

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Westall
Vice Chairman Mello
Mr. Barengo
Mr. Harmon
Mr. Vergield
Mr. Glover
Mr. Rusk
Mr. Tanner
Mr. Weise

GUESTS PRESENT

Chuck King, Central Telephone

Chairman Westall called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., and stated that the meeting had been called to discuss S.C.R. 1. She called for testimony on the resolution and discussion by the committee.

S.C.R. 1

Mr. Weise stated that the obstruction being debated is the conference committees. Mr. Vergiels made a motion that the committee amend the bill back to one conference committee from the two that are proposed. Mr. Weise seconded the motion. The motion was carried with Mr. Weise voting "No".

Mr. Barengo moved that Joint Rule 11 be amended to read that each party shall be represented on the commission in the closest proportion to the number of democrats and republicans in the Assembly. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harmon. Mrs. Westall stated that she felt that this would be the wish of the people since that is the way the vote went. Mr. Weise objected, and said that the commission was developed in 1949, and since then one or both houses have been held by both republicans and democrats and this partisan effort has never been displayed in the past. He does not see any logic behind it and the current rule was adopted by 35 democrats at the time. He asked that the rule be kept non-partisan. Mr. Vergiels said that the commission is established by the legislature and each time there is a session it may be remolded or even done away with if desired. Mr. Rusk backed the thoughts of Mr. Weise. He felt that the commission should remain non-partisan.

The motion was passed as amended, with Mr. Weise, Mr. Rusk and Mr. Tanner voting "No".

Mr. Weise and Mr. Tanner were excused by the Chairman.

Mr. Vergiels moved that S.C.R. 1 be recommended as "Do pass as amended". The motion was seconded by Mr. Harmon. The motion was passed as amended with Mr. Rusk voting "No".

Chairman Westall stated that there has been a request made by Mr. Charles Watson to be accredited as a newsman. He is not a member of the press as such, but puts out a newsletter known as "Nora Newsletter" on behalf of the National Public Lands Task Force of the Nevada Outdoor Recreation Association, Inc. Mrs. Westall felt that we might be starting a precedent by admitting everybody to the press corps. Mrs. Westall stated that the qualifications for admission have been pretty loose in the past, but it has been more or less for the news media. She said that many organizations have a newsletter, and to admit one person could open the door to many more. Following a general discussion, it was felt that Mr. Watson was representing a special interest group and, as such, should be registered as a lobbyist rather than a newsman and should not be registered with the press corps. As a writer of an advocacy publication he is not writing from an unbiased position. The Chairman will contact Mr. Watson and inform him of the opinion of the Committee.

Chairman Westall called for discussion on the problem of the lobbyists. She stated that the lobbyists had been invited to sit in on this meeting and they did not wish to do so. Mr. Barengo read the 1975 suggested rules covering the conduct of lobbyists during legislative sessions, and a 1976-77 handout which covered the same subject matter. These rules were made by the lobbyists themselves and circulated among them. The rules seemed to indicate that the floor of the Assembly should be open during extended recesses and adjournment to the lobbyists. Chairman Westall mentioned Rule 94 which does cover access to the floor, but felt that it should be clarified. Mr. Rusk said that so far he has not been bothered by lobbyists. Other members of the committee remarked that this would probably change as the session became more involved and more people became involved in lobbying. Mr. Rusk heard that there might possibly be a sign posted at the door of the Assembly when it is in session which would be controlled by the chair and removed when the Speaker felt that the lobbyists could be on the floor. Mrs. Westall felt that this would not help the situation which is being discussed, which is that of the legislators not being able to accomplish any work at their desks due to interruptions by lobbyists not at the invitation of the legislator. Rule 94 states that, "No person shall do any lobbying upon the floor of the Assembly at any time, and it shall be the duty of the Sergeant of Arms to remove any person or persons violating any of the provisions of this rule." There were some members who felt that the floor should be open at all times that the Assembly is not in session, but others felt that the rule should be enforced as it stands, with lobbyists entering only at the invitation of legislators. It was stated that many lobbyists are concerned

about the enforcement of this rule as it is only about ten percent of them who violate the rule to the extent that it is becoming a problem.

Mr. Mello moved that Rule 94 be enforced. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harmon. Mr. Rusk stated that this is going to be very shocking to a number of legislative lobbyists. Mr. Harmon said that Nevada is one of the very few states in the country that allows lobbyists on the floor, and some of the states do not even allow them in the legislative building. Mrs. Westall felt that when assemblymen are at their desks they are busy, and that lobbyists should conduct their business with them in the halls or at their invitation. The motion was passed with Mr. Rusk and Mr. Barengo voting "No". Chairman Westall will inform the Speaker of the decision.

Mr. Barengo moved to amend Rule 94 to read, "No person shall do any lobbying upon the floor of the Assembly during the time from the morning call to order and adjournment. It shall be the duty of the Sergeant of Arms to remove any person or persons violating any of the provisions of this rule." Following a brief discussion, Mr. Barengo withdrew his motion.

Mr. Rusk asked if the rule could be changed at a later date in the session if it became a problem. He was informed that it could be considered.

Chairman Westall announced that the next meeting of the Legislative Functions Committee will be on Monday, January 29, 1979, at 5:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 2:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Ruth Olguin
Secretary