

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 28 November 2000
(Morning)

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CONTENTS

Tuesday 28 November 2000

	Col.
ITEMS IN PRIVATE	929
EUROPE FAMILIARISATION SCHEME	929

FINANCE COMMITTEE

27th Meeting 2000, Session 1

CONVENER

*Mike Watson (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Elaine Thomson (Aberdeen North) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con)

*Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

*Mr Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP)

George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD)

Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab)

*Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP)

Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)

*Dr Richard Simpson (Ochil) (Lab)

*Andrew Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Callum Thomson

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Anne Peat

ASSISTANT CLERK

Graeme Elliot

LOCATION

Committee Room 1

Scottish Parliament

Finance Committee

Tuesday 28 November 2000

(Morning)

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:07*]

The Convener (Mike Watson): Good morning. I call the meeting to order. Mobile phones should be turned off and pagers set to silent. We have received apologies for absence from Keith Raffan and George Lyon, and apologies for late arrival from Dr Richard Simpson and Elaine Thomson.

Items in Private

The Convener: For the first item on the agenda, I invite the committee to agree to take items 3 to 5 in private, because those items concern draft reports. I remind the committee that it is our normal practice to take these items in private.

Members *indicated agreement.*

Europe Familiarisation Scheme

The Convener: The second item on the agenda concerns the interestingly worded Scottish Parliament European familiarisation scheme. The issue was discussed at the conveners group and the paper that members have is a brief version of that discussion. Last week, the conveners group agreed that the visit should go ahead. The cost to the Scottish Parliament will be minimal—there should be almost no cost, unless there is any add-on to the stay—and it is felt that such contact with the European Parliament would be of value to committees in general.

I should inform members that it has been suggested that not all committees should go. At the conveners group, we were given a list of the 11 committees that were described as most likely to benefit from participation in the European Parliament study visit. Those committees are: the Audit Committee; the Education, Culture and Sport Committee; the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee; the Equal Opportunities Committee; the Finance Committee; the Health and Community Care Committee; the Justice and Home Affairs Committee; the Public Petitions Committee; the Rural Affairs Committee; the Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee; and the Transport and the Environment Committee.

The purpose of the agenda item is to bring the matter to the committee's attention and to invite nominations for a member of the committee to join the visit, which will happen at some unspecified date next spring. Do members have any comments?

Andrew Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP): As the paper seems to suggest that the group will consist of conveners and other members, perhaps we should nominate you, convener.

The Convener: Although there will be some spaces on the visit for other members, committees do not have the right to nominate more than one member. It is intended that the delegation will be led by a Deputy Presiding Officer—probably George Reid, because of his involvement with the conveners group. He will be able to fill three additional places to ensure that there is party balance and that specific interests are covered.

Andrew Wilson: Let us nominate only the convener, for now. If any other member wants to go, perhaps the convener can push for their inclusion with George Reid.

The Convener: I will be happy to do that. I am interested in going and I appreciate the nomination. David Davidson has also mentioned to me his interest.

Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con): Like Andrew Wilson, I feel that it is vital for the convener to go on the visit, because of the various procedures that are involved. However, I will certainly be interested in going if a vacancy comes up.

The Convener: I will put a bid in for additional places on behalf of the Finance Committee. However, I cannot guarantee that members of the committee will fill any vacancies that come up.

If there are no further comments, I thank the committee for its nomination. I will keep the committee informed of any developments on the matter.

10:11

Meeting continued in private until 12:08.

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