



THASARS

Second Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

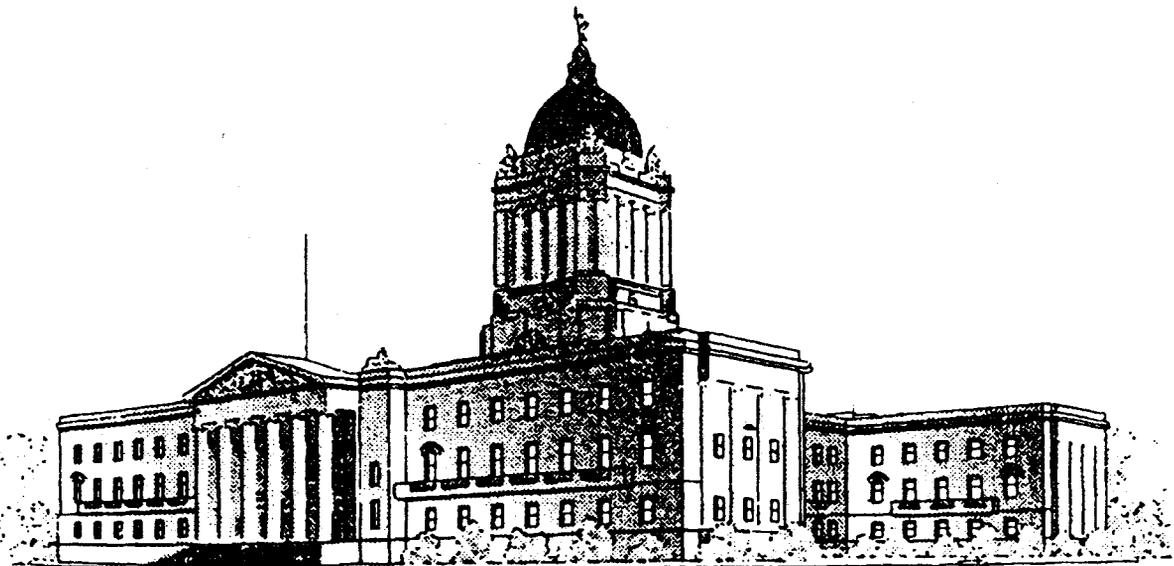
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Standing Committee

on

Agriculture

Chairperson
Mr. Stan Struthers
Constituency of Dauphin-Roblin



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
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ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
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DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
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GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
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LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
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NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
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TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, April 18, 2001

TIME – 5 p.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

**CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Stan Struthers
(Dauphin-Roblin)**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Tom
Nevakshonoff (Interlake)**

ATTENDANCE -13 – QUORUM - 8

Members of the Committee present:

Hon. Ms. Friesen, Hon. Messrs. Gerrard,
Lemieux, Smith (Brandon West), Hon. Ms.
Wowchuk

Messrs. Derkach, Dewar, Maguire,
Nevakshonoff, Penner (Emerson), Pitura,
Schellenberg, Struthers

MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION:

Government Resolution on Federal Support
for Agriculture

* * *

Clerk Assistant (Mr. Rick Yarish): Good afternoon. Will the Standing Committee on Agriculture please come to order. Our first order of business is the election of a Chairperson. Are there nominations?

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I nominate Mr. Struthers from Dauphin-Roblin.

Clerk Assistant: Mr. Struthers has been nominated. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, Mr. Struthers is appointed Chairperson. Mr. Struthers, would you please take the Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much. Our next order of business is the election of a Vice-Chair. Do I see any nominations?

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Chairperson, I nominate Mr. Nevakshonoff, MLA for the Interlake.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Nevakshonoff, Interlake, has been nominated. Are there any further nominations? Seeing none, the Member for Interlake is appointed Vice-Chair. Congratulations.

This afternoon the Standing Committee on Agriculture will be dealing with the organizational details relating to consideration of the agricultural resolution. Before we proceed with that discussion, does the committee wish to indicate how late it would like to sit today?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Six o'clock, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Chairman, I think we should determine to keep the agenda open long enough to at least take care of the business that we have to take care of at this time to determine what the process will be. If we can accommodate that within the minister's wishes then I would have no difficulty agreeing to adjourn at six, at least no later than six. If we cannot, then I would suggest that we extend it.

Mr. Chairperson: It sounds to me like we do have agreement then that we will shoot for six o'clock. If we need a little extra time, we will take it at that time, revisit the decision at that time.

As was stated earlier today in the House, today's discussion will deal only with organizational matters regarding subsequent meetings of this committee. We will not be hearing presentations from the public at this meeting. In preparation for our deliberations today, the Clerk's Office has compiled a list of questions and considerations relating to the travelling Standing Committee on Agriculture. Copies of this list have been distributed to all members. Are there any comments on this list?

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): Just for a point of clarification. The list, I guess, that you are referring to is a list of questions.

Mr. Chairperson: That is correct.

Mr. Pitura: Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I think that one of the important issues is whether the committee will be meeting evenings or at other times during the day. So the time of the meetings should be at least one of your questions which is there.

Mr. Jack Penner: I wonder, Mr. Chairman, whether there needs to be some recognition on considerations as to whether we might want to establish how many communities you want to meet, and the other question is what the timelines for adjourning the committee's consideration would be. I think we should add that to the considerations.

Ms. Wowchuk: I think the Member for Emerson raises a good point, and that takes us into the question of which communities the committee will visit. As we think about where we are going, I would like us to think about the fact that we have said in the House yesterday and in correspondence that had been circulated between the leaders that we want this to happen in a timely fashion. We do not want to see this process delayed. We also want to ensure that producers have the opportunity to participate and all people that are involved in the industry, but we also have to take into consideration the fact that, if the weather turns around, and we all hope it does, in a very short time, everybody is going to be very busy putting the crop in.

I think we also want to be sure to touch different parts of the province to give people the opportunity from various parts of the agriculture sectors to participate, and that would mean going to the southwestern part of the province, the eastern part of the province, the Parklands and one meeting here in the Legislature. Looking at those locations and thinking about the times that we have available, taking into consideration that we have a vote on the 24th and there are some other days that are tied up, I would like to put a

proposal out for discussion and see how people feel about these dates.

I would like to propose that we begin the meetings on April 23 in Dauphin; on April 27, which is a Friday, would be in Brandon; April 30, Beausejour; and May 1, Winnipeg. Now the 23rd, the 30th and the 1st would have to be evening meetings. The 27th, which I have suggested for Brandon, is a Friday, so that would give us the ability to have an afternoon or an evening meeting. So that is the proposal I would like to put forward. I would like to hear other people's comments as to whether those locations would be suitable. The reason those are being suggested is that it is going to various parts of the province and giving an opportunity for people from various parts of the province to participate.

* (17:10)

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Chairman, I think we have gone a little bit beyond where I was hoping to begin, but, nevertheless, let me take it back one step. I wonder whether or not there is any merit in this committee considering whether or not we need to travel to communities to hear from producers and rural community members at this time. Basically, we have heard from producers and from rural people. I think every one of us who has any interest in this issue has been approached by and has had conversation and has attended meetings on this issue, so my sense is that, if we do not know what the problem is by now, I think we will be told in very real terms by many producers that we have not been listening.

I am wondering whether our time as a committee would not be spent more wisely to perhaps engage in a couple of major meetings, but, then, more importantly, to seek the support of neighbouring provinces for the approach that has been taken in Manitoba and to have our neighbouring provinces join us in our effort to lobby Ottawa for the kind of support that we spoke about in the Legislature yesterday. To me, that would almost seem to be a more productive kind of exercise.

In addition to that, I think it would be important for us to engage in conversation with

the various farm interest groups. That is why I say perhaps a couple of meetings might accomplish that. I speak about the major organizations that we have in the agriculture community. Perhaps, to that extent, we may want to extend it to chambers and that sort of thing, where you could hold a couple of evenings where these people could come and make presentation.

I think that individual farmers have told us what the problem is, that they have told us what the issues are. They want us to act. They do not want us to go on a dog-and-pony show around the province. I hate to use that term, but they may not see it as positively as we think this exercise should be.

So I pose the question to this committee whether or not consideration might be given to perhaps instead of having meetings throughout the province, limit it to a very few meetings and then engage with the organizations that support agriculture, but also, at the same time, engage with other provinces as well.

Ms. Wowchuk: If I could, just with response to the other provinces, I would like to tell the member that process is in place. There is a regular discussion with other ministers about what they are doing. In fact, there is another discussion this week to talk about what we are doing here in Manitoba and what steps they are taking to further this along. There is very much a united front between, particularly, the five provinces on where we go next. Each is informed about what one province is doing and how we can continue to build a united front. I will only address that part of it. I think others should comment.

Mr. Derkach: To the minister, does this mean that in other jurisdictions of the five provinces that she speaks about, do we have the concurrence of the opposition parties and the Government in each of those jurisdictions?

Ms. Wowchuk: I will be able to fill the member in further after the discussions that I have with the ministers tomorrow, but there are similar discussions taking place for a united front from

all parties to send a strong message to the federal government.

Mr. Jack Penner: In regard to the three meetings that the minister has identified, is that the extent of the meeting that you had envisioned that this committee would hold?

Ms. Wowchuk: The intent is to reach out to Manitoba. Those would be the three meetings that we would hold outside the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Chairman, how many meetings would the minister envision inside the city?

Ms. Wowchuk: What we have suggested here is that we have one committee hearing in Winnipeg, and that would be May 1. Those are the dates and the locations that I am suggesting.

Mr. Jack Penner: So that would mean that there would be four public consultation meetings.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Gerrard: I would like to put forward the idea that in southwestern Manitoba, which has been particularly hard hit, if anything, there would be a need for additional meetings perhaps in Deloraine and Minnedosa because there is, I think, a real feeling of hurt and that, in whatever way we respond through this committee, it is important to reach out.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Chair, I guess yesterday, in my few remarks to this issue, I requested that, if we were going to be going into the southwest area of Manitoba, we look at Melita seriously. I think it is certainly one of the hardest hit communities. Minnedosa and Souris are very hard hit as well in this whole process. So I think in that neighbourhood, with what the Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr. Gerrard, has just indicated, Deloraine, these were, I guess, to look at some kind of central area there, I leave that up to the committee.

I think that it would be incumbent upon us to go to one of the hardest hit areas of the province and have a look at the situation that is taking place and hear the message from the

farmers. I think, if we go into these communities, we will hear from a lot more than just the farmers in those areas; we will also hear from the business community, representation from a number of those communities as well. I think it is incumbent upon us if we are going to go out. I do not know if we have answered Mr. Derkach's question yet. Particularly I would think that it would be incumbent upon us to expand this somewhat in regard to the locations for some of the meetings that we would have.

The only thing I would say in regard to the Member for Russell's (Mr. Derkach) comments about the absolute need to go to the country or not, and I would be open to the Government's opinion on this, is that I would reiterate a little bit of some of what I have heard of Mr. Chrétien's federal committee going to be appointed to appear to be making inroads into visiting people in western Canada and all across Canada and particularly western Canada in regard to their concerns on agriculture and report in the fall of 2002. Very clearly, the scuttlebutt in the country on this one is that it is a make-work project for the members that are on that committee and an absolute waste of taxpayers' money if they have not heard of what has already been said out there many, many times. So I just put that on the record.

* (17:20)

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I think what we all want to achieve is to hear from the folks out there on the logistics of it. The Member for Russell had a suggestion. I think what we would all like to do is make it as easy as possible for folks who want to make presentations to us on those logistics. A suggestion of between Minnedosa and Brandon and Virden, and that area to me the suggestion of Brandon kind of hits toward the southwest Manitoba where people can come into a central community. The reasoning for that in Brandon, whether it is within the 30-mile radius, we can pick another spot, I guess it is up to the committee, we want to, I believe, do this as efficiently as possible and make it as easy as possible for people to come out and see the committee and bring their views forward.

The dates and the times, as the minister has mentioned, the time frame is pretty tight.

Obviously people are going to be out on the fields seeding possibly within 12 days, 14 days. In a short period of time, they are going to be out on the fields. We need to get this done and assemble the information by that time. So I believe, if we pick the number of spots, number one, if four seems to be the number, maybe the committee believes that it should be three or five, I am not sure. Four seems like a reasonable amount in the time frame that we have to compile the information.

As well, the times and dates makes it pretty tight; even from now, to get that in is tight at four. So it is logistically, the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) has a suggestion, I believe. I would like to take it to the community and go out to the community as much as we can and try to centrally locate to get the best bang for the buck, so to speak, to get as many people out, to make it as easy for people to come and present to us as possible.

This seems like a pretty good split on the corners of the province we have here now. I would suggest that we maybe ascertain whether four is the right number or three or five, No. 1. I believe four is the right number, and I believe the areas, we can adjust those a little bit, but I certainly would like to touch as big a part of the province here as we can, and it seems that this proposal does that.

Mr. Pitura: I would just like to echo the sentiments of the member from Russell and the member from Arthur-Virden because many of the producers in my constituency, when I indicated to them that this standing committee could be going on the road, they said: Well, do you not know what the problem is? You know, you are just going to waste a whole bunch of time finding out what you already know, and I do agree with that. We do know that the situation with producers in Manitoba, all of the presentations yesterday in the Legislature indicated that knowledge. Those producers that were sitting in the gallery listening also understood that we understood what their problem was, and so they were suggesting to us that going on the road and hearing it all over again is probably not in the best interest of getting this job done.

I do believe that, if we were to pursue what the member from Russell was indicating, and that is to work with our provinces to the west, Alberta and Saskatchewan, and that perhaps, and it is only suggested that this standing committee appear at the standing committees of Saskatchewan and Alberta to jointly agree to this resolution or craft a resolution that accommodates the needs of the other two provinces and then jointly, jointly pay a visit to Ottawa and to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Agriculture, I think, if we did that, we would be doing a lot more for the producers of Manitoba. We would be doing it in a more timely fashion because even if we are only going to do four meetings, Mr. Chairman, we are going to take another, probably, seven or eight days time period before it is all said and done, and that is another week to ten days that has gone by. I think that we could be much more proactive and get on with the job if we were to just go directly to our sister provinces and get them on board and make this thing a big concerted effort. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Penner: We know that the Government has the majority on the committee and the Government can make the decision as to where they want to go and where they want to meet, so we are not going to debate a long time whether we should visit other places or not. I think the minister has heard what the concerns are, and I think we have heard from most other organizations what the issues are. If Dauphin, Brandon, Beausejour and Winnipeg are the ones that the Government has chosen to make presentations in and/or hold hearings, we certainly are not going to raise a huge objection to this.

What I would suggest to the minister is that she might want to tighten up this schedule a bit to allow for an earlier hearing in most of these areas and that we then are able to draft a position paper based on what we have heard and what we already know that we might want to share with other provinces, but hopefully we could do that before the 1st of May, accomplish this whole process before the 1st of May, the initial stages of this committee's responsibility as laid out by the resolution that the House adopted yesterday.

There are really two points that need to be considered here. One is the immediate, that is the immediate crisis and the need to address that immediately. The second one is a longer term one which we would hope would be able to be addressed within the next month or so, and that is, of course, the additional points that we raised in the resolution dealing with the broader and further policy decision and programming that would be required from Ottawa and the provinces and also the building of rural communities and the industrialization and the process required to accomplish that. That is the longer process that we would allow for, and we believe that there should be adequate time given, maybe up to a month, for this committee to make those considerations and then report on that. Hopefully, we can proceed then to hear what further plans the minister has in this regard as far as the notification of people and when and how we would hear that, but I would certainly ask that we condense the meeting time period of it a bit more than what is being proposed here to be able to report earlier to the Legislature on this matter.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, I thank the member for those comments. We looked very closely at the schedule of when we could set these meetings up, and when we could do the proper advertising to be sure that people knew about them, and when we could fit it in with House schedule as well. That is why the dates that I have suggested seemed to fit with the schedules.

The comment about Brandon, and whether it should be another location, I am open to that, whether another location would be more suitable; but, as others have said, Brandon is the central region from there. But, if it is easier to go to Virden or Melita or one of those areas, that would work as well. I should tell you that, looking at Brandon, one of the reasons that that date is chosen for Brandon is it is a rural forum and we are trying to work out with people's schedules as well to be able to attend, to be at Rural Forum and still be at the committee hearing. So that is the reason. So I am going to make a motion, and then see where it goes from here.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), that this committee meet on the following days and in the following places for the purpose of obtaining public input into the resolution: April 23, Dauphin; April 27, Brandon; April 30, Beausejour; and May 1, in Winnipeg.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is in order. Is the committee ready for the question?

* (17:30)

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Chairman, we have one of our committee members who has a daughter that is going to have a graduation on the 27th. I think that daughter is in Calgary, and the graduation is in Calgary. I think Mr. Maguire would like to see maybe some switching in some of the dates for the Brandon meeting if that would be possible.

Mr. Smith: I just wanted to accommodate that it would be possible to have an alternate as opposed to switching the date. Would that be acceptable to members opposite if Mr. Maguire have an alternate sit in his place?

Mr. Maguire: I guess one alternative to that would be to switch the 23rd and the 27th dates between Dauphin and Brandon. But that is up to the committee. I mean these things have been planned for some time and they cannot be helped. So I go with the will of the committee.

Mr. Chairperson: What would be the will of the committee?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I guess I have to speak. I do not speak to this because it is a member of my caucus, but more importantly I think we have in the past respected some of these commitments that families have because we still consider those obligations important in our society. I also understand that there is reason to try and hold the meeting in Brandon on the 27th. However, you also have to keep in mind that there will be many of Mr. Maguire's constituents who would have to come to Brandon to make presentation and would probably expect to see their MLA at these hearings, and I think it would be unfortunate if we were so inflexible that we could not move

that date. Now I do not know what is sacred about the 27th because we can meet on the 25th, we can meet on the 24th. There are alternate dates unless other people are tied up—and I understand that—but if there is any will, I would encourage us to look for another date for Brandon.

Mr. Chairperson: To move forward, we would need an amendment to the motion that has been put forward.

Mr. Derkach: Yes, we will make the amendment, but let us find a date.

Ms. Wowchuk: I am acceptable to just switching the two dates. One of the reasons for putting Dauphin on the 23rd was that it is the shortest notice. We thought we might be able to get good advertising through the radio station, get that one off first and notify people; but, if we are going to do the Brandon one on the 23rd, we would not have time for ads in some of the outstanding newspapers. I have no trouble changing the 23rd for the 27th, just remembering that the next day is the vote. Just switch the two dates. The 23rd and the 27th would be fine.

Mr. Jack Penner: You know, I am wondering, Madam Minister, if we are going to be in Dauphin on the 23rd, and when you take travel and everything into consideration, why would we not consider holding the Brandon one on the 24th, the following day?

Ms. Wowchuk: That is the Budget day.

Mr. Jack Penner: Oh, that is the Budget. Well, the 25th then. Why would we not go to Brandon on the 25th?

Ms. Wowchuk: I guess the other question is that, if this is not going to work, can we just add on an extra day and add on the 2nd of May? I am a little reluctant to do that. I would prefer that we have the meetings earlier, so I guess the question I would ask of the committee members: Is switching the 23rd and the 27th around and having Dauphin on the 27th a problem for other people?

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Chair, it is a problem. The 27th, is that not a Friday? That is the Rural

Forum banquet that evening. There will be a lot of people who may want to be at both, and we are not giving them the opportunity to be there unless we hold these hearings early in the day, and adjourn then at an hour when people can get to the forum, but remembering that there will be exhibitors at the forum from all over the province. So that is not a very bright plan from our point of view. It is not the kind of thing we should be doing as a government. I mean we are sponsoring the forum. At the same time we are conflicting with this hearing, so just a suggestion might be that we hold the hearing in Dauphin on the 23rd as scheduled, but we go to Brandon on the evening of the 23rd and start at the hearings at seven o'clock and continue them all until midnight if we have to.

Mr. Pitura: Mr. Chairman, I think the comment that Doctor Gerrard brought up earlier about perhaps having a meeting in the Melita-Deloraine area may make a lot of sense now with the inflexibility of these dates of adding—how can we say this?—a fifth one to make sure that Mr. Maguire is available for his constituents in the centre of his constituency. Just a suggestion.

Mr. Gerrard: I concur quite frankly that meeting on May 2 in Deloraine would be quite advisable. I think that people in the southwest corner would feel that we have slighted them if we are not a little deeper into the area that was severely affected in '99.

Mr. Smith: I certainly do not want to appear to be inflexible on this. I think the Member for Russell had a very good suggestion. I think none of us want to extend it past the point of the 1st and the 2nd. The member is leaving the 25th. We could have been done on the 25th, but that would not accommodate the 26th and the 27th.

I think it is a good suggestion that we look at doing the 23rd early afternoon to give us time to get to Brandon and look at doing the Brandon night and go quite late if we want or need to. I think all members would be open to doing that, and I think it is a good suggestion. I would call that we look at doing that.

* (17:40)

Ms. Wowchuk: The intent, as I had said earlier, was to have all of the meetings in the evening except the Brandon one, which we could do during the day, but if we are going to Dauphin on the evening of the 23rd after—we are not going during the day, we are going for the evening in Dauphin. That does not allow us time to—you are shortchanging that part of the province.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I was offering that as a suggestion. I know we have to change some things here if we are going to accommodate, but I would say that we can start in the morning. I do not think anybody would mind if we started in the morning instead of the evening. Dauphin, Manitoba, is not much different than Russell. There is still snow on the ground. So, if we start in the morning, people are not going to be that busy that they cannot come to the hearing or do the Brandon one in the morning and continue to do Dauphin in the evening. We could switch that around too.

Ms. Wowchuk: None of us have schedules here. There is also the number of people that will be away from the House for a whole day as well. Can we take this under advisement and then come back to you tomorrow? The other option is that it does not work to cover off Larry's issue, and that is the 28th. The Saturday will not work for your issue. Rural Forum is still on on Saturday. That is right. Okay. Can we take your suggestion and get back to you tomorrow morning whether we can do all day the 23rd and then not do the 27th and then do the other two days, the 30th and 1st, and then go from there? We will look at those and get back to you.

Mr. Chairperson: It is advisable that we withdraw the motion that we have put forward. The minister has agreed and wishes to withdraw the motion. Is there unanimous consent to withdraw this motion? *[Agreed]* The motion is accordingly withdrawn.

I think, for a matter of expediency, maybe we will proceed through the list that you have in front of you, the questions and considerations for travelling Standing Committee on Agriculture. We have had a discussion on the communities. Are there some suggestions on how the meetings

will be advertised? Any advice for the committee, Mr. Pitura?

Mr. Pitura: With the meetings scheduled the way they are and starting on April 23, our best, I think, advertising media would be the radio, and where we can hit the press in a timely fashion, yes, but if you are looking at a biweekly or a weekly paper, you might miss it on the advertising. So I would suggest, leave it up to the minister's office to peg whether it is newsprint or radio. Dauphin is radio. Brandon is radio. Beausejour, maybe, maybe not, maybe it is better in the press. I would suggest we leave it up to the minister's office, but I think either one can be used.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee then to leave that matter to the capable hands of the minister? Are all 14 committee members planning on attending all of the meetings?

Mr. Jack Penner: I think, Mr. Chairperson, if there cannot be a date accommodation made, then one of our members would not attend. But, other than that, I think we would all want to attend all the meetings unless something unforeseen happens. I wonder whether there could be an accommodation made for alternate appointments to be made. *[interjection]* I see that. That is why I am asking the question.

Mr. Chairperson: I see that Mr. Penner has been looking ahead on the list, and that is very commendable. The next question is: Will committee substitutions be allowed? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Dewar: On this point, any member, of course, of the Legislature can attend the standing committees, even if it is on the road, so it is not restricted just to the 14 members that are permanent members of the committee. If we attend Brandon, the Minister of Education or anyone could also take part in the committee. It is just, if for some reason we need to make a substitution, I think it is important that we have the ability to do so, even if we are not here in the Legislative Building.

Mr. Chairperson: I would like to thank the Member for Selkirk for pointing that out. We will be operating under the same rules as we

usually do for the standing committees when it comes to substitutions.

Mr. Maguire: I think the Member for Selkirk's point was that this would be different than normal because, if someone showed up at the actual committee meeting itself and one other member that is already on the committee was not able to make it, you would be able to make that substitution here. Normal process is to make the substitution here in the House. Am I correct? You are looking at making it in committee?

Mr. Chairperson: I am advised that you can actually do that at the committee. Can we assume that the committee would like a Hansard record of the meetings? *[Agreed]*

Time limits, what is the committee's feelings in terms of time limits on the public presentations, and will they apply to all the meetings? Do we have some advice from committee members on time limits?

Ms. Wowchuk: I think that with this we should follow the same rule. We are following the other rules that committee follows. We should follow the same rules that we have in committee, as well, that there is a time, I believe, that presentations are 15 minutes, and there are 5 minutes for question and answer. I would think that we would want to follow the same rules that we follow in committee.

Mr. Jack Penner: In essence there are no rules surrounding that that have been firm rules. There are rules that we adopt at every standing committee meeting when the Chair calls for the question. We have had many committee meetings without any limitation on time, and we have had limitations as short as 10 minutes for presentations. So I think it is up to this committee to decide that, but if the minister thinks that 15 minutes is adequate and 5 minutes for questions, I would ask the committee members. We would have no objection to that, I do not think.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee then to have 15-minute presentations followed by 5 minutes question and answer? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Derkach: I have a concern. That is that we have seen in standing committee before where one member can, for whatever reason, monopolize the entire 5 minutes of questioning. I would recommend that, if in fact that starts to take shape, we be given the latitude to change that to allow for as many questions, as short in nature as possible, to come from the committee.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there any further advice?

Mr. Maguire: Not on that point, but just another, Mr. Chair. If the person that is presenting does not use their whole 15 minutes in presentation, is this a 20-minute time period that we cannot ask them questions for more than 5? It is a 20-minute block for each presentation?

Mr. Chairperson: I believe past practice is that it would be the 20 minutes and that we be flexible with the time limit for presentations and use that to answer some questions. The other point before we move on is that these rules that we agree to will apply to all of the meetings that we do, the time limits for all the meetings. That is agreed?

* (17:50)

Mr. Pitura: If I could just be allowed to make a suggestion, the agreement was 15 and 5, but if we were at a hearing or at least people appearing before the standing committee and we had 4 hours and there are 5 people to present, that we be given the latitude to have leave to make it more flexible, but we would apply these conditions with the understanding that by leave changes could be made to make it more flexible. That depends on the situation at each one of the standing committees.

Mr. Jack Penner: Along that similar line, I would hope that we would be able to have some consideration of who is making the presentation. If we have one of the major farm organization leaders before us making the presentation or the president of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, for instance, and/or some of the other business organizations that are farm organizations, that we allow ourselves a bit of flexibility to maybe extend the questioning in those areas to a greater degree than eliminate it too narrowly, because I think there needs to be a

bit of fairness to those people and to the organizations. It does not matter to me whether the major farm organization is the Farmers' Union or the KAP organization or the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, should they choose to appear before the committee. I think we should give the committee the courtesy of questioning them to a greater degree than we might some others.

Ms. Wowchuk: I think that we came to an agreement that we should, or I proposed the idea of 15 minutes and 5 minutes for questioning and answering. Someone else said that, if you only have four presenters then in four hours, I would not want us to be belabouring, questioning one person for an hour just to fill the time. So I think that there has to be some flexibility that we agree to at each meeting, but I think that we should come out of here saying 15 minutes and 5, so for a total of 20 minutes, and then we have flexibility as we had in other committees.

Mr. Pitura: I agree with the minister in her comments, and I would assume also that with the advertising of the standing committee that the 20 minutes, 15 and 5, would be part of the advertising so that people are made aware of it prior to coming to the standing committee. So we may not, in fact, have anything more than 15-minute presentations prepared for the committee.

Mr. Chairperson: So in terms of the time limits on presentations at our hearings, my understanding is we have agreed to 15-minute presentations, 5-minute questions and answers with some flexibility built in. In terms of a person who has a smaller presentation than 15 minutes, we can take up the balance of the 20 minutes with questions and answers. Is that the understanding of the committee? *[Agreed]*

The next question that we need to deal with is: Will the usual rule of the individuals presenting to the committee no more than once apply? *[Agreed]*

Will the usual rule about the presenters appearing in the order of registration apply? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: Will you allow presenters to indicate where they would like to present, I

presume? When we have it just in Winnipeg, and the whole thing goes down, but maybe in this circumstance you should have people at least indicating where they would like to present.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Gerrard. When prospective presenters phone in, they will be given a list of places, communities, where their presentations will be heard, and they will pick and indicate where they will make their presentations.

Mr. Jack Penner: Are we also saying then that we would allow them to register when they come into a meeting, or does this mean that they all have to preregister before the date?

Mr. Chairperson: My understanding is that they can register as they attend the meeting. That is the same rule that would apply for this Standing Ag Committee here at the Legislature. Agreed? *[Agreed]*

If the committee visits any communities with Francophone populations, will translation services be made available?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes. Agreed. It is understood.

For the record there is another consideration that the staff has brought forward, that the committee may need to supply an onsite photocopier, as well the question of accommodations, the Committees Branch will cover the cost of accommodations. Members will need to advise the Committee Clerk on an ongoing basis whether or not they will require accommodations, and thirdly, transportation arrangements for members and staff will need to be worked out for all members and staff. That is for your information.

To sum up the work of the committee here today, the only outstanding issue, which will be decided upon tomorrow, is which communities this committee will be visiting. Are there any other questions or suggestions that we have here today?

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Yes, I have a comment. First, I would like a clarification from the Clerk as to whether or not it is in order to make comments off the record at this committee.

Mr. Chairperson: Comments off the record cannot be ruled on.

* (18:00)

Mr. Nevakshonoff: But I would like to make a comment off the record before the meeting adjourns. My comment is I take offence, sir, to the implication that you made when you suggested what vices I could be Chair of. I take exception to that. I would like clarification from you what you were implying.

Mr. Jack Penner: For the record, the Member for Interlake makes reference to the tongue-in-cheek reference I made before the committee started while we talked about the Vice-Chair. I made the comment, and I extend my apologies. I just asked the question: What vices could one chair? I apologize for that statement. I should not have said that. That is very clear.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: I accept your apologies, sir, and I would just like to add that I have been through a very difficult 18 months because my character has been expunged. I do not appreciate that. Again, I thank you for your apology, and I accept it fully.

Ms. Wowchuk: I have one more issue that I would like to raise. When we look at the considerations, it says the Committees Branch will cover the cost of accommodations and, I assume, travel. I wonder, each of us has a travel allowance in our budget and whether that might be a consideration that we would use for this, or is it the will of the committee that indeed the Committees Branch cover the cost of our travel to these meetings?

Mr. Derkach: This is like asking the farmers of Manitoba to bear the burden of competition with the United States and Europe. There is no way that we in Opposition have the treasury of Government, nor do we of the Minister of Agriculture. I would humbly request the minister

to consider the costs of the committee to be taken out of the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Jack Penner: I think it has been well said.

Mr. Chairperson: Are there any further comments? Just for the record, it is common practice that these expenses will come through the Legislature from the Committees Branch.

Are there any further comments or advice for this committee here today? Hearing none, that concludes the business before the committee. I would like to thank all members for their participation in this discussion.

Committee rise.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 6:02 p.m.