

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 18 February 2003
(*Afternoon*)

Session 1

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CONTENTS

Tuesday 18 February 2003

	Col.
ITEMS IN PRIVATE	4093
PETITION	4094
Saltire (PE512)	4094
COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (SCOTLAND) BILL	4097

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE **5th Meeting 2003, Session 1**

CONVENER

*Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
*Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
*Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
*Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
*Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Marilyn Livingstone (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
Fiona McLeod (West of Scotland) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO ATTENDED:

Mr Gil Paterson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Martin Verity

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Susan Duffy

ASSISTANT CLERK

Ian Cowan

LOCATION

Committee Room 4

Scottish Parliament

Education, Culture and Sport Committee

Tuesday 18 February 2003

(Afternoon)

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 15:03*]

The Convener (Karen Gillon): I call this meeting of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee to order. We are now in public session. I ask everyone to ensure that all mobile telephones and pagers are turned off.

Items in Private

The Convener: The first item on the agenda is to consider whether to take items 4 and 5 in private. Both items are for the consideration of draft reports and our procedure in the past has been to consider such reports in private. Are we agreed?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Petition

Saltire (PE512)

The Convener: Item 2 is consideration of petition PE512, on the saltire. Members have in front of them all the relevant material on the petition, which has been considered at some length by a number of committees.

Having read through the evidence, I suggest that we should not try to restrict what flags are flown at football or rugby matches or anywhere else but that we should accept that Pantone 300 is the correct colour of azure blue for the saltire. Our proposal will be a voluntary code and will not be statutory. People will still be free to keep the flags that they have and will not need to throw them in the bin.

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP): The convener is right. We do not have the power to pass a piece of legislation to set such a recommendation in statute. In any case, with only five weeks to go until the end of the session, I do not think that we would get the legislation through.

From the evidence that I have seen, which has been presented by Mr George Reid and Gil Paterson among others, there is no doubt that the correct colour for the saltire that most people would accept is Pantone 300. If the committee recommends that Pantone 300 is the correct colour of azure blue for the flag, such a recommendation will not have any statutory force, but it will be a pretty strong recommendation. If people are looking to manufacture flags, they will know that that is the view of the committee and, by extension, of the Parliament.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I agree.

Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I concur with the other members of the committee. This is a serious and important matter. There is some misunderstanding about the purposes and uses of certain flags and about the difference between the lion rampant and the saltire. The lion rampant is, of course, not the flag of Scotland but the flag of Scotland's royal family. It is important that we give some guidance on the matter, although I agree with Mike Russell that it would be inopportune to try to put it into statutory effect. Perhaps that could be given fresh thought after the elections in May.

I am happy to support the guidance relating to Pantone 300. It is the most appropriate colour, as people accept. If someone's flag fades, there is not much that can be done about that. People will want to parade their flags for all sorts of reasons. If they have the autographs of footballers on them,

people will still take them to Hampden park or wherever. The committee's decision to commend the guidance is the best way forward.

Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP): I agree with the suggestion that has been made. It was never the petitioner's intention that there should be legislation. He recognised that guidance and rules were all that was needed to bring us into line with almost every other country in the world where such simple guidance has been given about flags.

Jackie Baillie: The more members speak, the more I feel that I need clarification. We are not necessarily endorsing any guidance that is out there; we are simply offering the committee's view that Pantone 300 seems the most appropriate colour, on the basis of all the evidence that has been presented to us.

The Convener: Yes.

Jackie Baillie: On that basis, I am quite happy. If people want to issue guidance, that is a matter for them. However, as far as the committee is concerned, the issue is the colour.

Michael Russell: And the committee's view is that the most appropriate colour is Pantone 300. If anyone was consulting anyone, they would say that the Scottish Parliament's Education, Culture and Sport Committee believes that the colour is Pantone 300.

Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab): Absolutely.

Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): I go along with the views that have been expressed by other committee members. However, I want us to emphasise the fact that this is an advisory decision that we are making. We ought not to encourage people to try to enforce the colour on others who are not willing to accept it.

The Convener: Let us be clear about what we are saying. We are not giving a verdict on all the other information that we have received over the past three days; we are specifically giving our view on the proposed colour of the saltire—not on anything else that we have or have not received. On the basis of the views that have been expressed by committee members, we are happy to say that the colour that is nearest to azure blue is Pantone 300.

I invite Gil Paterson to comment. I do not want any big speeches, Gil.

Mr Gil Paterson (Central Scotland) (SNP): I appreciate that, convener, but I will give some clarification. My whole life has been involved with colour. It is a good recommendation that you are making. As the Parliament is the body that is responsible for the Scottish flag, the petitioner has

sought the Parliament's recommendation of a colour as guidance for people who manufacture flags or prints.

I think that confusion arises because people think that the word azure specifies something, whereas it does not. Today, I have brought with me examples of the roughly 300 references that my own business uses for the colour azure. They are all entirely different. If I may just show two examples to the committee—

The Convener: I must say to Gil Paterson that, having read all the evidence that has been given to the other committees, members are aware of the evidence that has been given about colours. That is why there is unanimity around the table that the correct colour is Pantone 300. That is the recommendation that we will make on the petition.

Mr Paterson: The last comment that I want to make is to thank the committee on behalf of the petitioner, who is present today. I am grateful for the research that has been carried out by the committee. It is gratifying that members have put so much work in that they understand the issue before people come to the committee. Some good work has been done today. Thank you very much.

The Convener: If members are happy with that, I thank Mr Reid for his persistence in bringing the matter before the committee and for ensuring that the matter has gone through all the relevant channels. We now have a recommendation from the committee for the future manufacture of flags.

Michael Russell: We should also thank Gil Paterson for his substantial work, and for all his colours.

The Convener: He may take all his colour charts with him.

Michael Russell: He did not manage to sell any paint today.

Commissioner for Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill

15:12

Meeting continued in private until 15:55.

The Convener: Agenda item 3 is to consider whether a child-friendly leaflet should be produced on the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill, assuming that it is passed. Members will be aware that we have produced such a leaflet in the past. If the bill is passed, it would be helpful if a similar young person-friendly leaflet could be made available. If we set that process in motion now, the leaflet might be available by the time that the stage 3 debate is held. I think that that would be a useful thing to have. Are members agreed?

Members *indicated agreement.*

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