

# **HANSARD**

**NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Thursday, October 31, 2002**

**Committee Room 1**

**Organizational Meeting**

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## **VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

William Langille (Chair)  
John Holm  
Mark Parent  
Jerry Pye  
David Hendsbee  
David Wilson (Cape Breton East)  
Muriel Baillie  
Brian Boudreau

In Attendance:

Darlene Henry  
Legislative Committee Clerk



**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2002**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**2:00 P.M.**

CHAIR  
William Langille

THE CHAIR: It being 2:10 p.m., after 1400 hours, we will start. The reason we have this committee meeting today is to sanction the postcard program. This year it's sponsored by EnCana, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union and J.D. Irving. It was sponsored by PanCanadian last year and they amalgamated with another company and they are still doing the sponsoring again. We have to sanction this through our Veterans Affairs Committee in order to proceed with this. So I ask for the question.

JOHN HOLM: This is the card, I assume, that's going . . .

THE CHAIR: This is the card this year, the one depicting the gravestones.

JOHN HOLM: This is going to all the schools.

THE CHAIR: That's right.

MARK PARENT: All the Grade 6 classes.

JOHN HOLM: This is what the packages are over at the office for us to deliver?

THE CHAIR: That's correct.

JOHN HOLM: Gee, they went ahead without our sanction?

THE CHAIR: I think somebody was anticipating.

JOHN HOLM: I agree.

JERRY PYE: Could you tell me, please, forgive me for not knowing, but who is EnCana?

JOHN HOLM: That's PanCanadian resurrected under its new name.

THE CHAIR: They amalgamated with another company. We have done the postcards, I believe this will be the fourth year.

DARLENE HENRY: Fifth year.

THE CHAIR: Fifth year. We have done it every year. It's a very effective program and certainly the intent of it is to make the children aware of what our veterans did for us. That's the reason we are sitting here today in this room. Is there any further discussion on this?

MARK PARENT: I think as a committee we should probably thank, at some stage, Kristy Herron, because she does a lot of work on this. I don't know, there may be others involved as well.

DARLENE HENRY: Actually, I do have draft thank you notes that are going out to the people. I'm going to get the chairman to sign those. (Interruptions)

THE CHAIR: After the meeting, Mr. Wilson, I'll give you a bit of background on it just so you will understand where he's coming from there.

JOHN HOLM: So moved.

JERRY PYE: Can I ask you if this postcard goes directly to veterans only, or is it spread further than that? Is it spread to everyone who is involved in the Canadian Armed Forces?

THE CHAIR: It's my understanding that it is going to the veterans.

MARK PARENT: Also, I think it goes overseas to peacekeepers as well.

THE CHAIR: However, last year it started going overseas.

MARK PARENT: In the packet, Jerry, there is a list of the veterans hospitals and on the other side, all the overseas peacekeeping centres. So the kids have their choice.

JOHN HOLM: They have to put their own stamps on them?

MARK PARENT: No, the stamps are in the package.

THE CHAIR: They are provided.

JOHN HOLM: Oh, are they?

MARK PARENT: And they are stick-on so there are no peanut allergies. They had a problem with lick-on stamps before. They've thought of everything.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Hendsbee.

DAVID HENDSBEE: Mr. Chairman, I thought in the past that this committee also had a resolution read in the House around Remembrance Day acknowledging this particular program. I'm hoping that will be the same from this committee. Perhaps a resolution could be forwarded to the House.

THE CHAIR: That's correct and I'll be doing that resolution.

JOHN HOLM: Maybe you could read it and say, reading as a member but on behalf of the entire committee.

[2:15 p.m.]

THE CHAIR: I think that's the way it is worded.

DAVID WILSON: That's the way he read it last year.

JOHN HOLM: I can't remember. That was years ago.

THE CHAIR: You're a busy person in the Legislature. Also, we will be doing a press release and there should be a copy of it on your desk. What we will be doing is we are going to list the members of the committee to make sure everybody is aware, when we do the press release, of who is on the committee. There will be myself as chair and Mr. Wilson as vice-chair, and then I will go alphabetically from there on down. That will be a press release that will be released. Could I have a motion?

MARK PARENT: John made a motion. I will second it.

THE CHAIR: Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

I have an announcement to make on November 7<sup>th</sup>, regarding the veterans' licence plates. I've seen drafts of it but I haven't seen the plate. I attended a few meetings this summer and we worked on it right up until now, trying to put everything together. You think something is easy and simple, but when you get into it you find out that it's not always that way, and this is the way that was. Anyway, I just got notice of this yesterday. There is an announcement which will take place November 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. It will be at the Nova Scotia/Nunavut Command, Rainnie Drive. I am asking that any person from the committee who would like to

attend, do so at that time.

JOHN HOLM: That's a week from Monday?

THE CHAIR: November 7<sup>th</sup>, Thursday.

JOHN HOLM: The timing is not good for Opposition Parties.

THE CHAIR: We didn't pick this time.

JOHN HOLM: I'm not saying you did, I'm just saying it's not good timing because that's House preparation, we're planning the overthrow of the government.

THE CHAIR: Are you? That's good. (Interruptions) Actually, I asked for it to be at the Legislature at 11:00 a.m. on November 8<sup>th</sup>, but I didn't get very far with that. This is what came back, the location too. It wasn't my doing, I just want you to know that.

JOHN HOLM: The House may be going in at 12:00 noon by that stage.

THE CHAIR: Anybody who can attend, please attend. I am planning to attend, if I can get away. I certainly want to attend. I will just give you a bit of background. I suggested a while ago that we issue a plate to the Provincial Command, the first plate, and that it be plate 001, that they can display. I'm not quite sure what the presentation will be or when all these plates will be made available. They will be made available to the veterans in the near future.

JOHN HOLM: Can I ask what you mean by the one for Command, to be put on a vehicle or just for the wall?

THE CHAIR: For display where they have their paraphernalia, the Veterans Memorial Highway and everything else. I thought it would be nice if they had the first plate. There will be a function there at 11:00 a.m. on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

DAVID WILSON: Mr. Chairman, can you give us an idea of what the licence plate looks like and what's involved. It's just a special designation, right? There's no cost associated with this, right?

THE CHAIR: The veterans will have to purchase the licence plate.

DAVID WILSON: They will pay extra for it, right?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

DAVID WILSON: Like a personalized plate.

THE CHAIR: That's right. Do you want any other description?

DAVID WILSON: Yes, just tell me what the plate looks like.

THE CHAIR: It's like the one that was in the paper last year. It will have the Canadian flag to the left. More prominent was the swirl in the flag. They didn't want one like DND had, the flat Canadian flag, they wanted one with a little swirl in it. It became quite an issue there, to get that. It will just have the number and veteran on the bottom of it.

I also have a letter from the member for Yarmouth, sent to me, from Fred Richardson, President of the Carleton Consolidated Branch No. 167, Royal Canadian Legion. If you would like, just take a second to read that.

DAVID HENDSBEE: Mr. Chairman, in regard to this particular letter, there are probably different avenues in which we can approach assistance, to try to provide historical display information. We could ask Nova Scotia Command for assistance for Legion paraphernalia. We could possibly ask the military base here, Armed Forces Atlantic, for some information. My only concern is, you know, in regard to provincial history, who is the best purveyor of that information because from the military tradition I thought Maritimes Armed Forces is probably the best source of information and plus they have probably more than enough paraphernalia and artifacts in all their facilities around metro. Perhaps they may be able to relocate some of these materials to this particular school.

JOHN HOLM: Is this a private school?

THE CHAIR: I would assume this is a private school.

JOHN HOLM: That's my guess and I guess that's neither here nor there in terms of the main issue. I don't know that we should be collecting the information for them. If there are places where the information can be obtained or things that they're looking for, then maybe we could provide that information to them, but whether or not we want to have artifacts from Nova Scotia sent and put on display in a school in Alberta, you know, it's quite possible to take photographs or scan images and those kind of things which is probably what you meant, David, but maybe we could provide them with information of who they could contact. Even our own museums would have some kind of information that they might be able to as well as the Command.

THE CHAIR: When I was given this letter, that's what I had in mind, to contact the school with addresses of places that they could contact to research and so on to see if they could obtain anything. Is there any other discussion or do we just go along with that? Mr. Boudreau.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of questions. Actually I'm

interested to learn where the request went. Who did they request?

THE CHAIR: It's from Fred Richardson.

DAVID HENDSBEE: No, but he said who did they request.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: Who did they request? Did they request the Nova Scotia Command, did it go there or did the minister responsible for Veterans Affairs turn it down? I would like to know who turned the request down.

MURIEL BAILLIE: That line in the middle of the paragraph, he told us they had contacted all provinces.

JOHN HOLM: But what does that mean? (Interruptions)

THE CHAIR: I'm not sure.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: Well, that's what I would like to find out.

THE CHAIR: We could write them a letter and ask who they did contact.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: But also at the bottom of the letter, Mr. Chairman, the final line says, "I am enclosing the contact information." It doesn't seem to be provided with this letter.

THE CHAIR: Well, I think there is another page with the address on it.

JOHN HOLM: With the name of the school?

THE CHAIR: Yes, there it is there. You can photostat that, Mrs. Henry, will you?

JOHN HOLM: What's the name of the school?

THE CHAIR: It's the Vimy Ridge Academy, in Edmonton, Alberta.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: Mr. Chairman, the letter doesn't provide much detail really, you know, if this school is recognized by the Canadian Government. There's no real information.

THE CHAIR: Well, it would be the province's military school and what they have is a room for each province and the room for Nova Scotia doesn't have anything in it. All they're asking is, this person thought . . .

JOHN HOLM: Can I make a motion? (Interruptions)

MARK PARENT: I was going to make a suggestion. I suggest you write him back and ask him who he contacted and what materials they are looking for.



JOHN HOLM: I guess I would take his suggestion and maybe convert it a little bit more towards a motion just asking to write them back and ask them who they contacted - I don't really care - what kind of information they're looking for and suggest at the same time, so that we're not going back and forth forever and a day, listing names and addresses of Nova Scotia Command and other groups that they may wish to contact directly themselves for information.

THE CHAIR: Are you putting that in the form of a motion?

JOHN HOLM: Yes, that was it if you could follow it.

THE CHAIR: Did everybody follow the motion?

JERRY PYE: No, not at all.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Would you do it again and we will write this down?

JOHN HOLM: That the chairman write to the school and in the letter indicate that we have been contacted by Mr. Fred Richardson and that enclosed are some names and addresses - after you've researched those - of organizations within Nova Scotia that they may wish to contact directly to obtain the kind of information that they're looking for.

THE CHAIR: Did everybody hear the motion? Could I have a seconder?

DAVID WILSON: I will second that.

THE CHAIR: Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

DAVID HENDSBEE: May I also suggest, Mr. Chairman, that we also forward a letter to the Vimy Ridge Legion just for their attention and perhaps this could be a consideration of a local project to the Vimy Ridge Legion as an affiliation with the school because of the name.

DAVID WILSON: I will second that.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: As well may I suggest that we copy Mr. Hurlburt any correspondence that goes out on this issue.

THE CHAIR: Yes, we will send copies to Fred Richardson and the member for Yarmouth.

DARLENE HENRY: If I could just interject for a moment, I received this from

Margaret Murphy, the Legislative Librarian and just for your information only, she's selling tickets to a concert at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium in support of the Camp Hill Veterans' Memorial Garden. It's a concert featuring the Stadacona Band and Maritime Forces Atlantic and Friends, and it's entitled Til We Meet Again. It's a Veterans' Week concert of wartime musical memorabilia and she states that if anybody's interested, FYI, you can see her for tickets, which are \$14.50 and that includes tax.

JOHN HOLM: When is it?

DARLENE HENRY: The concert is Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. I told her I would just FYI you guys, if you're interested.

DAVID HENDSBEE: I have my tickets already.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: Perhaps we should pass that information along to all MLAs.

[2:30 p.m.]

DARLENE HENRY: She has a poster put up in the House itself - it's on the billboard there before you go into the Chamber. I'm not sure where she has it posted.

THE CHAIR: Did we get notice of that through caucus?

DAVID HENDSBEE: Yes, that's where I got the bulletin from.

THE CHAIR: Your caucus should have notice of that. If you're having a caucus today, it might be there today. Do you want a copy now?

JOHN HOLM: Any other business?

THE CHAIR: The only other business we have is for a yearly statement of submissions for the end of the year for signing.

JOHN HOLM: Have we seen it yet?

MARK PARENT: Yes, it went out.

JOHN HOLM: Oh, right, it did, didn't it. Yes, that's right.

THE CHAIR: It was good. Is this for signing there, I don't know if it was signed.

JOHN HOLM: The annual report?

THE CHAIR: Annual report.

JERRY PYE: How do I know what it is? I'm just given a blank sheet of paper here? John, I'm seeking your advice here. (Interruption)

JOHN HOLM: If I'm not mistaken (Interruption)

THE CHAIR: It's good, is it?

JOHN HOLM: It's a summary.

THE CHAIR: It's a summary of what we did last year, that's correct.

JOHN HOLM: That's all it was, no recommendations. (Interruptions)

THE CHAIR: While that's being sent around, that's pretty well it for today.

DARLENE HENRY: Unless there are some new dates.

THE CHAIR: Just for upcoming witnesses.

MARK PARENT: Once again I will reiterate the invitation to Aldershot. Aldershot is the largest reserve training base in Atlantic Canada. I know that we didn't have money to take a trip last time, but if there is money, I think you would find it a very interesting experience and, as I said, this is the largest reserve training, thanks to federal largesse, in Atlantic Canada. (Interruptions)

THE CHAIR: We were going to go to Aldershot last year and I received notification that there was not any money available for the committee to take the trip. So that's why we didn't go.

MR. PARENT: I had to cancel it with the major, but really I think you would be quite impressed with it. So just on the agenda, if there's any money any time for a trip away . . .

THE CHAIR: But if it's the committee's wishes that it still wants to go and I know that I certainly would like to go at some point.

DAVID HENDSBEE: Mr. Chairman, out of curiosity, I'm not familiar with all the rules of the Speaker's administration of the House to the claiming of per diems while the House is not in session. Couldn't a committee meeting be called for up there and a per diem could be claimed for those members who do go to the meeting at the site?

THE CHAIR: Well, we would be going that day to Camp Aldershot and we would get any monies that we're entitled to, Mr. Hendsbee, at that time.

JOHN HOLM: You would qualify for mileage and for your meal per diem . . .

THE CHAIR: That's right. (Interruption)

JOHN HOLM: Yes, the meeting would have to be held up there or else you would have to be going as a critic with that responsibility and government members don't have any critic responsibility so they're out in the cold.

MARK PARENT: We're not critical.

THE CHAIR: We would be going for a meeting.

JOHN HOLM: But no, seriously, I mean if something like that is to be arranged and I don't know what the distance is in terms of travelling time between . . .

MARK PARENT: About 100 clicks.

JOHN HOLM: Between Aldershot and Pearson?

MARK PARENT: Oh, Aldershot and Pearson would be - you want to add Pearson on top of it - probably another 150 kilometers from Pearson, wouldn't it, from Aldershot?

JOHN HOLM: No, I was just wondering if something was to be done.

MARK PARENT: Yes, it would be good to see both of them on the same day.

JOHN HOLM: Two the same day. I don't know that we could arrange that right now though.

THE CHAIR: No, it's going to be tight, but we can put the Aldershot trip on some time in the future, but not give a definite commitment.

MARK PARENT: I'm just reiterating the invitation.

THE CHAIR: It depends on a lot next year. If the House is sitting . . .

JOHN HOLM: And the date of the election. (Laughter)

THE CHAIR: And what the Premier does, certainly.

JERRY PYE: I'm just wondering, do we presently have a list of witnesses that are to appear before the committee?

THE CHAIR: No.

JERRY PYE: Isn't it a custom or rule to have Nova Scotia Command make a presentation annually at this committee?

THE CHAIR: If they wish to make a presentation.

JERRY PYE: Shouldn't we ask them to make a presentation in the meantime while we're setting up for the next meeting at Aldershot and the peace centre?

THE CHAIR: I will be discussing that with them on the 7<sup>th</sup> and give them the invitation then if they wish to appear.

JERRY PYE: And the next meeting will be?

THE CHAIR: When there's a need for the next meeting, we will have one.

JERRY PYE: I thought we consistently had monthly meetings while we were here.

THE CHAIR: Not for this committee, Mr. Pye. It's not a committee that we have a monthly meeting, it's a committee that if there is a need to have a meeting, we have a meeting. It's not like Public Accounts or Economic Development or Resources or Human Resources and so on.

JERRY PYE: I guess I have simply attended too many Veterans Affairs Committee meetings that I didn't realize there weren't consistently monthly meetings.

JOHN HOLM: I can remember years when the Veterans Affairs Committee would have an organizational meeting every year and that was it.

MARK PARENT: I think the only one mandated to meet monthly by legislation is Human Resources.

THE CHAIR: We're the only provincial committee that's mandated for Veterans Affairs and I think what has happened in the last while is that we did a lot with the vets and there comes a point when unless you're out looking for something to do, there's just not the need for the meetings. If something comes up, we can certainly call one in a hurry, that's for sure. But I will extend an invitation on the 7<sup>th</sup> to the Provincial Command and have them come in and make a presentation. They always do make a good presentation.

JERRY PYE: It's a matter of continuity and we should continue to have at least one annual report from the Provincial Command to bring us up to date and keep us up to speed with respect to what's going on and what's new so that we're aware.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Do you want to put that in the form of a motion?

JERRY PYE: I would so move that we make a request to the Provincial Command to appear as a witness before the Veterans Affairs Committee if it so chooses.

DAVID WILSON: I will second the motion.

THE CHAIR: Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Mr. Hendsbee.

DAVID HENDSBEE: If you're looking for further witnesses for the future for discussion, I would like to suggest that perhaps you contact the Military Family Resource Centre and the support they give to families while their families are away during Operation APOLLO and stuff like that. It might be enlightening for this committee to see that kind of work and perhaps have a tour of their facility here in the North End of Halifax at the gymnasium facility.

JERRY PYE: There's one in Shannon Park as well.

DAVID HENDSBEE: It would be a nice opportunity for you folks to see that. Also, just for the record, just a reminder that next June 6, 2003 is the opening of the Juno Beach facility in Normandy and if anyone plans to go over, perhaps you should keep that on your schedule.

(Interruptions) I just wanted to remind you in case anybody wants to take an exploratory trip over there.

MURIEL BAILLIE: The chairman's way is paid.

THE CHAIR: That's right. (Interruptions) Is there any other business? That's all. Can we have a motion to adjourn.

DAVID WILSON: Mr. Chairman, I so move.

THE CHAIR: We stand adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 2:41 p.m.]