

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

January 8, 2001
1:10 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Rick Halford, Chair
Senator Drue Pearce
Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Jerry Ward
Senator Johnny Ellis

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

Committee on Committees Report

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

None

ACTION NARRATIVE

TAPE 01-1, SIDE A

Number 001

CHAIRMAN RICK HALFORD called the Senate Committee on Committees meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. Present were Senators Pearce, Kelly, Ward, Ellis and Chairman Halford.

CHAIRMAN HALFORD announced that the Committee's proposed report was distributed to committee members. The report follows proportional representation according to the Uniform Rules. The Senate Finance Committee membership will consist of nine members, as it did during the last legislature. Neither Minority nor Majority members received everything they wanted. He asked for a motion to first adopt the Committee on Committees Report and to discuss proposed amendments afterward.

SENATOR WARD moved to adopt the Committee on Committees Report.

SENATOR ELLIS objected and stated he has a proposed amendment.

CHAIRMAN HALFORD asked that the report be adopted first so that the Committee has a document to work from.

SENATOR ELLIS maintained his objection to the adoption of the draft report. The motion carried with Senators Kelly, Pearce, Ward and Halford voting "yea," and Senator Ellis voting "nay."

SENATOR ELLIS moved to substitute the name of Senator Kim Elton for Senator Donny Olson as a member of the Senate Finance Committee.

SENATOR WARD objected.

SENATOR ELLIS noted that Senator Elton is an experienced and outstanding Senator from Southeast Alaska. He was selected unanimously by the Senate Democrats to serve on the Senate Finance Committee. The Majority will control that committee with votes to spare, therefore the Minority decided that Senator Elton would best serve the interests of the state in representing the Minority viewpoint. The Minority is very concerned about its selection being rejected. If the roles were reversed, the Democrats would not presume to tell the Republicans who to put on each committee. He noted this is the kind of action that does not bode well for setting a positive tone for this Legislature.

CHAIRMAN HALFORD stated that the Majority's recommendation was not a personal slight to Senator Elton and that the Capital is well represented because all legislators are here. He noted the fact is that most of the dollars spent come from Senator Olson's district. He could not recall in his 18 years with the Legislature any time when the Majority accepted the Minority's suggestions about the Finance Committee membership, although it may have happened. Before the proportional rule went into effect, minority members were seldom given seats on the Finance Committee. There is no rule or tradition about accepting all of the committee appointments of the Minority members.

SENATOR WARD said he contacted Senator Olson the day after the election and asked him to try to get a seat on the Finance Committee because throughout his campaign he heard many comments about urban/rural conflicts. He felt it would be helpful to have three Alaska Natives on the Senate Finance Committee: himself, Senator Hoffman, and Senator Olson. Senator Ward said he believes he is partially responsible for Senator Olson's efforts to strive to work on the perceived and real urban and rural differences. For that reason, he maintained his objection to changing the Minority membership on the Senate Finance Committee.

SENATOR ELLIS responded that his motion, on behalf of the Minority, is supported by Senator Olson. It was not Senator Olson's idea to change the recommendation of the Minority. The Minority believes

that Senator Olson is an outstanding Senator but it also feels that Senator Elton is an experienced legislator and would do a better job on the Senate Finance Committee until Senator Olson gains more experience with the budget process. He noted he will work with Senator Ward to do a better job for rural Alaska.

CHAIRMAN HALFORD announced that a motion to substitute Senator Elton for Senator Olson on the Senate Finance Committee was before the Committee.

SENATOR ELLIS called for the question. The motion failed with Senators Ward, Pearce, Kelly and Halford voting "nay," and Senator Ellis voting "yea."

SENATOR ELLIS said that since the amendment did not pass, he is unable to support the Committee on Committees Report and objects to passing it out of committee.

SENATOR KELLY moved to pass the Committee on Committees Report to the Senate floor for a vote. He asked how Senators will address amendments to the current report during the next week if scheduling conflicts arise.

CHAIRMAN HALFORD explained the Committee would meet again. He announced that the motion before the Committee was to send the report to the Senate floor. The motion carried with Senators Kelly, Pearce, Ward and Halford voting "yea," and Senator Ellis voting "nay."

There being no further business to come before the Committee on Committees, CHAIRMAN HALFORD adjourned the meeting at 1:19 p.m.