

June 16/83

MR. CHAIRMAN: Keith Smith is the Executive Director of Research and Education for Occupational Health and Safety and John Wisocky is the Executive Director of Claims Services. I have to share -- I know John Thompson will appreciate the day that they had only one of these staff members along. Last select committee quite a bit of our work involved Keith Smith from health and safety and, as indicated in some of the areas of our report, the intent was to take a look at both. That's why the motion is both the Workers' Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act; therefore, we'll have two staff members. It'll come in handy, particularly to share the work of summarizing and advice.

In addition to the hearing dates, we have scheduled three days in July to get briefed: July 20, all day, briefing with WCB; July 21, Occupational Health and Safety, and the Occupational Health and Safety Council -- that's all day in Edmonton; and July 22, a visit to the rehab centre, the advisory committee on WCB, and finish off what we didn't cover. So you have three days in July.

MR. MARTIN: What are the times on those?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm going to work this out with you. What do you feel? If we're game to start at 8:30, we might be able to get away by 4:30 or 5. But if we start at 9:00 . . . What time do you want to start?

MR. THOMPSON: I won't be able to get here until nine o'clock on the first day, and I want to get out of here by five o'clock on the last day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why don't we start the first day at nine o'clock? Then we can always be a little more compact when we're going to the second day. In the hearings, Ray, we'll be starting at 9:00.

MR. MARTIN: Will you be sending us a memo with all these times?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Oh, my apologies. Our secretary from the Legislative Assembly Office is Louise Empson. I have trouble remembering Anglo-Saxon names. She'll be working full time for this committee and, whenever they need her, she'll be doing other things for Doug Blain.

So we have the three days in July and nothing in August. Am I right?

MR. MARTIN: August 30.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hope to get those summaries to you in good time, but because we have the closing date of presentation of August 15, please understand that you may be getting them -- particularly the first few hearings -- the day before or even when you arrive. But you'll have a summary sheet or fact sheet on the brief. We're not too sure that you'll them in enough time when we go to Grande Prairie.

At the meetings on July 20, 21, and 22, we will then firm up how we're going to arrange transportation to the different parts of the province. In many cases, if a suitable number are there, we'll use a government plane. We may even have to do some places by car. The intent is to do these hearings, then have time on occasion during the fall sitting to work on some of the consensus, and then take a look at the other provincial jurisdictions in January and February. I know Walt Buck wanted to go to St. John's, Newfoundland, in January. Didn't you, Walt?

DR. BUCK: Yes. It's my idea of heaven.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It will be like Sweden on that February day, won't it?

MRS. FYFE: It couldn't be any colder.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the intent. I think the only way we could accomplish some of the review of the other provinces is by splitting into two groups; keep that in mind. I'm not saying we visit them all.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, can I interject right at that point? Unless we are completely strapped for time -- I think the greatest injustice I have seen inflicted upon a member of this Legislature who was in a select committee was when we left Henry Kroeger home on a trucking committee, because he had just come back from some place else. Either the committee goes, or the committee doesn't go.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you mean the whole committee?

DR. BUCK: The whole committee, that's right -- unless there's a problem of logistics or there's no purpose in doing that. I don't think it's fair. It's a legislative committee; everybody who can go should see what we have to see, unless there's some really legitimate reason for breaking up the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd be open to it; I think it's quite fair. Walt has a good point; if there's a real purpose to look at both health and safety, maybe the whole committee should plan to go. Let's think about it. We have time to decide that in September or towards the end of our year.

DR. BUCK: And the same thing with Andy Little.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Andy got left out of a trip.

DR. BUCK: A legislative committee is a legislative committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And we left Kushner out, too. We had a bigger committee last time, folks.

DR. BUCK: To their graves, Henry Kroeger and Andy Little will never forgive us. All we were doing was trying to save the taxpayers some money. We said, Andy Little just came back from a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and we can't take him back. He was a member of the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A good point. Let's keep that in mind before we finalize.

DR. BUCK: We're all supposed to see what we're supposed to see unless we can't just . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other strong feelings on that? I know John Thompson likes to get left out of some of these trips. He claims he hates flying.

MR. THOMPSON: That's a fact.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll put him in a luggage compartment, so he doesn't think he's flying.

DR. BUCK: We can cure that for you, John. Just stick with me.

MRS. FYFE: You're in safe hands.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The dates, which Stan missed, are July 20, 21, and 22, briefings here in Edmonton. We finalized those.

MR. MARTIN: And you'll send those ones out, specifically the first ones.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, we'll send out where the meetings are.

Here's an example of how we're covering the province. Here's the north part: Edmonton, then we go to Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Drumheller, Calgary, and Red Deer. Sure, there could possibly be a need in the Edson area, and there could be a need in the Lloydminster area, but you can't cover everything.

DR. BUCK: Bill, one area -- give it some consideration -- is High Level. You have lumbering and timbering up there, and it's a long way from Grande Prairie. And you have the oil patch up there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we have Peace River here.

DR. BUCK: But that's 200 miles from High Level.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I appreciate that.

DR. BUCK: The big bird flies in and out of there. The service is good. You get in at seven o'clock at night, and you can get out at 7:20.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, let's watch the briefs that come in. If sufficient briefs coming in, we can always accommodate them. Wouldn't you want to spend a night in High Level?

DR. BUCK: Well, I've been up there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's a good point, to watch for the submission, because it is 200 miles. But so is Lloydminster. What's Lloydminster from here -- 190 miles or something like that?

DR. BUCK: No, 140 or 150.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, so it's not that far. Okay.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, there's always that feeling in those isolated areas: they just sort of forget about us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For the benefit of all of you, here's a list of the Occupational Health and Safety, and Workers' Compensation boards. The purpose of this is that in the next month or so you may want to drop in on one of the regional offices in your area or where you're travelling. These are the head people in the different offices, and don't hesitate. We've kept Keith Smith and John Wisocky in the two respective Edmonton divisions, but that doesn't mean they're the chiefs there.

I've given you a tentative budget, worked out with Doug Blain. It's not written in stone. We're going to forward more information, more comparisons with other provinces. This was just so you'd have an idea of the ceilings and how the different provincial benefits are paid. That's as brief as possible, a thumbnail sketch of it.

The last one I want to go over -- that's why I've addressed this from myself to the file -- and share with all of you some of the areas: naturallyt the

first one is a review of the Workers' Compensation Act; number two, examine if the 90 per cent concept is really working as we had intended it in the last report.

As some of you know, the review of merit rebate and super assessment is one that industry is very critical of. I'm hoping to have some proposals on it for you before we go into the public hearings. I have an accountant working with the WCB on it to look at what possible alternatives we can implement. It's not a legislative thing. As you know, it is a policy that the board has had since the late '40s, that there would be a merit rebate program. Some of our rates are higher in this province than in others, because an employer can get up to a one-third rebate. It doesn't seem to be working too well. But under number three, we may have some information for you before and maybe even some announcements. At least we can be prepared for it.

The principle of the lump-sum payments: at one time the board didn't pay any lump-sum payments. It was the '72 committee that recommended up to 10 per cent be considered for lump-sum payment, with the exception of some back injuries and so forth. When we have a briefing, John will lead us through a review of what appears to some of us to be a successful program in Saskatchewan. The widows' pension lump-sum payment: as you know, '82 was the first year that a widow with no dependents could get equal to a three-year payout or over five years reduced. We should look at how it has worked? The board will have that information for us.

Number 6 is a further extension of number four. I'm not going to get into the briefing on it now, but you can think about it. If you want more information on it, don't hesitate to phone John or Keith on the Workers' Compensation. In Saskatchewan, they seem to have a minimum of \$500 and a maximum of \$15,000 on lump-sum payouts; then they don't have these workers receiving permanent partial pension cheques of \$75 a month. At a meeting one time, the chairman of the Saskatchewan board told to me that he feels that psychologically that's just a reminder for the claimant of what he should do during the next month to try to get more instead of concentrating on his rehabilitation or his work.

Number seven is the one I have personally been troubled about. I've visited four jurisdictions, and I haven't got an answer. The only pensions in this country that are piggybacked are workers' compensation. All other pensions you know of -- even United Mine Workers, back when I was in social work -- at the age of 65 are reduced by the amount of old-age pension and Canada Pension. I really believe we're going to have to look at that and may be receiving some submissions on it; in other words, to study the possibility that workers' compensation be reduced at the age of 65 or even a lump-sum payment at the age of 65, one of these things.

The next one, number eight, is transfer of medical payments. I made a promise when I was speaking on Bill 38 in the Legislature, and also to many employers, that will give them another crack at this transfer of medical payments.

The concept of combining the workers' compensation building and the rehabilitational facilities: as you know, cabinet has approved the purchase of the site. The purchase of the site is now under option; the city hasn't given final approval. The planning has been in place. To proceed with the building is referred to this select committee for recommendation. We may have to spend some time after the briefing and the hearings on the question of combining the building and the rehab centre. We may want to wait to put that in the report until we see some of the other jurisdictions.

Number 10, comparison of benefits under different Acts: we've started to give you some of that information here. Coverage to industries not presently

under the Act: that is something that any select committee always does. We want to see if they could cover dentists, optometrists, and others.

MR. THOMPSON: The legal secretaries.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. I promise you, I'm not going to get into farmers' coverage. If any of you want to get into it, be my guest.

MR. NELSON: Dentists don't need any. They're rolling in it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Accuracy of the fund of method of capitalization: let me share this with you. I want to indicate to you that the Act requires that no less than once in five years an actuarial review of the fund be done. The last one was done in '79; the next one should be done in '84. I would like to recommend to cabinet -- I have to bring in an O.C. -- that we have another review by an actuarial firm this summer. What would it take, John; three months, something like that? In other words, we'd have the benefit of the review before we conclude the report. What do you think of this?

MR. NELSON: It makes sense.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It makes sense, doesn't it? We didn't have the benefit of the review when we did the '79 report; it was just being done.

MR. WISOCKY: I'm not sure, but that may be in motion already, Mr. Chairman, in the sense that Crawford Laing in B.C., who knows our business, may be asked to do it again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll have to get to you, because I've been thinking about it. I have to bring in an O.C. on it, John. We'll have to work on it. But I think it would help to complete the report.

I added one more item -- as you see, a different print -- proprietorships and clearances on accounts. That is the most annoying thing. It all came from when we changed the definition of "independent operator" to "proprietor". Some of you remember the 1982 mail that came in from every contractor, every independent trucker, whoever was around -- the mail was high. We've had a good feeling on it. To explain how this works: you get a trucker that is hauling gravel. Many of them said, look, if I pay my assessment for three or six months -- some of them have even shared with me that they'd pay a whole year. Then they would have a card that would say, he's paid up, and there's no need for that contractor he's working for to phone WCB and get a clearance that his account is paid up. The most sticky people for clearances are government. Public Works will not release a payment on a contract unless the clearance from WCB is there.

DR. BUCK: Explain to them what is happening in those cases. It's very simple. Some of these independent truckers and so on wouldn't have their people covered, so then the general contractor ended up being liable. We were having all these kinds of problems. This way, if the guy hasn't got his pink slip saying that he's paid up, he doesn't get his money from the government.

MR. THOMPSON: We had that problem back in '75.

DR. BUCK: It's been an ongoing problem, John.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's been ongoing, and we just about had it in place. I was working with the board, and then I was advised by cabinet to let the select committee look at it this year. Maybe it's good, because we didn't rush into putting some program in. But the board is interested in it; they don't mind. John, I know you don't work in financial, but the number of clearances that have to be issued every day is large.

MR. WISOCKY: There are problems, but it might be important to check with other boards. In other words, when you visit other boards, you might see what their system is and get some insight.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Even a big contractor -- if PCL uses earth-moving people, I. H. Davis, PCL will not pay I. H. Davis until I. H. Davis has a clearance that their account is up to date. It happens even in the big firms, but the big firms can cushion. But you get a small contractor, a fellow who has one piece of equipment, and those are the ones that . . . That's why I have to take a look again at proprietorship and clearance on accounts.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I have a suggestion, something that's dear to my heart. While we're looking at the Act and the situation, I think we should look at regulations as far as deregulation is concerned.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Add the regulations.

MR. NELSON: Deregulation.

MR. THOMPSON: Well, we'll look at the regulations, and the deregulation is something else. But I have a feeling that everybody in government should start looking at -- we just keep tacking them on and tacking them on, and nothing ever comes off. If it's costing people money to do this type of thing, we'd better make dang sure these regulations are necessary. I'm not against regulations; I'm against unnecessary regulations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please understand there are some specific sections to the WCB Act that John and the staff are going to brief us on. I've been advised of section 51. I don't want to get into it now, so that will take place during the briefing. Certain areas of the Act are just causing the board difficulty.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, would it be possible to have -- I haven't met these two gentlemen at this point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry. Keith Smith, executive director, Occupational Health and Safety, and John Wisocky, executive director, Workers' Compensation Board. You know Louise.

MR. NELSON: If I might, this information that we're going to endeavor to digest from July 21 to 23 -- would it be possible to have packages sent to us prior to that date, so we might digest some of it? You might just give an overview, and if there are some questions -- it may shorten the process, for one thing. Secondly, through reading this and then listening to your discussion, we may better understand what is actually happening. In the interim before we actually meet, I would like to visit the Edmonton and Calgary offices, so that maybe we could just . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's a good idea to visit the two offices; don't hesitate. You have the name of the contact in Calgary and here, by all means. John and

Keith, I think we should give them about a page and a half to two pages of some of the material that you want. That's what I meant when I said we'd give them some more in comparisons, too.

MR. MARTIN: As much as you can, especially for the new people, so that they understand what they're doing.

MRS. FYFE: We have one package already.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's fine. We'll work on that. Louise will get that.

MR. MARTIN: As much as you can, to educate us.

MR. THOMPSON: On the subject Stan brought up, visiting the offices, I think it would be proper if we had some kind of authorization from you, the board, or somebody. I don't want to walk into the Lethbridge office and say, I'm on the select committee, so give me the grand tour. I think it would be nice if you'd give us a piece of paper to show.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll get letters out to you by tomorrow.

MR. WISOCKY: If I may, Mr. Chairman, why don't they just give me a call? I'll let them know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh no, it's no problem here, but John may want to drop into the Lethbridge office, being from southern Alberta.

MR. WISOCKY: If he gives me a call, I can phone down there and say: by the way, this gentleman is coming, and this is what it's all about.

MR. CHAIRMAN: John, would you do it that way?

MR. THOMPSON: In the first place, I'd like the guy to know I'm coming and, in the second place, who I am.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have his name; you call him.

MR. WISOCKY: Okay, I'll tell these people to expect a call.

MR. SMITH: I think it would be better if we just advise our local offices . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You'll do that? Good point, John. They will advise the offices that any of you six may be visiting.

From time to time, we may come up [inaudible]. That's the purpose of the hearings, as the public may give us some other items we haven't got. This isn't the end-all of what we'll be looking at.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'm sure our resource people can given us this information. What does the United States do? We've always looked at our own jurisdictions. We've looked at England, Sweden, and Germany, and we've seen the Australian experience. Is the United States similar to what we're doing?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That might be a good little thing you could add. Six or eight states have the same as ours and six or eight have a meld of private and state

compensation similar to ours. The rest of them are totally free enterprise; they have the lawyers chasing the ambulances.

MR. WISOCKY: Basically, about six have a system similar to here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are some very close, Walter. For instance, the state of Washington is almost the same as B.C.

MR. MARTIN: I expect the latter ones you're talking about are down in the deep south.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, Washington, Oregon . . .

MR. MARTIN: No, I meant the latter ones, where they chase the ambulances.

MR. SMITH: The only major difference on the preventive side is that, while there are state and federal programs, it's the federal program that sets the standards for the states to achieve. That is entirely different from our structure here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, that's the other interesting part. Maybe that's something you could prepare for them in half a page or so: how our occupational health and safety preventive program in Canada is evolving. We're using a lot of their knowledge and expertise in in-service training.

MR. SMITH: It's rather interesting, too, at this stage. We've had a lot of correspondence with OSHA, the federal operation in the States, particularly over the question of performance standards as opposed to specification standards for regulations in health and safety. They are following us. They're very interested in knowing what we are doing, because they are also moving into performance rather than specifications. The difference would be indicating that a ladder should be in the trench for egress, which would be performance; whereas a specification would be that the ladder shall be of such and such a knotted structure, rungs shall be so far apart, they shall be X number of inches, and so on. That's the difference between the two. There are movements in the States, as well, particularly in regard to what you were saying about deregulating and making regulations much easier to live with.

MR. WISOCKY: If I may, Mr. Chairman, a typical example in the States is Oregon. It has about the same population as we do and about the same number of industrial accidents -- in fact a bit fewer. They have a meld of a state compensation board *per se*, private carriers, and insurance companies, and with the lawyers involved, the cost of compensation was twice as high as here in '82. That's the difference in systems.

But the chairman is right. There are about six that are purely like ours, including Ohio, which is . . .

MR. MARTIN: Quite industrial.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We may decide by next January or February that we want to hold off -- that's why I have the year '84 -- tabling the reports until the fall of '84 to look at one or two of these jurisdictions, Walt. Let's wait with that and not commit ourselves.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, did you say that we're going to look at some of our neighboring jurisdictions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The other provinces.

DR. BUCK: It would be Ontario almost for sure; Saskatchewan.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are one or two maritimes that John says are . . .

MR. WISOCKY: New Brunswick.

MR. CHAIRMAN: New Brunswick. Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia. I've been to Quebec on several occasions, and I don't know how much -- they have a different approach. They've now amalgamated there. They've done away with workers' compensation. They now call it some translated meaning . . .

DR. BUCK: Well, what is the philosophy? What did they replace it with?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, they've amalgamated their automobile and their workers' compensation Acts together.

MR. WISOCKY: It's more of a social security type of system.

DR. BUCK: I see. So it doesn't matter how you get hurt.

MR. MARTIN: It's part of a whole general program.

MR. WISOCKY: But there are moves there, and if you're thinking that way, it might be wise to go there if we need to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, if we go to the maritimes, it's just as well to combine them and have a look at it.

DR. BUCK: If they have something completely different, then I think it's our responsibility to look at it. It may be entirely different.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll keep that in mind.

MRS. FYFE: Was it Australia or New Zealand that has some all-encompassing . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: New Zealand has that: from the womb to the tomb.

MRS. FYFE: Yes, you could be hurt at anything -- chased by a jealous husband -- and you're still covered.

MR. NELSON: It's all state socialism down there. Believe me, New Zealand is socialist. I've been there three times. God forbid.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think you're right, Walter, that if we look at any maritime province, combine it and spend some time in this Quebec thing. When we get the submissions, we'll have a better chance to look at something to help us have some idea of what direction we may want to go. Anything left out, Keith? John?

MR. SMITH: Yes, I think there were some points which might be brought to attention regarding the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please go ahead. Not the total briefing, now; that's for the 20th.

MR. SMITH: What I was going to do is have a copy of your conference statement for Friday. You haven't seen it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, the press conference tomorrow. Yes, that should be distributed.

MR. SMITH: I have a copy for everybody here. Rather than go over the details, the actual topic areas the minister has mentioned are listed in here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm holding a press conference tomorrow to elaborate on it. Distribute that to all of them. And what else?

MR. SMITH: It makes mention in particular of the substantive changes that were made in Bill 51, the amendment Act, which has just gone through, as you know. I think a number of those areas would be subjects that would come up in the hearings. We'll make sure we get you copies.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, at this time, what are the greatest concerns that the employer is having that have been funnelled back to you? Are most of the concerns from the employer rather than the employee?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, a good question, Walter. I don't want to sound like so often he couldn't answer the question in the Legislature from the minister. A good question. The high cost of assessment bills for 1983 . . .

DR. BUCK: Just at this point, Mr. Chairman, has that changed significantly, or is that just because everybody is making fewer dollars and they feel the pinch more? MR. CHAIRMAN: That changed significantly, Walter. Where the real complaints are coming -- and there are certain sectors of our employers who had a work force that was earning close to \$40,000. Their assessments are based on the actual payroll. Prior to 1982 their assessments were based on up to \$22,000. We were advised that that impact would only be about a 15 per cent increase, and it's far greater. But how many of those employers are in that category? That's the biggest concern. The second one is the misunderstanding . . .

MR. MARTIN: The construction people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Construction was one, but manufacturing has been the most vociferous on these concerns. Construction has not been that bad. Right, John? I think manufacturing was worse. Interestingly, I was recently looking at some information that even miners, for example -- many of the McIntyre Mines' workers were earning between \$35,000 and \$40,000, with additional benefits: overtime, wet pay, shift differential, and whatever. With the recession, the downturn, the industry is closing.

The other one, for the benefit of those who were around here, is the misunderstanding on the compensation. John's people advised me that the average compensated earnings for 1982 -- after the year '82 -- was only about \$2,000 difference. In 1981, the average compensated earnings, before we raised the ceiling, was \$20,882. At the end of '82, their average went up to \$23,064. So the average wasn't that great, but something is happening there. Many employers believe that it is the cost that has pushed up. That's the biggest complaint my office has had.

MR. WISOCKY: I guess it's a question of looking at the method of financing. That is foremost. And if you visit other jurisdictions you get some insight because there are different ways right across the country.

MR. MARTIN: Do you think, too, that part of it would be the economy? I would expect that they're facing a squeeze in every way. Perhaps you wouldn't have seen the same complaints if the economy had stayed relatively the same.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Back in '79, we didn't hold hearings in Drumheller, Peace River, and Fort McMurray. Nobody showed an interest. Part of it is the economy. We have to accept this.

MRS. FYFE: We didn't go to Medicine Hat, either, did we?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, we didn't have any in Medicine Hat either. Just Lethbridge and then Red Deer. We didn't have any in Drumheller or Medicine Hat. No responses.

MRS. FYFE: I don't remember Grande Prairie.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, we did Grande Prairie.

MRS. FYFE: I didn't attend that one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the second part is: they were just not prepared. They're going to be a lot better prepared this time, because wherever I've gone in the last six months, I have talked to them: be ready, there's going to be a select committee. So many of them are doing their homework and preparing. At the same time, I'm encouraging them. When you hear from any of them and they know you're on the committee -- if it's Ron, Stan, Walt, or whoever -- just say: for gosh sakes, don't beef; present some recommendations in your brief that the committee can use. There's no use talking about it.

I will always have one of my staff along in case we get a complainant, a claimant, come up. So the committee will not be devoting time; my staff will look after the complaint. If we're in wherever and up comes a worker, what do you? You don't want to assign John to it. One of these two -- Brian or Jenny, both will be working at it -- will be along with me to take that. Jenny says she wants to go to High Level, Walter. I don't know why.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, I may have missed this before I came in. Walter has been talking a little about the maritimes. I understand there is a conference there in August. I just wonder if that's been given some consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Stan. John and I have talked about it. John has attended those conferences. In our chat earlier this week, we were of the opinion that we could just waste our time. The conference is a sharing of information. John, do you want to elaborate on how that national conference of boards takes place?

MR. WISOCKY: It's group sessions, like rehab claims and so forth. It's highly technical, and there's hardly enough time to even share the technical aspects.

MR. MARTIN: It's more for professionals.

MR. WISOCKY: Yes. So I feel that it would be a waste of time in some respects, and to visit them at that point in time would cause some problems if

we wanted to visit boards. That's why I'm glad we're going in January. Also the constitution for the association just blanket said many years ago, no outsiders. In fact, I understand that the chairman of the advisory committee in New Brunswick asked to attend this year and they said no.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that may resolve our dilemma. Ron was going to be in the maritimes for his vacation, and he wanted to know if he could just sit in on some of the sessions.

MR. WISOCKY: I don't think you would learn that much and in fact you'd feel uncomfortable in some respects.

MR. MARTIN: Enjoy your holiday. Don't ruin it by going to meetings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm glad you raised that, Stan. That was something we were talking about and I just forgot that. John, do you have anything else you want to add?

MR. WISOCKY: That was one of the points. You have the mailing lists.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I have to get them back to Louise and you. I don't need them.

MR. WISOCKY: I spent most of yesterday with the industry task force people. They want a briefing as to what the board is doing. That will be a whopping submission; no question about it. But the whole thrust is dollars. Some of the people on it have to learn a little more about the business. Generally speaking, I feel confident that they'll make some sound recommendations and proposals. It was worth while spending time there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: John, I want to compliment you, if you're doing that now; continue doing it. There was nothing more disappointing than some of the briefs that came up. As a matter of fact, one particular one just gnaws at me. It was a large firm in Grande Prairie, if you remember, Walt -- the Proctor & Gamble one. The two lads who presented the brief that morning hadn't seen it until they were in the car. That was how ill prepared they were. The author of it wasn't even around. That's the thing that was unfortunate.

MR. WISOCKY: The other thing I strongly suggest this time is that when it comes to legislation, I'd like to have the draft legislation done in house and then give it to Legislative Counsel to fine-tune. That was one of the problems last time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would really like to see legislation in layman's words. When you leave it to the lawyers . . .

MR. NELSON: I agree with you. There's too many lawyers doing legislation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: However, it's a good point.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I think we have to keep two things in the backs of our minds when we're listening to these things. One, they're going to be complaining about the rates. Then if word gets out that Workers' Compensation is going to build a new castle, we as politicians will all be pilloried. You know, the man says, look, I can't afford to pay my assessment right now, and I

hear the Workers' Compensation Board is going to build a whole new building; why do they need it? Plus the fact that we've got to try to help inform these people what they're getting in return for what they're paying. So that will be our purpose, as well as just listening.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Walter, when you raise that -- let me just brief you. The benefit is . . .

DR. BUCK: Plus that transfer, Mr. Minister, of the funds from Workers' Compensation to Alberta health care, which I think is utterly and totally ridiculous. I've already prejudiced my views in my statement on that. If you are hurt, you are hurt; if you are an Albertan, you are an Albertan. I don't care if you get hurt falling down the street, dead drunk, or on the job. You have already paid your premium to be cured and treated. I think we're going to have to have some kind of a stand, because people are going to be asking us that question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Until the report is issued, I think the best way is to encourage them to make their representation.

With regard to the building, let me just brief you a little. It's there; you're right on. Back in '80, when the board thought -- and you know what the climate was like in 1980; there was a shortage of all kinds of space. Next to its building, the board had a very valuable piece of land that cars were parked on. They asked me to take to cabinet the recommendation that they wanted to build another tower there, because this building is paid for totally.

I took it to cabinet. At that time, Tom Chambers and the economic affairs committee of cabinet recommended that the board relocate and that the government would pick up the building to house government departments, which sounded fine. There's a need for space and everything. That was given the okay. The board went on the [inaudible] of cabinet, because they have to get approval to purchase land, and obtained an option on that CN land on 16th Street and 4th Avenue. It's now before city hall for rezoning. If that rezoning doesn't go through, we start at square one. It's really not the board's doing alone. The board would have been just as happy to have another building where they are, maybe to house the rehab facilities and everything else. I thought I would share that with you.

The same with health care costs, give us your input. Someone said to me that there's so much empty space, the board should rent space. Well, it's like renting space for a hospital. If you're going to combine the rehab services and offices, it's enough. The building has got to be designed for it. You can't just rent the Sun Life building or some other building to house that. It's just not that simple.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, the last question I have to ask is: what dollars are we talking about transferring from Workers' Compensation to Alberta health care?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Around \$23 million for '82 and about another \$20 million has been paid for by the board for doctors' reports and other expenditures.

MR. MARTIN: It's a lot of dollars, isn't it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's a lot of money, when you think about \$30 million to \$40 million. We'll look at it. We'll have to get some more definite, pinpointed figures so the committee can see what it is.

DR. BUCK: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions? Keith.

MR. SMITH: It's the tentative attendance at the Medichem conference, which you indicated might be of interest to the committee. Do you still want to present that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What week is that conference; who has those minutes?

MR. WISOCKY: The 26th to the 29th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is an international Medichem conference in Calgary. If any of you are interested, it's basically on occupational medicine, isn't it?

MR. SMITH: It's very heavily weighted in toxicity and toxicological studies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll get the agenda out to all of you. I'm committed to be at the Medichem conference and I have a cabinet retreat toward the end of the week, so we have no hearings that week. If any of you want to take in any part of it, I'll send it out to you. You get back to me, and we'll be able to authorize it. I think there could be a value, particularly when we're looking at some of the submissions that I suspect trade unions are going to present; that is, on health and safety. That's September 26 to 29.

MR. MARTIN: Is that going to be so technical? How much benefit are people like us going to get out of it?

MR. SMITH: There's a great difficulty in reading the titles on some of the pages, let alone the conference.

MR. MARTIN: Maybe a dentist would understand.

DR. BUCK: I'm going to have to be suffering in Vancouver that weekend.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, has this ad appeared?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that the redraft? The material he's given you will be going. That was the first draft. Yes, that will be in next week's weekly.

MR. NELSON: The reason I ask is that there are four of us here who sit on the heritage savings trust fund. We have identified the 30th and 31st as trust fund meetings, where you've identified Grande Prairie and Peace River. I wonder if we could switch those two days, either to the end of the previous week or something along that line. There are a couple of other conflicts, but we're not going to clean everything up. I just wonder about those two particular ones where there is total confliction.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The thing is that we might often find ourselves with only five out of seven.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But we wouldn't want to get below four.

MR. NELSON: The Heritage Savings Trust Fund thing is very, very important, as this is. I just wonder why we can't switch those two days into a previous week or something. I think that would be reasonable.

MR. MARTIN: I thought they had gone through this. It was my understanding that . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kowalski and I talked about it. Ken said that he has 13 members, and he won't be as short of members as we would if you go with me and miss one or two of his hearings.

MR. NELSON: What I'm saying is that there are two days there that we could possibly switch into other days. If we can do it to accommodate the four members, I think we should try to do that.

DR. BUCK: The only thing is that they changed the membership on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund so all four opposition members were on so there would be one or two there at all times.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Stan, if need be, if you want to attend a heritage fund and we miss you, you'll get the briefing material and all that. You won't be there to get the experience of hearing the presentation. But I think we're going to have to go then, because I have to fit in my own calendar.

MR. MARTIN: That's what I understood they had done. The two chairmen tried to minimize the impact as much as they could. By the time you start switching -- because there are other things -- then you create a problem for other people. I'd just as soon deal with it.

DR. BUCK: There are just those two days when there are really bad conflicts.

MR. NELSON: Well, there's a day here and a day there. But that's okay.

MRS. FYFE: There are four altogether.

MR. NELSON: Where there's just a day, we could pick that up. But where there are two days in a row like that I think we should make some other efforts.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Here's the thing: we don't yet know the interest that will develop there. We're giving this in the ad.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I have one suggestion on that. If that's the ad that's going in on the public hearings, I think the members of the committee should be listed as well as the chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, that's the ad that's going in. I didn't list each of the members. But the news release that I sent to all the news media has all of you on it, plus your biographies.

DR. BUCK: If that's the notice that's going in all the weekly papers, I think the members of the committee should be on there. I don't think I need any publicity and neither does anybody else. But the thing is that if somebody wants to contact you, then they can bend your ear and get some of the details. Because people don't read the newspaper. At least if they know you're on the committee, they'll say: where and when is such and such a hearing? I think we're all practising politicians. If we're going to be spending taxpayers' money, we all might as well get a little benefit from it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The only reason my name is there is so the mail would come here. We'll keep it this way, Walt. Sorry.

DR. BUCK: Why? Do you want a motion?

MRS. FYFE: I would just as soon that some of those calls came to Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've worked with this already. The first ads have gone out to the weeklies. We have to get them to the weeklies today, to get them in next week. I don't want a weekly in Fort Saskatchewan or the St. Albert journal complaining that they didn't get their ad.

DR. BUCK: If they put them out that early, they'll forget them by the time . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is several ads.

MR. SMITH: This will run for two ads in the dailies and one in the weeklies. I was going to mention, though, that there will be second advertising once we have the exact locations.

MRS. FYFE: Who has the list of weeklies? Does that go through . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: They do it through the Public Affairs Bureau.
One more thing I need. Can I ask -- and I've been trying to reach you, Walt.

DR. BUCK: Yes, I've been suffering in Jasper for four days.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can I have you act as vice-chairman, because of your background?

DR. BUCK: I can do that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In my absence -- if I break a leg, and I'm not there.

DR. BUCK: I'd be pleased to do that. I'll be clear for just about all of them, except the July one when I'll be in the bush. But I've been to all those other things, so I can read the material. If you wish, I'd be pleased to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Nothing else? Put this half-day on your July bill when you come in, so we don't put in a bill for the half a day *per diem* that you get. Oh, you have it already for the month. Oh that girl.

MRS. EMPSON: I don't have the kilometres for those that applies to.

MR. MARTIN: What do we put in here? I forget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put in your mileage from your home to here. Oh, the *per diem*. What's the *per diem*?

MRS. EMPSON: As a member, you get paid \$100 for attending, and you get a \$75 *per diem* . . .

MR. MARTIN: No, not for us.

MRS. EMPSON: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not today, but you would get the other.

MR. MARTIN: If you're in Edmonton, you don't get the other.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you live in Edmonton, you don't get the other.

MR. THOMPSON: On that point, Mr. Chairman. I'm heading out tonight on the plane. I'm not going to stay here tonight. Why would I be getting *per diem*.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The meeting is duly called for today. I don't get any *per diem*.

MRS. EMPSON You would get the \$100 claim, though, as a committee member. All the other chairmen are submitting it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ministers don't; chairmen do.

MRS. EMPSON Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. THOMPSON: Well, what do we get? Is this a half a day? Is it a full day?

MRS. EMPSON If you're not staying overnight, you can claim your meal allowance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the daily allowance?

MRS. EMPSON \$100.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Claim the \$100.

MR. THOMPSON: It doesn't matter if you're here for two or ten hours?

MRS. EMPSON That's for attending as a committee member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You'll be doing homework, and I won't be giving you time for homework. John, do you have something else?

MR. WISOCKY: I'm not going to be here for the first four days of July.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right.

DR. BUCK: Can I ask a very naive question? In our mileage thing, it's there and back, isn't it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. That's all that is due for today.

MRS. FYFE: May I depart. I have a graduation to get to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for coming a little earlier. Everybody will be able to get away a little earlier.

MRS. FYFE: It's a great advantage to me. I appreciate it very much.

MR. MARTIN: So the 20th is the next one, right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. See you at the briefing on the 20th. You'll get a reminder where it's at. It'll be at the WCB building.

DR. BUCK: I'm not going to be there. I'll be up at La Crete that week.

MR. NELSON: That means that information will be sent out to the various offices that they may expect a visit, and the people there will be able to assist us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That will be the intent.
Very good; thank you.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.