

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

**The Chair:** — We'll get under way this morning because I know there's some members who have to rush off pretty quickly here. This morning what we require from the committee is to move a motion with respect to the 1997 Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees conference in Alberta, and the attendance of this conference in September — the dates, September 14 through September 16.

Now it's been the practice usually that I think the Chair and the Vice-Chair attend this conference; so this is the motion before us that would require somebody to move. Now I also note that although, you know, the Chair and Vice-Chair are the ones who are normally in attendance, others they note are welcome to attend as observers if they so wish as well. But having said that, could I have somebody move this motion?

**Mr. Sonntag:** — I'll move it. The motion includes "or designate," does it?

**The Chair:** — That's correct.

Okay, the motion before the committee is:

That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts authorize the attendance of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, and the committee Clerk at the 17th annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees to be held in Edmonton, Alberta, Sunday, September 14 through Tuesday, September 16, 1997. And further, that if the Chair or Vice-Chair cannot attend, they be authorized to designate another committee member to attend in their place.

Is the committee ready for the question? Everyone in favour of the motion? That's carried.

Now the balance of our short meeting will be to entertain some suggestions, members of the committee present, as far as possible, future meeting dates out of session. So if anybody has any particular . . . I suppose this morning what would be most advantageous, if there's members of the committee that know that there are particular weeks that they will not be able to attend, that might be the best way to approach this, given that there's not . . . some members not present as well and the Chair and Vice-Chair in the future could work out the most advantageous schedule after that.

**Mr. Sonntag:** — I thought maybe we should start on September 13 and go through until about the 17th.

**The Chair:** — Well there's probably a few other members of the committee that would go along with that.

**Ms. Stanger:** — Well I don't think that September, October is good because of Walter and Don and maybe June, because of farming. So I would make a suggestion, because I know that our convention is later on in November and I know I'll be gone the last week in October and part of the first week in November . . . I don't know what anybody thinks.

Oh November 11 we have off. I was going to say November 10 on, but that's no good because we all have dos November 11. Oh dear, already it's starting. How about the 17th?

**Mr. Sonntag:** — In 1996 we went from October 7 to October 11 which didn't seem to be a conflict. There we went the second week of October.

**Ms. Stanger:** — October?

**Mr. Sonntag:** — October, here it is — October 7 to October 11.

**Ms. Stanger:** — Oh well, we could do it in October then if people think they'll be done harvesting.

**The Chair:** — So you suggest that then perhaps we might consider a week in October then as our first meetings out of session. We can continue to investigate that; we can ask other members of the committee if that would suit their agenda. Every year is different of course, given the weather considerations and other people's activities with farming and such, so.

**Mr. Sonntag:** — It'd be my thought anyway that not before October 1 anyway. I don't think September's appropriate.

How about June; how about you; how do you feel?

**Ms. Draude:** — It really . . . It won't make any difference to me; I'm not going anywhere so I don't have any . . . (inaudible) . . . I'm going to.

**Mr. Jess:** — Well I think we . . . (inaudible) . . . probably if it has any impact on the farmers, it's probably better to go in September than October, but that doesn't matter to me. This is my job and I'm here.

**A Member:** — Better September than October?

**Mr. Jess:** — Oh yes, I think maybe earlier instead of later.

**A Member:** — September?

**A Member:** — Because . . . (inaudible) . . . won't be off yet.

**Mr. Thomson:** — The problem with September is obviously we want . . . The conference, the Chair and Vice-Chair will be at . . . I know Vi Stanger and I will be at the Washington seminar, whenever that is.

**Ms. Stanger:** — Mid-September.

**Mr. Thomson:** — Mid to late September.

**Ms. Stanger:** — And then you guys are away in September.

**Mr. Jess:** — It's hard to say. October's probably just as . . .

**Ms. Stanger:** — Just don't make it the first week in October.

**The Chair:** — So it looks like we're leaning towards October, sometime mid to latter half of October as a possible. So we'll continue to investigate that and then we'll deal accordingly.

**Ms. Stanger:** — From October 6 on.

**The Chair:** — Okay.

**Ms. Draude:** — Why don't we ever have a week in late August?

**Ms. Stanger:** — That would even be better.

**Ms. Draude:** — And then you wouldn't have to meet again until later on in October and, you know, that would break it up a little.

**Ms. Stanger:** — November.

**Ms. Draude:** — Yes, whenever. I just thought it would be a . . .

**Mr. Jess:** — That's probably a good suggestion.

**Ms. Stanger:** — That's a good suggestion.

**The Chair:** — So we'll also investigate a latter . . .

**Ms. Stanger:** — Last week in August.

**The Chair:** — Last week in August as a possibility.

**Ms. Draude:** — Or somewhere near the end of August.

**Mr. Jess:** — We'll get out of here by then, won't we?

**Ms. Draude:** — Could be. We just could keep on telling you otherwise.

**The Chair:** — I think that pretty well covers what we wanted to do this morning then. I have one exception; I note that the Provincial Auditor has brought a document along with him related to business plans. I know that this is something that we've had rather lengthy discussions about in meetings gone by.

Well maybe I'd just ask the Provincial Auditor just to make a few brief comments about this document that you've brought here this morning.

**Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Chairman, since this wasn't on the agenda, could I simply suggest we receive it and defer the conversation till our next meeting?

**Ms. Stanger:** — Because we have caucus at 12:15, so if we don't go and eat now, we don't eat.

**Mr. Thomson:** — Sorry. I appreciate the initial information. We've had this discussion before. I just recommend we postpone it until our next . . . next time.

**Mr. Jess:** — Actually Mr. Chairman, I'd appreciate about three minutes on it — three or five — from the auditor, if he can give us a little outline very, very briefly.

**A Member:** — I'm about to leave now, so you're going to lose quorum. My plane . . .

**The Chair:** — I note, Mr. Sonntag . . . yes.

So that's the extent of the meeting. The document is here for everyone to examine . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well we'll continue on then, just with a few brief discussions from the auditor here.

**Mr. Strelloff:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members. Last week the Government of New Brunswick announced that the business plan of New Brunswick Power Corporation was going to be placed on the Internet. So . . . so what we did was access the Internet and printed out a copy of that plan and just provided it for your information because this has . . . The planning information provided to legislators by Crown corporations has been an issue that has been discussed in the past and I thought it would be interesting to bring to your attention, an example of the more recent trends. And that's all.

**Mr. Strelloff:** — With that can . . . ?

**Ms. Draude:** — . . . two thousand and two.

**Mr. Strelloff:** — It's a very good document, too. Very interesting insights into their operations.

**The Chair:** — Could we have a motion to adjourn? Ms. Draude? Thank you.

We'll see you later this summer.

The committee adjourned at 11:43 a.m.