should be dealt with.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, I'm going to deal with those now.

The one motion is that the distribution of the *Hansard* transcript, which I shared earlier, of today's meeting, i.e. September 3, be at the sole discretion of the chairman. Could we have a motion to get that on the record?

Bonnie.

MRS. B. LAING: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

Now, the suggestions. We should put in the form of a motion that each member is to submit their list of items for discussion, including and/or fundamental principles, prior to the next meeting. I don't know if we want to be more specific than a week before the next meeting or whatnot.

MRS. HEWES: As long as we acknowledge, Mr. Chairman, that that list may not be complete insofar as members can bring forward others as we move on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But it's probably wise to formalize.

MRS. HEWES: A preliminary list, in other words.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. Why not each member just submitting a preliminary list of items - I want to get the wording right here - for discussion by this committee prior to the next meeting? Corinne, I want to include those words I mentioned: including and/or fundamental principles.

MR. GESELL: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Kurt. Any objection? Carried.

Any other business before we deal with the date of the next meeting? We've probably dealt with most other business now, but there may be items that don't have to be in camera that we can discuss, in case we neglected to mention things like visiting certain places or having people come or advertising or whatever. Is there any other business for the committee?

Charlene, do you have a calendar?

MS BLANEY: No, I don't think so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kurt has got a calendar. Brian has got a calendar. What's the first week in October? Knock out the 8th because that's probably a caucus day. Is it, Kurt? Monday or Tuesday? Tuesday is probably the best day, is it? October 6.

Halvar.

MR. JONSON: Just waiting, Mr. Chairman, for you to announce the time, and then I want to take issue with it. The problem – I had better check my book – is that I think the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee is scheduled to go into action or some semblance thereof.

MRS. DACYSHYN: The 6th in the morning is when the Provincial Treasurer is scheduled.

MR. JONSON: The 6th. Yes, both morning and afternoon of the 6th; the afternoon of the 5th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What does October 12 look like to you, Halvar?

MR. JONSON: That's Thanksgiving Day. Yes, it looks good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's the day after, isn't it?

MR. JONSON: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What's the Tuesday?

MR. JONSON: The 13th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hawkesworth cannot be with us until after the 8th, and if it's agreeable to you, it wouldn't be a bad idea to accommodate him. Generally, we like to have at least an 80 percent turnout. October 13? Would that be . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: That's all right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we'll have the rest. What's the most convenient time? Is it 2 to 5? I know that if I drive from Lethbridge – well, I'm only the chairman; let's not consider me.

MR. EVANS: We do have a vice-chairman, Ponoka-Rimbey.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Or should we have luncheon meetings and follow through? Do they present problems? I mean, I think it would be novel to meet, say, at noon and have a lunch and follow through till 3 or 4 or 5. Pardon me; I'm a member of cabinet and have my communications committee every Tuesday from 12:30 to 1:30. That doesn't mean I can't buy you lunch. Like today, is 2 to 4:30 or 2 to 5 . . .

MR. EVANS: Fine by me.

DR. ELLIOTT: This business of scheduling meetings, Mr. Chairman. If you give a member like myself enough lead time, we can accommodate you. When I come in from my constituency, I will come in the day before and stay two days or something like that. With the possible exception of when the House is sitting – we can probably get another schedule going then. When the House isn't sitting, I suggest we pick a day, run it for six months, and give this thing a go. Then we can have it built in and build around it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we tried to do that, as you know, with the government caucus days. I'm the chairman of the Council of Ministers of Education, for example, and I've got to fly down to Washington, D.C., next week. Then I've got to go to Winnipeg as chairman of the council. Then Premier Getty phones me and says: do this and do that. So it's very difficult to be definitive.

Although I know I don't have to be here, I want to be here; I'm very interested in this. For example, today we decided on the 13th. There's ample notice and so on. People can make plans accordingly. I almost think we should poll everybody every meeting about the next meeting and find out what the most suitable day is rather than set a specific day. How do you feel? I find it difficult to set a specific day.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the kind of schedule you must have, but I find it easier if I know well in advance. We seem to get booked up awfully quickly. Is it your intention to meet only once a month, or were you thinking about bimonthly?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Once we have the shopping list, which is next meeting, then I think we can schedule a couple of meetings a week or a meeting weekly and so on. I think we can do it very quickly. No, it wasn't my intention to go to one meeting a month. So could we deal with that next month, then, at the meeting?

MRS. HEWES: That looks good. Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Before we have a motion to adjourn, Louise, do you have any . . . Sorry, Bob. Go ahead.

DR. ELLIOTT: I just want you to confirm what we've agreed to, Mr. Chairman, so we're all hearing the same thing: date, time, and place of the next meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Here, here, here. The 13th, 2 o'clock.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Until 4:30 or 5 p.m.?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, until we're finished. You know, we don't want to constrain ourselves. We might get lasagna for supper.

Any administrative details?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Any member that would like some assistance on the completion of their expense form . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, yeah. We went over that at the beginning of the meeting, I think, Bettie.

Okay. Could we have a motion to adjourn then? Bob Elliott. All in favour? Carried.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for that inaugural meeting.

[The committee adjourned at 4:02 p.m.]