



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSE SERVICES**

**Hansard Verbatim Report**

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**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSE SERVICES  
2007**

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair  
Prince Albert Carlton

Mr. Rod Gantfoer, Deputy Chair  
Melfort

Mr. Greg Brkich  
Arm River-Watrous

Ms. Doreen Eagles  
Estevan

Mr. Glenn Hagel  
Moose Jaw North

Mr. Andy Iwanchuk  
Saskatoon Fairview

Hon. Warren McCall  
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

Hon. Kevin Yates  
Regina Dewdney

[The committee met at 09:08.]

**The Chair:** — Well good morning, members. I think we're all set to go. Welcome to all the members of the Standing Committee on House Services to this meeting.

We have a very brief agenda, and none of which matters require a whole lot of debate. And so what I would ask for first of all is a motion that the committee not broadcast today's meeting, that being that there is really not much to broadcast. So Mr. Hagel moved . . .

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Chair, I move:

That the committee not broadcast today's meeting.

**The Chair:** — Moved by Mr. Hagel, member for Moose Jaw North:

That the committee not broadcast today's meeting.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt that motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Motion is carried.

You have before you an agenda consisting of four items. My proposal is that we move agenda item no. 3 to being the last item so that we can follow up after we get the report from the Sergeant-at-Arms about the Chamber chair proposals that members can actually take a look and feel and sit in the chairs and test them out.

Are we agreed on the agenda . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . right on.

Then let's go to agenda item 1, adoption of changes to membership of standing committees pursuant to rule 137(4)(a). Mr. Hagel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I would move:

That the name of Mr. Eldon Lautermilch be substituted for the name of the Hon. Judy Junor on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Chair:** — Moved by Mr. Hagel:

That the name of Mr. Eldon Lautermilch be substituted for the name of the Hon. Judy Junor on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Motion is carried. Mr. Thomson.

**Mr. Thomson:** — I would move:

That the name of Mr. Hagel be substituted for the name of

the Hon. Mr. McCall on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Chair:** — Moved by Mr. Thomson, the member for Regina South:

That the name of Mr. Glenn Hagel be substituted for the name of Hon. Warren McCall on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — The motion is carried.

The Chair recognizes Mr. McCall.

**Hon. Mr. McCall:** — I move:

That the name of Hon. Kevin Yates be substituted for the name of Mr. Andrew Thomson on the Standing Committee on House Services.

**The Chair:** — It has been moved by Member Warren McCall from Regina Elphinstone-Centre:

That the name of Kevin Yates be substituted for the name of Andrew Thomson on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Motion is carried.

**Hon. Mr. McCall:** — I further move:

That the names of Mr. Glenn Hagel, Mr. Eldon Lautermilch, Mr. Andrew Thomson be substituted for the names of Hon. Judy Junor, Hon. Sandra Morin, and Hon. Kevin Yates on the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — It has been moved by the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre, Mr. McCall:

That the names of Mr. Glenn Hagel, Mr. Eldon Lautermilch, Mr. Andrew Thomson be substituted for the names of Hon. Judy Junor, Hon. Sandra Morin, and Hon. Kevin Yates on the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt this motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Motion is carried.

Are there any further committee changes? Mr. Iwanchuk.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** —

That the name Mr. Andrew Thomson be substituted for the name of the Hon. Len Taylor on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

**The Chair:** — Moved by Mr. Andy Iwanchuk, member for Saskatoon Fairview:

That the name Mr. Andrew Thomson be substituted for the name of Hon. Len Taylor on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Motion is carried. Mr. Thomson or Mr. . . . are we going to have a battle over this?

**Mr. Thomson:** — No, I'll defer of course.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Iwanchuk.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** —

That the name of the Hon. Judy Junor be substituted for the name of Mr. Eldon Lautermilch on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

**The Chair:** — Moved by Mr. Iwanchuk, the member for Saskatoon Fairview:

That the name of Hon. Judy Junor be substituted for the name of Mr. Eldon Lautermilch on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Motion is carried. Mr. Thomson.

**Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Chairman, I would move:

That the name of Mr. Peter Prebble be substituted for the name of the Hon. Lon Borgerson on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

**The Chair:** — Moved by the member for Regina South, Mr. Thomson:

That the name of Mr. Peter Prebble be substituted for the name of Hon. Lon Borgerson on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Motion is carried. Any further membership changes on standing committees? No.

And members will have just received a report which states the new memberships of the committees which have just been amended. We needed to report on that. The Chair recognizes Mr. Hagel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Chair, I move:

That the 11th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be adopted and that it be filed with the Clerk, pursuant to rule 134(6).

**The Chair:** — Moved by the member from Moose Jaw North, Mr. Hagel:

That the 11th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be adopted and filed with the Clerk, pursuant to rule 134(6).

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Motion is carried.

We've had some discussion, members, about follow-up to the revision to the *Rules and Procedures* manual that we have been working on over the last two or three years, and the follow-up would consist of looking at our rules in total and seeing if there are any changes that would be suitable to make simply because of the current practices and in some cases just housekeeping.

And so the proposal is that we appoint a sub-committee to make recommendations on the rules and procedures back to this committee. Mr. Hagel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Chair. Hon. members of the committee may or may not recognize this wad of paper here. But what has occurred is that as a result of thoughts about the rules and operations of the Assembly, along with the fact that we've had some major changes in our structure of operation over the course of the last three years I guess it would be, related to committees and the sitting days and a set calendar — which have been major changes in our operation — that it's appropriate to update the operational rules of the Assembly, many of which I think we would put into the category of housekeeping, bringing what the rules actually say in line with practice.

And I think in some cases looking still at some small changes in terms of operation, I think it's appropriate at this time to take a closer look at that. And as we're in the process of reprinting the rules book for ourselves to reflect the major changes, that we just simply update the whole process.

And in order to accommodate that Mr. Gantfoer has indicated he's willing and I would be willing, Mr. Speaker, to work together with you as a subcommittee to bring recommendations back to this committee for decision by the committee to recommend to the Assembly. At the end of the day, changes in rules can only be made in one place, and that's in the House itself. But as this is the committee which can make . . . and is the appropriate committee to make recommendations to the House. There is a fair chunk of . . . I think the large bulk of

which will be considered relatively tedious deliberations on the rules, some of which is bringing, just as I say, just modernizing our writing of what we've actually been doing in our practices but also some of which, I think, involves careful deliberation on the balance of the rights and the responsibilities of both government and opposition in balance in order to reflect the appropriate will of democracy in the practices of what we do in the House.

And I certainly would be willing — and Mr. Gantfoer may want to speak to this as well — to just go through our entire rule book item by item right now and look at the appropriateness of changes.

**An Hon. Member:** — Not right now.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Well . . . So we have, I think, a couple of options. One is we could set aside the next several hours for the committee to do this as a group exercise, and I don't know if I would anticipate a big group hug at the end of the thing or not. But the other is to assign it to people who apparently have no life and ask them to make recommendations back. And so anticipating the will of the committee, I would move:

That a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on House Services consisting of the Speaker, Mr. Gantfoer and Mr. Hagel be appointed to study and make recommendations on revisions to the rules and procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

If I may violate the rules, Mr. Speaker, by making one more comment before continuing the vote, this would simply I think parallel what we did last year when the three of us did reviews of the Western Canadian legislatures and then brought back recommendations to this committee which made recommendations to the House that we adopted and put into practise this spring regarding the calendar and operating days of the House. Mr. Speaker, I shall so move.

**Mr. Brkich:** — I'll gladly second it.

**The Chair:** — We have a mover and a seconder. Any further comments to the motion? Mr. Gantfoer.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to briefly echo what Mr. Hagel was saying as well. I think it's important that we take this opportunity to indeed make sure that the rules as they exist are in keeping with the intent and direction that we've been setting and also reflect the actual parliamentary practice that we have adopted for some time.

I was certainly hoping that there'd be a clamour to stay and to go through this in detail, but I certainly understand that people may not quite appreciate the joy that comes in getting things right. And I certainly am prepared to participate in this process and would hope that we would have this process done fairly quickly and that the House Services Committee would reconvene perhaps in later summer or certainly before the fall and receive our report and then be prepared to make a recommendation and a report to the legislature for ratification. So I do agree and I think it's worthwhile and look forward to the exercise.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Thomson.

**Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Chairman, if I might ask this question, if the legislature were not to sit this fall due to a general election, what would become of this work and this report?

**The Chair:** — Greg, could you give us the options on that?

**Mr. Putz:** — The report would be filed with the Clerk, and it would be available to the public. But of course it would never be ratified by the House, so it would have no effect. I suppose a new House would have the option of taking up that work and adopting it for itself. But one legislature of course can't tie the hands of another legislature, and they may wish to start from scratch or ignore it or, as I said, take it into consideration and adopt it for itself.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Hagel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Yes, I think just further to that as we consider all the possible scenarios, I think the bottom line would be that if there is a new legislature, then the report of the subcommittee and the actions of the House Services Committee — assuming, as Mr. Gantfoer said, that the House Services Committee deals with the report — would be made available to a new legislature if that were the case.

And it would simply be an item of information, but I suspect in reality what it would do would be considered by a new legislature as useful in the process having reflected the deliberations and the advice and recommendations of the previous House Services Committee.

So even in that possible scenario, I think it's a worthwhile exercise. I would also offer the view that this is the appropriate time — and I think this has been sort of the tradition of this Assembly — the appropriate time to do a review of rules is in the latter part of a term and at a time in which the approach to it is the most likely to find, when recommending changes, a balance that represents both the rights and the responsibilities within the democratic process of both the government and the opposition.

**The Chair:** — The motion before the committee is:

That the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on House Services consisting of the Speaker, Mr. Gantfoer, and Mr. Hagel be appointed to study and make recommendations on revision to the rules and procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

Moved by Mr. Hagel, seconded by Mr. Brkich. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Motion is carried.

And now we'll approach the final item agenda, and that is the report on the Chamber chair replacement. I would welcome Pat Shaw, our Sergeant-at-Arms, who is responsible for keeping our furnishings etc. in this room and in the Chamber. Mr. Shaw.

**Mr. Shaw:** — Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. As you are aware, the Board of Internal Economy has passed a motion in which we are going to replace the chairs in the Chamber. Since the end of the session, through SPM [Saskatchewan Property Management] . . . they have standing orders through their furniture branch. We had eight chairs brought in of various makers and sizes, dimensions and styles. We have picked two out of that.

The committee that was struck was myself, Ken Ring, and Shannon Ferguson from LAS [Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan]. We've chosen two chairs based on the criteria that they have to fit in the Chamber, they have to look good in the Chamber, and they're of a sufficient size that would meet the demands of various body sizes that we have in the Chamber, you know, going from Mr. Nilson down to the smaller people in the Chamber. I have two chairs to present to you here.

They're in black simply because that's what was sent to us. I would like whomever wishes to try them out. Try them out. Try them in different heights and positions and so on. And I'm looking for consensus on a chair. What the plan is, is to have the coat of arms embossed on the back, facing side of the chair which would be the part facing you here. And it wouldn't be stitched in. There would be a template made, and it would be actually stamped into the leather, and it would be the coat of arms.

Several considerations that we had were the style of the chair. Some of them were too modernistic. They didn't look good in the Chamber. Heritage branch also has a say in this as to whether the style is suitable for the Chamber. Colour is another aspect. We were thinking of something that was neutral as opposed to blue or green or red. So black is neutral. Brown is neutral. And that's basically it.

As far as prices are concerned, one of the chairs is more expensive than the other, owing to the fact that the quality of the grade of leather and the adjustability of it is a little superior to the other one. So I would invite you to try them. I can give you the prices if you'd like.

Okay, the chair on the right, as you're looking at them, the maker of that chair is HON, Park Avenue model. It's a mid-back leather with a maple base. These chairs are available in an oak base to match the Chamber colours. That chair is \$1,200 plus crestring and tax and shipping.

The chair on the left is the Haworth chair, Prescott model. It's also mid-back. It's a grade 2, their top grade of leather with an oak base. They're \$1,737 plus crestring and tax. You can also get that chair in a grade 2 leather which is a somewhat inferior quality. What I'm told by the manufacturer is that it could have cattle . . . No, I'm just joking. It doesn't have brands on it, but it could have slight deficiencies in the leather, marks, and so on.

The crestring would be 21.50 per chair, that includes the making of a template. The template has been costed out to us as \$2,500 by one source. The one manufacturer will include that in the 21.50 per chair, is the making of the template.

**The Chair:** — Could you just elaborate please once again on the embossing. I'm not sure if you're talking about it being

stamped on in gold for example or is pressed in?

**Mr. Shaw:** — No, it'll be pressed in. There'll be no colour associated with it. There'll just be the . . . It'll be pressed right in to the leather. We thought that was better instead of stitching as the stitching could at some point be cut or break and come loose, and we're looking at the maintainability of the chairs over time.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much. Unless there are questions, what I would do is just . . . We're not looking for a decision here. We're looking for various input for consensus. So I'll take Mr. Gantefoer, then Mr. Thomson.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you. Patrick, when we travelled to Alberta and BC [British Columbia] on this fact-finding thing, it seemed to me that one or both of those legislative assemblies had just replaced their chairs. Have you looked at the type and quality of the chairs that they are using there and put that in the comparison?

**Mr. Shaw:** — Yes, I've contacted both. I've had all the information sent on the chairs they use. The ones in Alberta are substantially less money, but they're not as good a chair. And the ones in British Columbia are about the same.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you. And I would assume then, that part of the quality of the chairs is beyond the leather into the mechanisms that you know, some of the chairs that we currently have in the Assembly are starting to get pretty tenuous in terms of how the mechanisms are working and that sort of thing. So I'm assuming that this is a high quality mechanism that's designed to last for some time.

**Mr. Shaw:** — Exactly. What we've been told is that the life of the chair, they sort of . . . it's not a warranty or guarantee, but 25 years.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you.

**Mr. Shaw:** — Also the chair on the left has a feature on it that will lock the back. If you lean back you can lock it into a position whereas the one on the right doesn't have that feature. They also have a tension ability so that you can tension how easy or how difficult it is to push the chair back into a reclining position. The chair on the left is a little larger chair. It's a little wider in width, of course, a little longer in the seat as compared to the chair on the right.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you. The chair on the left that's larger then, has that been sort of tried in the spaces we have in the Assembly? So there's room between the risers and the desks and things of that nature?

**Mr. Shaw:** — Yes, I've measured them in comparison to the chairs we have in there now. They will fit and there's not a problem with it.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Thomson.

**Mr. Thomson:** — Yes, I have three concerns. First of all, I'm

obviously concerned about the price of this. I'm not understanding why it is today we're looking at undertaking or why the board for whatever reason would look at authorizing \$120,000 expenditure for chair replacement. Second of all, going to a high-back chair is not the style that our Assembly is accustomed to. Third of all, embossing is simply an Americanization of our Chamber.

I guess it's of little concern to me as I will probably never occupy one of them, but as a member of the Assembly I have significant concerns that we would look at undertaking an expenditure at this time of this frivolous nature when it would appear we could simply continue to use the existing chairs. Now if there's a reason that the existing chairs cannot continue to be used, I'd appreciate hearing it.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Brkich.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Some of them are in good shape, but some of them are in bad shape, and I had one of them. And it ended up getting shuffled around. I remember I moved it to the front. I think Mr. D'Autremont ended up with it and then Doreen. There's about two or three of them that were just awful in there. And then they finally got shuffled around. Mine, I finally got one you could adjust. One or two of them that you just couldn't adjust them anymore for the height.

And I know the one beside me, if you lean all the way back in it — I think that's Mr. Kerpan's — it'll just about flip him right out the back. You know, you can't lean back on it. I'm not saying we need new chairs, but some of them, if we don't get new chairs, there is a few that need to be fixed. Some of them are in good shape but if . . . you want to make sure you're in the House every day, so you don't end up with one of them bad ones because if you miss two days you'll come back and somebody will have switched a chair on our side anyways. There is about four or five them that are basically almost wrecked. I know we've tried to find replacements. I don't know if you want to answer that.

**Mr. Shaw:** — Several of the . . . I'm not sure how many, some years ago were manufactured to match the chairs in the Chamber at a cost of \$3,400 a piece which pales in comparison to what we're looking at spending now. So these chairs are at an age and of a style that SPM only has so many that can be replaced if they break. The components are virtually not available. And there are a number of people in the legislature now that are afflicted with bad backs. And they're not ergonomically correct to begin with. We spend a lot of time in those chairs, and that was the reason for the decision in the first place.

**Mr. Brkich:** — When were the chairs we're using currently now, when were they purchased?

**Mr. Shaw:** — Well some of them were purchased many, many years ago. I don't have any idea when, and it's some probably 15 years or 20 years ago that there were chairs manufactured to match what we had.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Thomson.

**Mr. Thomson:** — So let's get to the specifics then. How many

chairs currently in the Assembly are deemed to be unsuitable and in need of repair?

**Mr. Shaw:** — I don't think that's been established. The other thing is these chairs that we have, there are no wheels on them. I notice, particularly some of the women having difficulty getting into the chair, pulling them back. They're very heavy. But I don't think there's been an assessment made by SPM to say which ones are not good and which are good.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have been the recipient of a bad chair. I don't know if people just trade with me or what, but it just seems like every day Mr. Gantfoer has graciously adjusted my chair. I mean you have to be careful how you sit in them, or they'll just flip you right over. And I remember a few years ago when Mr. Hillson was there; he did flip right over in his chair. It went over the back. And I'm not saying that you know, we need all new chairs, but something has to be done with them because they're just . . . I've had a bad chair many days in there. Like Greg says, especially if you're missing a couple days, you're going to end up with it.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Thomson.

**Mr. Thomson:** — Well my understanding is that this is not an issue we actually decide on. This is something left to the board. I would hope that the board would consider in its wisdom the issue of replacement versus a simple restoration of existing furniture. I would assume that they have better information available to them in terms of the number of chairs that are in need of repair. I understand, to members of the Assembly, 120,000 may not seem like a significant matter. But 120,000 for chairs, frankly, seems to be a fairly high cost. Again I reiterate my concern about the Americanization with this cresting issue, and I would hope that the board'll take into consideration a report from heritage branch about what it is in terms of general style and approach we want to use.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Gantfoer.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think in sort of looking at this that the Board of Internal Economy either has made the decision or has certainly mandated to make the decision if this money should be expended or not. I think that the Sergeant is looking for input from members in terms of if there's a preference for comfort level or that sort of thing and that's appropriate if that's what we're being asked to consider.

In terms of the overall picture, I mean sooner or later the chairs have to be replaced. There is no question. And I would be very, very reluctant to have 10 chairs replaced at \$3,500 a piece to match the existing units and then have to face that again if you can cobble together the appropriate hardware to make them even work. I think that the time will come, and if it's now, then that's the Board of Internal Economy's decision to indeed replace the chairs.

I don't have a concern one way or the other about the cresting on them. If that's suitable and is a style in other legislatures, then I think it's appropriate. I don't worry about if it's coming from other Commonwealth countries, if that's the style or the Americans or wherever, if it's appropriate that we consider that then it's not a cost prohibitive kind of an add-on when you're

going through this exercise. And I certainly appreciate that, from my experience in life and in business, it's better to spend a little more money to get a high quality that's going to last for an extra decade perhaps than kind of going on the cheap and ending having to replace it because it's the easier decision at the time.

**The Chair:** — I thank members for their input. And unless there are others . . . I would entertain a motion to adjourn. Mr. Brkich.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Just one more comment on the chairs too. We've been to CPAs [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] and you want your legislature to look good. And my chair, I've finally found a good one, but it's also coming apart. The stuffing's going on it. It's wore to the wood. It kind of almost looks a little ratty. And some of them look nice, but some of them look rough. And we have a lot of visitors coming through, and sometimes I think that, you know, there's also the appearance of the legislature; you want it to look good. You want it to, you know, match. And we have a beautiful building, beautiful Chamber.

And yes, I know that if we buy the chairs, there'll be a news story about how we're spending money, but if we haven't bought one for a number of years, I think sometimes we owe it to have this Chamber look decent. And if the chairs were functional and if they could be fixed, I'd go that route. But I don't know if they can be. And like, I know there is some in there that look pretty rough. They're starting to tear. The fabric's tearing on them. Some of the fabric on the arms are wore right to the wood. To me, if I was a visitor I would think, you know, you've got a beautiful Chamber, and then you've got these chairs. Some of them are torn.

So that's just a comment from a member just on what it would look like. Being such a beautiful building and beautiful decor and heritage, I don't know if them chairs are appropriate or not, but I do think we do need to keep the upkeep of the building, and that's the only comment I wanted to make on chairs.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. Mr. Hagel.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn.

**The Chair:** — Moved by Mr. Hagel that the meeting do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Motion is carried. The meeting stands adjourned until next meeting is called.

[The committee adjourned at 09:42.]