



Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
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Kelvington-Wadena

Ed Tchorzewski, Vice-Chair
Regina Dewdney

Rod Gantefoer
Melfort-Tisdale

Jack Goohsen
Cypress Hills

Jack Hillson
North Battleford

Walter Jess
Redberry Lake

Mark Koenker
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Violet Stanger
Lloydminster

Andrew Thomson
Regina South

Grant Whitmore
Saskatoon Northwest

The Chair: — It's 9 o'clock. I'm calling the meeting to order. This morning's business is consideration of a business agenda to establish an examination of the sale of Channel Lake Petroleum Ltd.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Madam Chairman. Madam Chairman, as you know, that the whole issue surrounding the Channel Lake thing was brought to light in the Provincial Auditor's fall report. There has been discussions as to what's the most timely way to deal with this, and certainly Public Accounts is one of the committees that have no choice but to deal with this issue since it is in the fall report of the Provincial Auditor.

In the House, over the last number of weeks, it has come to a great deal of public attention and has become an issue that has taken on somewhat of a life of its own. And I think that clearly the people of Saskatchewan and the taxpayers of Saskatchewan find it important that this be dealt with appropriately.

The official opposition has felt all along, and continues to feel, that the best way possible to deal with this is to have an independent public inquiry. However, it has become obvious that that is not likely to be granted by the government, and therefore we are reluctantly in agreement that the second-best place for this to be dealt with is the Public Accounts Committee, fulfilling its mandate to deal with the auditor's report and that this whole issue was reported by the Provincial Auditor.

However it's important that this committee has the latitude and the wherewithal in order to properly convene and investigate this whole issue. And therefore, Madam Chairman, I would like to move a series of motions, that with the support of members of the committee, I believe has the opportunity of making this investigation appropriate and thorough so that all the issues surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco will be dealt with.

And so with your permission I would like to move, first of all:

That the committee recommends and reports to the Legislative Assembly that the order of reference for the investigation be as follows:

that the Public Accounts Committee meet to conduct a special investigation of the purchase, management, and sale of Channel Lake; and

that the committee also consider the events surrounding the termination of Jack Messer by SaskPower and the subsequent decision to provide him with a severance package.

I so move, and I will provide copies of all these motions to all members on to you, Madam Chairman, for circulation to committee members.

The Chair: — There is a motion on the floor. Will the committee take this motion as read? Okay, those in favour of the motion?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Chair, I think it is important to

clarify the circumstances surrounding what's occurred here. And in doing so I want to indicate at the outset that we intend to defeat this motion and vote against it. I'll give you the reasons why.

I guess, putting it simply, I regret to say that this is probably too little too late on the part of the official opposition. It's unfortunate that we are at this juncture, and it's even more important that we are here the way we are here.

I think it is time, and the public of this province I think will agree and does agree, that it's time that the political gamesmanship that has been going on here stops and that the elected members of the legislature, whether it's in this committee or any other committee, get on with the work that the people of this province elected us to do.

The inquiry into the issue surrounding Channel Lake will begin in the Crown Corporations tomorrow. That has been decided because it was forced for that to be going there by the official opposition. This decision was forced by the Chair of this committee who refused to call a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee, and she and her party publicly declared that they would not call a meeting of this committee to review the Channel Lake issue. That is on the record in the House; that is on the public record.

And to come here today and all of a sudden say, whoops, we changed our mind, I'm sorry, is somewhat of an insult to the process.

The situation was further complicated when the Chair of this committee publicly called the Public Accounts Committee a kangaroo court, not only putting herself in contempt of the legislature, but putting into question her credibility as the Chair of the committee, and more importantly, her credibility as a Chair who could chair on this issue because of the nature of the way it was handled, in a position that should be a very responsible one.

This committee has a reputation of being effective and constructive in the disposition of its work. It is chaired by the opposition with a government member as Vice-Chair. The meetings are called and proposed agendas are prepared in consultation between those two people, whoever they may be at any particular time.

This meeting was called and this agenda was proposed by the Chair with no consultation. And the exercise was strictly politically motivated without regard for the public interest and the effective functioning of the Public Accounts Committee.

The official opposition can't have it both ways. They can't refuse to allow this committee to meet and function when it politically suits them and then call it to meet when it politically suits them yet another time. It can't work that way in committee. The work of the Public Accounts Committee is too important for that kind of chess game.

And because the official opposition obstructed the work of this committee, the matter of Channel Lake was put to the Crown Corporations Committee because the government believes that

it is important that this matter be considered promptly, and that the facts surrounding the issue be aired publicly. And it would be irresponsible, in our view, to continue with the so-called chess game that the official opposition has been playing, and keep moving this important inquiry around again.

It's time to get on with the work that we as elected members have been asked to do by our electors, and that's why we're not going to support this motion. And I would propose another motion to deal with the meetings of this committee and an agenda for the purposes of getting the work done in the Public Accounts Committee.

When the committee deals with this motion, I will then make my motion, having the floor. The agenda will follow the proposal in my motion to deal with the 1997 reports of the Provincial Auditor, which the Provincial Auditor was good enough to present to us at the last meeting of this Public Accounts Committee, with one small change which I will indicate to you when I propose my motion. And I will also, in the motion, indicate the dates of meetings of this committee that will hopefully, if the committee so approves, take place while the legislature is in session.

So, Madam Chair, I want to indicate again, we're not going to support this. And I want to reinforce what I am saying by something which the editorial in, I believe it is the *Leader-Post*, said about what has transpired here, because I am concerned that the whole credibility of the legislative process is being put into question.

In the editorial it says — and I won't mention the name of the member — but it says the name, but I'll just say the member. The Chair of the committee, it says:

... is wrong. Her statement suggests that MLAs could not possibly rise to the occasion and investigate Channel Lake in a thorough but fair manner. That is disappointing and demeaning of those elected to public office. What (once again the Chair, the Chair's) response really tells us is that the process won't work because her party won't let it, not because the committee isn't capable of doing the job.

I agree with that editorial, and I think the public of Saskatchewan agrees with that editorial. And that, I think, in itself is good reason why we need to oppose this motion and any other motions that are similar to it because they are in total contradiction of what the public expects us to do.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Madam Chair. When our caucus first began raising the issue of Channel Lake, we met and we were aware of course that there is more than one legislative committee. We discussed that and we came to the conclusion that Public Accounts was the appropriate forum for dealing with the matters arising out of Channel Lake.

I don't want at this time to go into what happened since then. It would serve no purpose except to say, as you are all aware, that I'm the only member of the legislature who has consistently said that Public Accounts is the appropriate committee to look into Channel Lake. And while I say I don't want to degenerate into saying I told you so, I cannot resist saying that if hon. members had supported me when I first raised hearing Channel

Lake in this committee, we would now be well along that road, and I submit, public confidence in all of us would be somewhat higher than it is today.

My main concern is that the public is clearly anxious for us to proceed. I worry that when they hear that this debate has now degenerated into a quarrel of which committee will hear the case, they will be even more frustrated.

Again I don't want to be too political this morning, but is it not a bad joke that for two weeks certain members rang the bell in the legislature for the express purpose of preventing a meeting of Public Accounts and then announced that they were calling off the bell-ringing on condition that there be a meeting of Public Accounts.

I want to suggest to all members that while we come from various political parties with different agendas, this morning we all have the same basic interest. We all want to demonstrate that a legislative committee hearing can be an effective, quick, and less costly way of dealing with public concerns.

While I am not always an admirer of all things American, we know that senate hearings are routinely and effectively used in the United States, and no one has ever suggested that a senate hearing is a kangaroo court. Is it too much to suggest that we here in Canada could do as well as the Americans.

My main point is that we should simply get on with the job. The people of Saskatchewan, who in Arlene Julé's words last week are the real client, demand it.

Frankly, I don't have strong views as to which committee should hear this issue. Although as I've already indicated, my caucus long ago came to the conclusion that the appropriate committee was this one here.

I'm sorry that now, because of various juxtapositions by various members, that it appears that probably will not be the case. But I would encourage all members to have a serious look as to which committee really is the best committee to hear this matter — a committee which is charged with the responsibility of reviewing the auditor's reports and the auditor's concerns, a committee which is chaired by the opposition and therefore, I think, gains some credibility from that; or another committee which lacks the long history and tradition of Public Accounts, a committee which was created in this province.

So those are my comments, Madam Chair. However, I would encourage all members, regardless of how the vote may go this morning, I would encourage all members to come together in a determination to make this process work to demonstrate to the people of Saskatchewan that notwithstanding our various parties and our various interests, we can come together in a determination to get to the bottom of these issues and to serve the true interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Gantefer: — Madam Chair, I feel that it's important to respond to the comments made by the Vice-Chair. And I want to reiterate again that the very nature of this committee and all committees are such that they are partisan. And we can try as we may and think if we like, that the committees deal in a non-partisan way. That simply does not augur true.

It's interesting that Bruce Johnstone has an article in the Saturday paper. And I'd like to quote from it. And he says:

Now we're faced with the prospect of the government reviewing the Channel Lake affair through the Crown corporations committee, which is chaired by partisan NDP backbencher Pat Lorje. This is opposed to having Channel Lake investigated by the public accounts committee which is chaired by June Draude of the Saskatchewan Party.

So which bogus review process is better? The NDP-dominated Crown corporations committee, or the NDP-dominated public accounts committee?

Either way, the government will be investigating itself, rather than the full, independent inquiry called for by the Saskatchewan Party, former SaskPower president Jack Messer and a large number of Saskatchewan taxpayers.

And it is completely in that interest that we have all along said that the only totally fair and impartial way that this investigation can occur in fairness to everyone, including those whose names have been on the front page, i.e., Mr. Jack Messer, and he agrees, members of the legal community agree that the only way, that the best way, the first choice way of the majority of Saskatchewan taxpayers has been to have a full and independent committee.

And that's what we have tried to do all along, is to convince this government of what people were telling us right across this province, that this is the only independent way of doing it. And to have the government members suggest that the only reason we were doing this was from any other motivation is just simply unfair and not based on any facts at all.

We certainly have said all along that if there's going to be a full investigation of this, there has to be the complete public inquiry and that all related documents related to this whole issue have to be tabled. We have said that there has to be waiver of the solicitor-client privilege that the government hides behind. And we know that a government-dominated committee, be it Public Accounts or Crown Corporations, are going to find out if they are willing to put the government to the test and say, we demand that all documents are released.

We will see if this self-righteous group of people who are so sure they want to get to the bottom of this all in an expeditious way are willing to stand the test of making sure that this committee or at the Crown Corporations Committee, that all people who are summoned will appear, that they will appear bringing the documents, all of the documents, all of the legal opinions, that they will waive the client-solicitor privilege so that these documents and the legal people who prepared them will be able to answer the questions of the committee totally and frankly.

We will see how forthright that the NDP (New Democratic Party) and the government majority is going to be to get at this whole issue. All along we were extremely cynical and we remain cynical of the so-called stated good intentions to get into this full and public inquiry. And it isn't going to happen, in our opinion, but we're willing to see and to put forward the test to see if that's going to happen. Opposition minority positions on

either committee are not going to see the light of day if all of this complete and forthright disclosure does not happen.

And so, Madam Chair, I certainly am not of the opinion that it's going to happen here because I don't believe that the government is going to allow it to happen here. I'm almost equally cynical it's not going to happen in Crown Corporations, not because of the desire of opposition members to ask for the information and to query people, but because the government majority will not allow it to happen. They will go so far but not far enough.

And so what happens is we get the similar kind of half-answers and half-truths and partial disclosure that the government thinks that the people of Saskatchewan are going to be satisfied with. And that is why, if we're going to do this, why we have to have all of the information disclosed.

And I will be moving all of these motions on this committee, and let the government defeat them. And we will be moving them, if that is the case, if we are forced to another agenda by the government majority here today, we will be moving these motions again tomorrow in Crown Corporations and to see exactly where the goodwill and the good faith of government majority members is going to be, Madam Chair.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Chair, I often reflect on what's happening and why there is cynicism in the view of many people about government and political parties and the political process. Because I think it's something we all, no matter what political stripe we may come from, should be concerned about that.

I know that there is some people, and even some politicians and some political parties, who deliberately would like to have the public believe that government doesn't work for them. When I speak of government, I mean the executive side of government, the majority side of government, and the opposition, because all that makes government, and it makes government function.

But there is unfortunately some people who would like nothing better than to discredit that whole operation because somehow it suits them politically. And I think it is time that that stopped, because when people lose confidence in their democratic institutions, then it's not long before they find their democratic institutions to be in jeopardy. And I have for one . . . I for one have no interest in pursuing that route.

We don't share that view. We believe that government — and I say about government in the broadest sense, which includes everybody in the legislature — is elected to do a job for the people who elected them: government members, opposition members and others.

And we're capable of doing that job. At least I think we are and I think my colleagues are. I would like to hope that members in the opposition believe the same of their colleagues.

If the official opposition is so convinced that the documents they want and people they want to call will not be called, why have they not been prepared to call a meeting so that those questions could be asked where they should be asked — in the committee?

We're prepared to have that happen. If there's a request that the member from Melfort-Tisdale has, he or his colleagues can raise those in the Crown Corporations Committee and we will be . . . we're prepared to stand to be judged by how that committee functions. We're prepared to be judged by the public of Saskatchewan whether that committee functions effectively, openly and constructively, because we think it's important as MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) to do that job. That's what the people elected us to do.

So I urge the members of the official opposition to come to the committee tomorrow, Crown Corporations Committee, and raise whatever issues they wish to raise. There will be an agenda set there. We'll all have a share in doing that. No restrictions will be — as they are not in here — made and what questions can be asked, as long as they're within the terms of reference. And let's get on with it. Let us stop this fooling around wasting public money; wasting the time of people who should be getting on with lots of other things in this legislature, and get on with the work where it is now going to take place, in the Crown Corporations Committee. And let's stop the chess game, because we're not here to play chess; we're here to do the people's business.

And so I think, let's deal with this motion. Let's defeat it. And once it's defeated the other motions are therefore no longer in order, because this motion refers to a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee. And if we're not having a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee dealing with this issue, then we have to move on with another item on the agenda.

The Chair: — Okay. Is there the desire of any other committee members to speak? We have a motion on the floor right now. Will you take the motion as read? Or would you like it read again?

Mr. Hillson: — I think, let's hear the motion, Madam Chair.

The Chair: — That the committee recommends — and this is moved by Rod Gantefer from Melfort Tisdale:

That the committee recommends and reports to the Legislative Assembly that the order of reference for the investigation be as follows:

That the Public Accounts Committee meet to conduct a special investigation of the purchase, management, and sale of Channel Lake; and

That the committee also consider the events surrounding the termination of Jack Messer by SaskPower and the subsequent decision to provide him with a severance package.

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

Recorded vote. Those in favour of the motion? Two. Those opposed? Six. The motion is defeated.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Madam Chair, that being the case, I think it's important that this committee get on with the work that it has to do and the Crown Corporations Committee get on with the work that it is now mandated to do, and will do. And

therefore without taking a lot of time in speaking to this, I want to move this motion to sort of give us some direction as what the committee of Public Accounts should be doing. And I will pass this over to you as soon as I've read it. And my motion is:

That the Public Accounts Committee meet on Thursday of each week while the legislature is in session, at 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., beginning on April 9, 1998.

That the agenda will be as proposed by the Provincial Auditor when this committee last met, except for the SaskPower Corporation, chapter 5, 1997 fall report, volume 2, which will be considered by the Crown Corporations Committee.

And I attach to this motion the memorandum which the Provincial Auditor provided for us, as part of the motion.

The Chair: — We have a motion before us moved by Mr. Tchorzewski.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — And I put in there that the committee would meet every Thursday because the Crown Corporations Committee — it looks like, if it so decides — but will be meeting on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

But we all know that members of the committee sometimes are unavailable or there are other things intervening, and I think at different meetings we may decide, if necessary, that we may not meet on some Thursdays. But I think we really need to have a schedule which we can pursue, and then make exceptions to that schedule so that we can know clearly what we're going to do.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Madam Chairman. Well of course, I am dismayed that the government would deliberately pull a very important section of the auditor's fall report from the purview of the Public Accounts Committee. . .

Mr. Tchorzewski: — That's the Channel Lake report.

Mr. Gantefer: — That's exactly what it is. I think that that section should have been dealt with here regardless if there was a public inquiry or in what format that there would be. I have indicated the reasons why I felt that that was the appropriate way to go, and the government again accuses the rest of us of playing politics. And clearly you see the heavy-handed hand of a majority number of members of this committee exercising that majority, and if anyone in the public or the world believes that when it suits them that that won't happen into the future are just simply kidding themselves. And I certainly will be opposing this motion.

Mr. Hillson: — The impact of this motion would be that of course Channel Lake is removed from Public Accounts even though it, of course, first came to our attention by virtue of the Provincial Auditor's reports.

The Provincial Auditor's reports of course, are dealt with in this forum. And it was some of the irregularities regarding, first of all, the purchase of another company that was interestingly enough revealed by a government in Alberta but not in Saskatchewan. It was that irregularity which first alerted the

Provincial Auditor. It was the fact that Channel Lake was getting involved in activities for which there appeared to be no authorization and which appeared to be well above and beyond the mandate of Channel Lake and the reason for which the company was first formed.

Of course the reason the company was first formed was apparently because we had two Crown corporations squabbling with each other. And so rather than dealing with each other, they chose to deal with third parties. So these issues became public because of the work of the Provincial Auditor.

This committee exists to deal with the report of the Provincial Auditor, and so I am rather confused as to why we would now say, well that part of the Provincial Auditor's report ought not to be considered by this committee.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Just let me try to explain briefly further. Mr. Hillson's correct in how . . . in the background. I think we all understand that. But it is not unusual for the Public Accounts Committee to refer some items to the Crown Corporations Committee, and we've done it before.

And I know there's disagreement on that, but steps are being taken to make sure that the items we have referred prior to this to Crown Corporations Committee will be dealt with, because it is the intention of, I hope, this committee to make sure that there is a reference from the legislature on those issues we have referred to the Crown Corporations Committee directing it to deal with them. Because I understand that in the past, sometimes things have been referred and have not been dealt with the way they should have been. So I think that will be rectified, and we will see that it is looked after.

So this is not an unusual thing to do. It makes no sense for two committees to consider the same issue. Surely nobody would think that it is reasonable for one committee to deal with an issue as important as the Channel Lake issue and all the circumstances surrounding it and then have the Public Accounts Committee do it as well. I think if we did it that way the taxpayer ought to be — and probably would be — wondering whether we knew what we were doing as legislators.

So since Channel Lake is being considered by the Crown Corporations Committee, I think it makes eminent sense that there's no reason why we need to duplicate that effort and call the same people twice — surely that would not be a reasonable thing for this committee to do — and that's why the motion is here, to make sure that it's clear that it is being considered and where it's being considered.

Mr. Jess: — I guess my question has been partly answered by the previous speaker. But I was wondering before I voted, if anybody could explain to me what advantage it would be to go to both committees. Is there an area here that is not reached by one committee that would be reached by another, or what is the argument? It just appears to be a total duplication and I would like your response to that.

Mr. Hillson: — Well I think there are different issues — I thank the member for the question there — there are different issues that in some cases, yes, the Crown Corporations would be the appropriate forum to question why we have two Crown

corporations fighting with each other, keeping secrets from each other and buying and selling a company that really is in the other corporation's purview and trying to keep it secret from SaskEnergy.

That's probably a Crown Corporations issue. However, as I've said, this whole fiasco did come to public attention because of the work of the Provincial Auditor and the issues he flagged: the lack of proper authorization, going well above and beyond the mandate of the company, getting involved in activities which (a) were not authorized and (b) were not financially advisable; these really are, I think, Public Accounts issues.

And so I don't think there would necessarily be a conflict in saying that both committees have a role into looking into what went wrong. It's often been said in this committee as well that Crown Corporations is a policy committee that is future oriented; Public Accounts is more a committee, as I understand it, to review what has happened. In that sense it is past oriented. And to ensure that the raising and spending of all public funds is done in an appropriate and correct manner with the necessary authorization in place, which would appear not to have been the case here.

So I'm not sure that there is a, there is a conflict. And again I've tried to dampen the rhetoric here but I'm really worried. What is the public going to say when what they see is that when the Conservatives want it in Public Accounts, the NDP doesn't want it in Public Accounts; when the NDP want it in Public Accounts, the Conservatives won't have it in Public Accounts. Is the public going to be able to get their mind around that? I don't think so. I really don't think so.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I think one of the key differences, in addition to what was outlined by my colleague, is the whole status of the Provincial Auditor on the two committees.

On Public Accounts he is a member of the committee and has a right to be here by a matter of course, and on Crown Corporations it is a matter of invitation. And so there is a whole different relationship between this committee with the Provincial Auditor than there is in Crown Corporations.

The large function of the Public Accounts Committee is an audit function in terms of reviewing how appropriate government officials have exercised their mandate to expend funds as directed by the Assembly. And so we do not deal very often with the politicians in terms of the ministers and Executive Council; we deal with the officials who explain how they've exercised their mandate. And we have the benefit of having the Provincial Auditor and his audit team available to indicate the details under which he has found some discrepancies in that mandate. And so it is a different committee in terms of its function and purpose.

Crown Corporations, as has been outlined, is much more of a policy and a forward-direction type of interpretative committee, and that's why routinely Executive Council members are the people who give the reports to the Crown Corporations Committee as opposed to senior officials explaining what has happened in the past. And so therefore both committees have two fairly distinctive mandates.

Mr. Jess: — Yes, I would like to correct one statement. I don't believe the Provincial Auditor is a member of this committee. And I hear your argument here, but if your argument is so strong now, I would just like to ask why this whole process was held up for two weeks, when you expect . . . your chairman was saying that we don't want to go to Public Accounts. And now it is extremely important, from what I hear from you, in your view, that it does go to Public Accounts and be in this committee, where your own chairman has said that it was a kangaroo court. I'm afraid I can't understand your reasoning.

Mr. Gantefer: — I think clearly the reason that we have all along outlined, that we believed, still believe, that the best way to get to the bottom of this specific issue is a full, independent public inquiry. That has been our position for the last two weeks. It continues to be our position in terms of what we believe as the best way to proceed with this specific issue.

Our second choice is the Public Accounts Committee. Our last choice is Crown Corporations.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Jess I think clarified it, but I think it's important that, for the record, it be very clear that the Provincial Auditor is not a member of the committee. The Provincial Auditor reports to the legislature and assists the committee in going through his report and guiding us in the work that we do.

But that does not in any way mean that the Provincial Auditor's role in this particular issue is in any way not a very important one. It is extremely important. I agree with Mr. Hillson. And that is why it is important that the Provincial Auditor have an opportunity to make his presentation and answer questions in the Crown Corporations Committee on this issue. The Provincial Auditor ought not to be left out of this process, and it can be done and it will be done.

So no one should assume from the comments made by Mr. Gantefer that somehow that will not be done because it's not being done in Public Accounts. It will be done in the Crown Corporations because it is important for that to happen. The Provincial Auditor should have an opportunity to present his case and he will be given that opportunity.

Once again, why, if you're going to do that in the Crown Corporations Committee, would you want to take the time of another committee, being this committee, to do it over again. It doesn't make any sense and there's no logic to it. And therefore we should get on with our business.

The Chair: — Anybody else have a comment? We have a motion on the floor.

Mr. Hillson: — In regard to the last comment by the member from Redberry, and as I said, yes, we all come from our own partisan agendas. But I hope that the commitment today is how do we get this thing on the track, how do we proceed, how do we give a bit of confidence to the people of Saskatchewan that we can ask the questions that need to be asked and get the answers that need to be answered. To review what's happened the last month in the various flip-flops by the various members is, I respectfully submit, not a productive exercise and that's why I've avoided it this morning.

And to point out that some members have contradicted themselves when the truth is there is only one member who hasn't, I don't see that helping us. I don't see where that helps us, and I'm not going to get into it. I'm going to avoid that. I would point it out, but I just don't want to point it out; so I'm not going to. But okay, forgive me for that. Let's say the last month is the last month, the future begins now, and we are all joined in the commitment to show that a legislative committee can be an effective inquiry.

Mr. Jess: — Yes, I'm particularly pleased to hear his last comments, because the comments I was hearing over the weekend were that this process by the elected members, regardless of the political stripe, to deal with this very major concern was somehow accepted better by the general public than having it turned over to a total public inquiry where people could hide behind the high-priced lawyers. It seems like — Mr. Hillson might not agree with this — but it seems that we as politicians still have more respect out there and more confidence from the public than do the legal inquiry. So I think this is the route that we should go.

The Chair: — We have a motion on the floor. Will you take the motion as read? Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion? Those in favour of it? Six are in favour. Opposed? The motion is carried.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — With that motion, the business of this meeting is complete then. We will meet again on Thursday to deal with the agenda as outlined.

Mr. Thomson: — I move we adjourn.

The Chair: — Motion to adjourn. Those in favour? We are adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 9:45 a.m.