



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Standing Committee
on
Legislative Offices

Tuesday, October 2, 2018
9:02 a.m.

Transcript No. 29-4-4

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session**

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Shepherd, David, Edmonton-Centre (NDP), Chair
Malkinson, Hon. Brian, Calgary-Currie (NDP), Deputy Chair
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (NDP), Acting Deputy Chair
Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (UCP)
Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (Ind)
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (NDP)
Kleinsteuber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (NDP)
McKittrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (NDP)
Payne, Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (NDP)*
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (UCP)
van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (UCP)
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (NDP)

* substitution for Brian Malkinson

Also in Attendance

Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP)

Legislative Officers

Jill Clayton	Information and Privacy Commissioner
Del Graff	Child and Youth Advocate
Glen Resler	Chief Electoral Officer
Marianne Ryan	Ombudsman, Public Interest Commissioner
Marguerite Trussler, QC	Ethics Commissioner
W. Doug Wylie	Auditor General

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer Participant

Drew Westwater	Deputy Chief Electoral Officer
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Support Staff

Shannon Dean	Law Clerk, Director of House Services, and Acting Clerk, Procedure
Stephanie LeBlanc	Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Trafton Koenig	Parliamentary Counsel
Philip Massolin	Manager of Research and Committee Services
Sarah Amato	Research Officer
Nancy Robert	Research Officer
Corinne Dacyshyn	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Aaron Roth	Committee Clerk
Karen Sawchuk	Committee Clerk
Lyndsay Tischer	Manager of Human Resource Services
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications
Jeanette Dotimas	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Janet Schwegel	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

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[Mr. Shepherd in the chair]

The Chair: All right. Well, I'd like to welcome members, staff, and guests to this meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices.

My name is David Shepherd, MLA for Edmonton-Centre and chair of the committee. I'd just like to ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, and then we'll hear from those on the phones.

Mrs. Littlewood: Jessica Littlewood, acting deputy chair and MLA for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mrs. Aheer: Leela Sharon Aheer, Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Pitt: Angela Pitt, MLA, Airdrie.

Mr. Westwater: Drew Westwater, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. Resler: Glen Resler, Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. Horne: Good morning. Trevor Horne, MLA for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

Ms Woollard: Good morning. Denise Woollard, MLA, Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Ms McKittrick: Bonjour. Annie McKittrick, MLA for Sherwood Park.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Good morning. Jamie Kleinsteuber, MLA for Calgary-Northern Hills.

Dr. Massolin: Good morning. Philip Massolin, manager of research and committee services.

Ms Tischer: Good morning. Lyndsay Tischer, manager of human resource services.

Ms Dean: Good morning. Shannon Dean, Law Clerk and director of House services.

Ms Rempel: Good morning. Jody Rempel, committee clerk.

The Chair: Excellent.
And on the phones?

Mr. Gill: Good morning. Prab Gill, MLA, Calgary-Greenway.

Ms Payne: Hello. Brandy Payne, MLA, Calgary-Acadia.

Mr. van Dijken: Glenn van Dijken, MLA, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you, everyone.
We have, I believe, Mr. Cooper as well.

Mr. Cooper: I'm a guest, but I am here. Nathan Cooper from the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cooper, and welcome to the meeting.
A note for the record: Ms Payne is an official substitute for the hon. Mr. Malkinson, and Mrs. Littlewood, as noted, has been designated deputy chair for this meeting.

Before we turn to the business at hand, a few operational items. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*. The committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and

broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. As always, please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

Before we proceed with reviewing the agenda, I'd just like to advise committee members that I plan to give a brief report on the 2017-2018 audit results for the office of the Auditor General.

If there are no other comments . . .

Mr. Cooper: I have an item that I'd like to add under additional items.

The Chair: Certainly, Mr. Cooper. What would you like to add?

Mr. Cooper: I'd like to add some discussion around correspondence that I received this summer with respect to harassment policies of the legislative officers.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cooper. We will add that under other business.

Were there any other additions to the agenda?

If not, do we have a member that would move adoption of the agenda with that addition? Ms Woollard. Thank you. All those in favour? Any opposed? Those on the phones? Thank you. Motion carried.

A set of draft minutes from our previous meeting has been distributed for consideration. Are there any errors or omissions?

If not, I would look for a motion to approve the minutes. Is there a member that would move that? Mr. Horne. Thank you. All those in favour? Any opposed? Those on the phones? That motion is carried.

All right. We move, then, to a supplementary funding request we received from Elections Alberta. I'd like to welcome Mr. Resler, the Chief Electoral Officer, and his colleagues to the meeting. I understand that birthday greetings may be in order.

Mr. Resler: Yes. Thank you.

The Chair: Congratulations, sir.

The committee is considering a request from Elections Alberta for supplementary funding for 2018-19.

Mr. Resler, I understand that you have a presentation that will take about 15 minutes. After that presentation I'll open the floor for questions from committee members. Please start by introducing your colleagues, and then move on to your presentation.

Mr. Resler: Good morning, everyone. With me today is Kevin Lee, director of finance, and Drew Westwater, my Deputy Chief Electoral Officer.

I'd like to thank everyone for the opportunity to speak on our 2018-19 budget supplementary estimate. We're here today as a result of Bill 32, An Act to Strengthen and Protect Democracy in Alberta, that was introduced in the Legislature three days after our budget approval last December.

I'll briefly address the impacts of Bill 32 as it applies to the Election Act in relation to our original budget request. Our budget request, which was passed, included the use of vote tabulators in advance polls and also a mail-based enumeration, and those items are no longer applicable and have been deducted from our supplementary budget request.

As I stated in my letter dated May 15, 2018, to the committee, there are three significant changes to be implemented as a result of Bill 32: a mandatory door-to-door enumeration, which requires the hiring of 7,000 enumerators; the addition of a fifth day of advance polls for the provincial general election, which results in a 25 per cent increase in staffing and poll rental costs for advance polls; and thirdly, the addition of a new category of polls called special mobile

polls, which will provide us with the flexibility to add an additional 180 polling locations throughout the province during advance voting days. Also, the legislation specifies that advance polls and special mobile polls are to facilitate an electorate to vote in any location throughout the province during those advance voting days. This vote-anywhere capacity will add logistical complexities, technology needs to automate the poll book, and the requirement to provide a ballot-on-demand functionality, in which we need to be able to provide the elector with their local ballot wherever they vote.

Bill 32 was not the only piece of legislation to impact enumeration. New legislation relating to working alone and staff safety has also impacted our budget. We increased the number of enumerators going out working in pairs, and we also introduced GPS technology, among other measures, to ensure the safety of our enumerators.

In addition to Bill 32 changes, in the year of a provincial general election we do not budget for by-elections. If a vacancy exists within the year, it is usually vacant until the general election. The two vacancies in Fort McMurray-Conklin and Innisfail-Sylvan Lake occurred outside that one-year period, but the polls were not held until July 12 and, therefore, were unfunded in our budget.

At a high level we estimated \$545,000 for the two by-elections, \$8,329,000 for the additions as a result of the legislative changes, for a total supplementary request of \$8,874,000.

The last page of the handout that I provided to the committee provides a detailed listing by account code breaking down those expense items. As those items were provided well in advance, I will not be going over those in detail.

9:10

Since our supplementary request in May both by-elections have been held, and we're nearing the completion of the enumeration, so I thought I'd provide the committee with some highlights of those activities. The enumeration recruitment has gone well. We were looking to hire 7,000 enumerators. We received over 9,700 applications. Unfortunately, those applications weren't evenly distributed across all electoral divisions, so only 5,500 enumerators were hired. Many enumerator positions, particularly in rural Alberta, were not filled. Every returning officer also experienced a high number of terminations, which also resulted in additional hirings and additional training sessions.

Our permanent register has just over 2 million addresses to be visited. As of September 30 we confirmed information on 1.4 million addresses, or approximately 67 per cent of the residences.

There are three methods of enumeration available to Albertans: the provincial call centre, online on our website, and the door-to-door process. The call centre: there were over 120,000 electors that have used the call centre to update their information, and we're averaging approximately 4,400 calls per day. Online on the website: just over 116,000 Albertans went online to complete their enumeration, and there we are averaging about 4,000 enumerations daily. The door-to-door process: a total of just over 1.1 million electors have completed the enumeration through the door-to-door process, just over 80 per cent of the volume.

We had some challenges with the enumeration application on the first weekend, and the cold and snowy weather throughout September has set us back a little bit, so we've extended the door-to-door enumeration process by an additional week. That will end on October 5, Friday of this week, and the online and call centre period has been extended to October 12 to capture those who call back after this week.

As previously mentioned, we were concerned for the safety of our enumerators in this process. We've submitted 20 claims to the Workers' Compensation Board, primarily for dog bites, slips, trips,

falls. Seven of the claims have resulted in lost time, including three incidents in which the enumerator has broken a leg, knee, or wrist. Police involvement has been requested in several instances of enumerators being followed, harassed, and/or physically pushed by residents of the households that they have attempted to enumerate.

In closing, I'm very proud of the enormous amount of work that has been achieved by my staff in Edmonton and across the province. It has been a very stressful period for staff to deliver the enumeration in less than six months' lead time. Returning officers, enumerators, and support staff are dedicated and passionate about the electoral process, and I'm very happy in what they have accomplished. The enumeration itself has set us back in pre-election planning for next year as we are a very small core group of staff, so I just want to give a thanks to everyone back in the office and out in the field.

I'll now open the floor to any questions you may have.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Resler.

I'll now open the floor, then, to questions from the committee. Mrs. Aheer.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Chair. Thank you so much, by the way, for being here and for all the work that's been done. Would you mind clarifying? You were speaking about no money for the by-elections or that it's not prepared. I have, actually, two small questions. One of them: you had mentioned something – and I don't know if I just missed it – about \$8 million due to the legislation being put in. If you could clarify what that \$8 million was. I think I misheard that.

Secondly, with respect to the by-elections do you have historically sort of a way that you hedge out for the year or through a process to kind of guess over the years, like, what by-elections may or may not look like?

Mr. Resler: I'll start with the by-elections. We normally budget three by-elections per annual cycle. Previously there weren't too many by-elections being held, but the money was there in case vacancies did occur. The last while we've had several by-elections. The reason the two by-elections were unfunded – they would have been funded previously. In the previous year we would have had funding for the by-elections, but in 2018 there would have been no funding for those by-elections. Usually we estimate between \$250,000 to \$300,000 for each by-election. It all depends if it's urban, rural. One of the primary costs as far as staffing is the number of population. Otherwise, advertising has a very big aspect to it.

For the supplementary as far as Bill 32 implications, as I said before, the door-to-door enumeration is the primary item for that.

Mrs. Aheer: I just wanted to clarify. Thank you so much. I appreciate that.

Mr. Cooper: I'd like to be on the speakers list if possible.

The Chair: Certainly, Mr. Cooper.

Mrs. Aheer, did you have a supplemental question?

Mrs. Aheer: If you don't mind.

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Chair. You were also mentioning about issues with getting rural enumerators. I was writing down madly at that point in time. Would you mind clarifying that again? Did I understand correctly? You mentioned something about that it didn't get out there or the logistics or the paperwork. What were you saying there?

Mr. Resler: For rural Alberta we have difficulty recruiting people who are willing to go enumerating. Part of it is a safety issue and the drive time. You're driving distances to each household or farm. You're driving down long driveways which you don't know. If you're not familiar with the local residents, you're not certain as far as what you're driving into. That's part of the issue. The other issue could be just compensation itself as far as: is it worth their time to do it?

Where we have significant shortfalls in staffing, the returning officers have recruited enumerators that were doing other areas. If they completed the polling subdivision within the timeline, they're taking on additional polling subdivisions to complete the work. They're trying as much as possible to get the whole area covered as far as enumeration, but in the north specifically I think what our statistics show right now, you know, is that some of the areas may have 40 per cent completion compared to some of the urban, more well-established areas, which will be 100 per cent completion.

Our average of 67 per cent at this point in time: for me, I think that's a good success rate. For the previous enumeration we had no contact as high as 35 per cent in areas. That wasn't uncommon. I think people are less willing to open their doors now than they did in the past, so I'm actually quite pleased with the number.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you very much.

Mr. Resler: Thank you.

The Chair: I have Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Mr. Resler, for your presentation and to your team for their efforts in the enumeration so far. Back when we initially spoke about the enumeration, you did highlight some of the very concerns that you spoke about this morning as well, particularly about rural Alberta and the ability to enumerate those areas in any sort of efficient manner. I wondered if you might just provide some comment, if possible, on some of the injuries that individuals have sustained, if that would be appropriate.

I know you highlighted that one of your big concerns about spending significantly more resources to get similar sorts of results with the enumeration was around the safety of enumerators. As it turns out, you know, there have been at least 20 incidents. Police have had to be called. I wondered if you have the same opinion today as you did the last time we had this discussion about some of the pitfalls, if you will, of doing the enumeration this way as opposed to doing it in a more targeted fashion.

9:20

Mr. Resler: I don't think we have enough information to determine whether this enumeration has been a success. We have, you know, 1.1 million residences already confirmed as far as updating their information. Are those residences electors who already are in our permanent register of electors and we're just confirming their existence, or are there actual updates to the information? Obviously, there's new housing to which people have moved, and we're updating the information there. But what actual per cent of the information is actually updated in comparison to the cost of the enumeration? That's something that we will be providing to the committee as far as our postenumeration reporting. We'll look at the success of the enumeration in that fashion and whether there's value for money in this exercise.

With regard to the safety of enumerators, I still think that's a concern. Enumeration in this manner is a full-scale enumeration. There's always that risk. You know, we've had a few hospitalizations, severe dog bites, a pit bull encounter where an arm

and leg were bitten, broken kneecaps, that type of thing. We did implement kind of a higher advertising program in order to accentuate what the enumerators are going to look like, where they are, when they're in local communities. We automated the enumeration process as much as possible, even the door-to-door using tablets, and that's where we had GPS technology with that. If an incident was to occur with an enumerator, we'd be able to pinpoint as far as where that enumerator was last recorded and potentially where that tabulator was if something did occur. So we're looking at the safety of enumerators at all times.

Mr. Cooper: I just have one quick follow-up if I may, Chair.

The Chair: Yes. Please go ahead, Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Cooper: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Resler, for your comments and your commitment to safety. Obviously, I had some concerns, as you did, when we spoke about this previously. I'm finding it a little unfortunate that this was the path that the Assembly instructed you to take, but it is where we are.

The last thing that I wanted to get some clarity from you on is that you highlighted some of the concerns that you have with respect to election planning being delayed because of the enumeration. I wondered how you feel in terms of your level of comfort as to where Elections Alberta is today. Let's say that the Premier elected to not follow the election window. Would Elections Alberta be able to complete the tasks of the Premier's ask for an election? And how much delayed is your election planning?

Mr. Resler: Our election planning is delayed. Examples that are specific to members themselves: if you're looking at polling subdivision maps for the new electoral division boundaries and an updated list of electors passed as a result of the boundary commission, those have not been completed as we had to reassign all our staff to work on maps specific to the enumeration. What would have been released probably at the end of June, early July, the maps: now we're looking at later this month releasing them to the public and to members. So that's an example of the delays.

We've staffed our GIS group, our mapping group. There are two, three people that directly work on that. We've added another three people to double it up just to meet the mapping needs that we have right now.

During the enumeration process we've been working on election readiness. We're working on some mock polls as far as the new advance polls and special mobile polls, what that will look like. We've done trial runs with that, stress testing of it to see what the appropriate staffing component for that is. Our director of operations wasn't able to attend the meeting today because we're doing video shoots for training programs for election officers. Then in the next week or so we're meeting with the political parties to discuss the changes and impacts of the legislation and how that will impact them as far as their election preparation.

As far as our readiness, we will be ready February 1. Our offices across the province are going to open February 1, and we'll be ready. The impact is that staff aren't getting holidays and extra staff are being brought in. So as far as resources within the office, it's fairly tight, but we will be ready for any election call when it is called.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Resler.

I have Ms Woollard.

Ms Woollard: Thank you very much. Mr. Resler, it's really good hearing about your preparations for an upcoming election. I just will go back for a moment to a quick question about the by-election

costs. I think you said that the costs were between \$200,000 to \$300,000 per by-election. I was just wondering: how much of a difference is there between the rural and the urban, as in Fort McMurray-Conklin versus – I know it's not really urban – Innisfail-Sylvan Lake? How much of a difference would there be for that?

Mr. Resler: There's quite a significant cost. Even though we provided the \$545,000 as the estimate, we're looking at that number being lower when the final figures are determined. A big item, you know, especially for Fort McMurray-Conklin is that it's one of the smaller electoral divisions, so one of the bigger costs associated with it is staffing at the polls and such. Because of that, there are fewer polls that are set up, fewer staff that are required. So that one does come in lower.

Advertising is a big factor. When we're advertising in Calgary, Edmonton, the two largest newspapers come at a far higher cost than the local papers in rural Alberta. Also, Bill 32 removed the requirement for us to advertise a couple of our mandatory advertisements, the announcement of the election as far as the timelines and also the official agents ad. So we removed those also. They are advertised through our website, and we do a news release, which is usually carried by the local papers. So that will also bring down our costs in future by-elections and then those two.

Ms Woollard: So Fort McMurray-Conklin would cost less, then?

Mr. Resler: Absolutely.

Ms Woollard: Oh, interesting. Thank you.

Just a quick other question about by-elections. The budget provides for three by-elections per year, but because of the way that last year fell, these two by-elections weren't covered, correct?

Mr. Resler: Yes.

Ms Woollard: Okay. So what ordinarily happens to the unspent budget for by-elections?

Mr. Resler: That's unspent. That remains with the general revenue fund, so those monies never come to our office.

Ms Woollard: Okay. So it's just put back in, and then when a new one comes along, it's not covered. It has to be funded.

Mr. Resler: Yeah. Strictly in an election year we do not budget for it because normally it would just form part of the election.

Ms Woollard: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Resler, thank you for being here. What is the hourly wage that you pay enumerators?

Mr. Resler: Enumerators are at \$15 an hour. That is a big change compared to the previous enumeration. For the previous enumeration, they would have been paid per elector on the list. I can't remember the number anymore, say a dollar as an example of what they would have been paid, which caused issues as far as the quality of the data that's collected because the incentive, then, would be not to remove anyone from the list, to have people remain on there.

In addition, because of fewer people opening their doors, you're going door to door and you're only collecting a couple of names, depending on how many people you're able to access. The hourly rate is fairer, but it is the minimum wage.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you.

Did that change at all as of Monday?

Mr. Resler: We went with \$15 right from the start, so that was the rate.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you.

The Chair: Mrs. Aheer.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. I just have a question with respect to what had happened with some of the enumerators with dog bites and falling and whatnot. Especially in the rural areas, you're right about those driveways and so many long, long distances and whatnot. Have you come up with any suggestions or ideas that may be more efficient for these areas? I mean, we're dealing with a lot of different issues out in the rural areas. Did you come up with any other suggestions or thoughts on collecting that data?

9:30

Mr. Resler: Well, the thoughts as far as data collection would be mail based. What we originally proposed is using something similar to what Elections B.C. performed for their enumeration. It's a mail-based one. You provide the elector information as far as who is registered at the household, and if there are any changes, then they provide that information through the call centre, online or in writing.

You know, we've had considerable push-back with the rural electors. If there's signage that says "do not trespass" or "no trespassing," those types of things, for the most part we try to not even approach in the sense of: is that safe? Some enumerators, you know, want to do this as best they can and want to get as many electors registered and have gone onto those properties. They have been challenged by some electors because it's someone that they're not familiar with; it's a vehicle that they're not familiar with. That's where we've had some electors chase down the enumerators or call the police on the enumerators to say that they're on their property.

You know, the We Missed You cards are legislated as far as providing that, which is good contact information, because after a heavy weekend of enumerating, our Mondays are usually 50 per cent busier as far as phone calls and online than regularly during the week. We get some criticism because they're a sticky note that's left on the door versus in a mailbox, so they think that encourages theft or robberies in the areas, too. You know, there are different aspects of it. Although they work, the We Missed You cards, as far as I see, there are some negative aspects to it, too.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Resler.

Just, if I may, a quick reminder to members that we are here to discuss the supplementary budget request for the Chief Electoral Officer, so in general I think our discussion would be best focused on questions about those particular costs, how that budget is put together, et cetera. We are looking towards making that decision today. Happy to exercise a bit of latitude. I appreciate that it's a good opportunity, with the electoral officer here, to be able to ask some other questions, but just a reminder of what our area of focus is this morning.

Did you have a supplemental question, Mrs. Aheer?

Mrs. Aheer: I did, and thank you, Chair. With that in mind, the reason for my question was to find out about efficiencies with those, because you have a lot of folks that are going out these ways that may not even be able to enter properties. So that's why I was asking with respect to other options to try and get these folks out, because I can imagine that it would be quite expensive to have folks going out there who can't even get to the doors of the people that they're trying to . . .

Mr. Resler: As part of the enumeration, as far as our advertising and outreach to electors, we provided a householder for every residence, informing them of the enumeration and how they can update their information. It was advertised for every mail address in Alberta as far as the door-to-door process, the mail based, and the online. You know, if a person in rural Alberta did not want someone coming to their door, they should have been aware of the mail-based process or the online in which we could accommodate them. If that information was collected in those two manners, then a door-to-door enumerator would not need to come to their residence. So as far as the door-to-door process, we felt that there would be some difficulties with that, and that's why we offered the other two manners in which the information can be collected.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Aheer and Mr. Resler.
I have Mr. Horne.

Mr. Horne: Yes. Thank you, and thank you for taking the time today. I'm just looking at the explanation of the supplemental budget request and, specifically, item 12 there. You're requesting an additional \$335,000 to lease laptops and printers from Elections Ontario. I'm wondering if there's something special about that equipment or the capabilities of the software.

Mr. Resler: We're strictly looking at the hardware as far as the lease arrangements. Elections Ontario: this last provincial election they fully automated their processes across the province and have, I think, about 10,000 laptops available for lease arrangements.

What they have done as part of their process to automate is that they've also made an agreement with the committee that they report to that those pieces of equipment can be made available to other electoral jurisdictions. For their municipal elections, there are municipalities within Ontario that are going to be leasing, but also across the country there are jurisdictions that are able to lease the exact equipment. The cost to us, really, is the shipping cost and to be able to wipe the laptops as far as any data that's on there. That's the cost to us. That's substantially less than leasing or purchasing. For the automation for the advance polls and the special mobile polls, we're accessing equipment from them.

Mr. Horne: Okay. Just a quick follow-up. I'm gathering, then, that this equipment, if it's mostly shipping costs, wouldn't be available from, say, B.C. or Saskatchewan.

Mr. Resler: Saskatchewan has no automation, and B.C.'s automation as far as their previous elections was limited. Next election they will be fully automated also, I believe.

Mr. Horne: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: All right. I have Ms McKittrick.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you. I wanted to really thank you for the work that you've done over the past month, especially your staff. I understand the conditions were not always easy for them, but I ran across a lot of your enumerators in my constituency, and they really seemed to be very diligent and to take their work seriously. They were wearing a vest, so they were clearly identified, and they were very respectful when I saw them in the area. I wanted to thank them.

I'm really interested in how your budget contributes to more awareness of the election and citizen participation in the election, so I was wondering if you could tell us if in your increased budget demand and so on you have the capacity to provide the material in languages other than English. Is that something that happens during

the enumeration process, that you have language capacity, and how is your budget reflective of that?

Mr. Resler: As far as language capacity we do have translation in 25 of the primary dialects as defined with census Canada in Alberta. We do have some translation. It's limited as far as kind of the request of information. The enumerator at the door would provide a sheet to the elector, and they would be able to pick out if we had one of those languages that they spoke. To some extent it is limited, but we do as much as possible. We also have significant outreach with different groups in order to educate them on the process in advance of the enumeration itself and if any questions come up during the period itself.

I can't remember if there were other questions. Sorry.

Ms McKittrick: I was just interested in your budget increase and how that was incorporated within the amount of money you were asking for in the budget increase. Alberta has changed an awful lot, and participation in the democratic process is something that's important to all of us.

Mr. Resler: On the outreach component of it, as far as the increase in the budget, I would say that there was nothing applicable. That was something that we've always done, and we have translation in the polling place, too, as far as what they need to do as far as eligibility and how to mark a ballot. Those posters are available in the polling place also.

Ms McKittrick: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Mr. Horne.

Mr. Horne: Yes. Thank you. Just one more question. Looking at the same document, item 9, your submission shows a decrease of \$216,000 for fees allocated for tabulator operators. Is there a reason for that decrease? I would imagine that if the tabulator is in place, we still need somebody to operate that.

Mr. Resler: Actually, the reason for the decrease is because Bill 32 prohibits me now from ever using tabulators in the polling place. That was something that we had originally budgeted. That was something that was brought forward to the committee as far as testing of new equipment. We tested the tabulators in by-elections. They were successful. They were time saving and helped alleviate, you know, long days as far as for election officers in the polling places, where you're working 14-hour days and you have to count ballots. If they balance the first time, you're okay. If you continue counting for a few hours, they're already at a tired point in the long day.

Tabulators are something that I will still recommend in future legislative changes to accommodate that. But at this point, because we're no longer allowed to use them, that's why that cost was removed.

9:40

Mr. Horne: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Resler.
I have Ms Woollard.

Ms Woollard: Thank you. One of the things I was interested in when reading through the notes is about the increases you have in technology services under note 10. I'm wondering. If a person registers to vote through the online enumeration – would signing up online allow for more efficient door-to-door enumeration? Does that make a difference in the process?

Mr. Resler: Absolutely. The process itself as far as the online and even the call centre, both of them, allows for electors to update their information directly. It provides flexibility as far as time. The enumerator by legislation has to visit the home three times. They try. We try to instruct them to go different times of the day – you know, during the week, weekends, morning, afternoon, evening – in order to find someone in the household. They'll leave the We Missed You card, and that provides them access as far as the website to go online and update the information themselves. So the technology in that sense does create efficiencies. It creates the opportunities for the electors to update their information.

With the web-based technology, then, as soon as someone updates the information online, for example, or through the call centre, those addresses are removed from the list which the enumerators have to visit. That saves them a stop and that type of thing from going on.

Ms Woollard: Thank you.

So, basically, it's just avoiding that human walking to the door over and over again.

Mr. Resler: Walking, driving. Absolutely.

Ms Woollard: Absolutely. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Woollard.

Are there any further questions from members, then, in regard to the request for the supplementary budget?

If not, do we have a member that would wish to make a motion with respect to the 2018-19 supplementary funding request from Elections Alberta? Mr. Horne.

Mr. Horne: Yes. Thank you, Chair. I would like to move that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices approve the request of the Chief Electoral Officer for supplementary funding for Elections Alberta in the 2018-2019 fiscal year in the amount of \$8,874,000.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Horne.

We have the motion on the floor. Is there any discussion or debate? Mrs. Pitt.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There were a number of things that were highlighted here today. I mean, the reason we're here today allowing additional monies for the Chief Electoral Officer is because of some of the I would like to hope unintended consequences from Bill 32. However, I do think that they're intended, more particularly in terms of the tabulator. Thank you, Mr. Horne, for asking that question. The tabulators actually improved efficiency, as was proven and stated, yet they were removed. It's costing the taxpayer a significant amount of money to replace that system.

In addition to that, there are a number of Albertans out there who are trying to make a couple of extra bucks being enumerators, and they're put at risk. There was previous concern about this when this was presented to the committee last Christmastime. I mean, I hate to say that I told you so, but that's sort of the situation that we're in. It's unfortunate that we have, you know, a combination of Albertans at risk and also more money going out the door, so to speak, to pay for this experiment by this NDP government.

I mean, it is what it is now, and the legislation has been passed, but I would be remiss if I didn't highlight those issues that were just sort of highlighted, reiterated here today.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Pitt.

Any further discussion regarding the motion on the floor? Anyone on the phones?

Seeing and hearing none, we'll put that to a vote. All those in favour of the motion by Mr. Horne, that our committee approve the request of the Chief Electoral Officer for supplementary funding for Elections Alberta in the 2018-19 fiscal year in the amount of \$8,874,000? Any opposed? Those on the phones?

That motion is carried.

All right. I would at this point, then, thank Mr. Resler and his staff for joining us this morning. We appreciate your efforts and the additional information.

Thank you.

Mr. Resler: Thanks. Have a good day.

The Chair: We'll move then to item 5. Looking ahead at the next two items of business, they both involve officers of the Assembly. I would suggest that the committee, including the Law Clerk and director of House services; the director of human resources, information technology, and broadcast services; Senior Parliamentary Counsel; the manager of research and committee services; and the manager of human resource services, consider moving in camera for our discussions as we may be discussing details of the contracts of the officers of the Legislature.

Do we have a member that would be willing to move that motion?

Thank you, Mr. Horne. Mr. Horne moves that

the committee move in camera.

All those in favour? Any opposed? Those on the phones?

The committee will move in camera.

Thank you.

[The committee met in camera from 9:47 a.m. to 10:38 a.m.]

The Chair: Excellent. Well, thank you, everyone. We've returned to the record. I believe we have a member that would wish to propose a motion in regard to the 2018-19 officer compensation review. Do we have a member that would like to make a motion in that regard? Mr. Kleinsteuber.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Yes. After discussion in camera, I'd like to move a motion that

the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices adopt a compensation strategy that is consistent with that provided to the public service management employees, which includes no scheduled increases or movements within salary grids for 2018-2019.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

Mrs. Littlewood: Mr. Kleinsteuber.

The Chair: Sorry. Mr. Kleinsteuber. Indeed. All right. Hanging with Mr. Kleinsteuber. Thank you.

We have the motion from Mr. Kleinsteuber, that we have no movement, then, within the salary grids for 2018-2019. Do we have any discussion or debate on this motion?

If not, I will call the question. We have the motion on the floor. All those in favour? Any opposed? Those on the phones?

That motion is carried.

Mrs. Littlewood: Mr. Chair, I'm wondering if we would be able to take a quick recess for 10 to 15 minutes.

The Chair: Okay. We completed our motions, then, in regard to item 5, so we would be approaching item 6, other business. We have a request from Mrs. Littlewood; I guess that would be a motion.

Mrs. Littlewood: Yes.

The Chair: Mrs. Littlewood is putting forward a request, a motion, that we take a 10- to 15-minute recess before proceeding to other business.

Mr. Cooper: I wonder: what is the purpose of the recess?

Mrs. Littlewood: I don't know, Mr. Cooper, that you would like to know what I'm leaving the room to do, but it involves the bathroom.

The Chair: I'm clarifying with the clerk that we do not require a motion to take a recess but just the general testing of the will of the committee. Mrs. Littlewood has requested a 10-minute break, a quick 10-minute recess. Are there any opposed to such?

Mrs. Pitt: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. I register that we have two that are opposed. Any other members of the committee? All right. So two opposed. I get the sense that the remainder of the committee is all right with it, so that being the case, I see no reason not to grant the request. We'll take a quick 10-minute recess.

[The committee adjourned from 10:42 a.m. to 10:54 a.m.]

The Chair: All right. All members have returned, so we will pick up the business of this committee.

Now, under other business I recognize we have an item from Mr. Cooper, but before we proceed to that, I just want to take care of the item of business I had noted earlier in regard to my report to the committee on a meeting I attended on June 26, 2018, with the Auditor General and senior staff from his office as well as the audit team from St. Arnaud Pinsent Steman, which is the firm we have under contract to conduct the annual audit of the office of the Auditor General. I'm pleased to advise that the 2017-2018 audit was completed without any issues identified. A copy of the audit documents will be released by the office of the Auditor General this fall in addition to their annual reports. Any questions on that?

If not, we have another item of business, from Mr. Cooper. Mr. Cooper, are you with us?

Mr. Cooper: Yeah. You betcha.

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Chair. I would just like to bring to the attention of the committee some concerns that I have. I think that ultimately what will result – I don't know what will result, but one of the concerns I have is on perhaps a gap in our process on how we may assist people or individuals who have a complaint against an office of the Legislature. As you know, Chair, in early August a complaint was brought to our attention. I believe it was brought to both my and your attention. I want to be as cautious, I guess, as possible with respect to keeping the identity and some of the issues around the complaint, handling it as appropriately as possible. I think, at the end of the day, what we need to do is ensure that there are processes in place. Certainly, I was unaware of what the process could and should and would be when this complaint was brought to my attention.

Essentially, just the Coles Notes version, I guess, is that a complaint was brought to me against the Election Commissioner . . .

The Chair: Mr. Cooper, I apologize. If I could just break in for a moment. [interjection] If I may break in for just a moment, Mr. Cooper. Thank you. I apologize for interrupting, but I think it's very important that we be very clear about what appropriate boundaries are in discussing this particular item. I agree that we should have a

discussion about the procedural elements of this, but outside of being in camera, I would hesitate to identify anything about the specific individual or the specific officer involved in this particular circumstance. I think both of those should be kept in very general terms. I would agree with having a discussion about a complaint that was raised about an officer of the Legislature at this time, but my advice, from my discussions with Parliamentary Counsel, is that that is as specific as it should get outside of discussions in camera. I apologize. I should have that made clear earlier.

Mr. Cooper: I guess what I would state, then, is that the complaint was serious against an office of the Legislature, everything from . . .

The Chair: Mr. Cooper, again, the specifics of the complaint should not be discussed outside of in camera. If you wish to discuss the fact that there was a complaint and your concerns about gaps in the procedure, that would be appropriate. Let's be clear. You may speak in general terms. Otherwise, it's discussion that should be moved in camera.

Mr. Cooper: Well, can you take me in camera with you?

The Chair: My understanding, as I'm being advised, is that a member of the committee could make a specific motion to that effect.

Mr. Cooper: Okay. Prior to doing that – I don't know; perhaps a colleague of mine would be willing to make that request – I'm happy to state a number of my concerns. I was included in this particular complaint. It did come to me, which is why I'm bringing it forward to the committee. My primary concern is around the fact that when this complaint was brought forward to the chair, it wasn't forwarded to anyone else on the committee. I don't know if that would have been appropriate or not.

The point is that, to the best of my knowledge, there's no process in place when an employee, in this case a whistle-blower, one would suggest, brings a complaint forward, in particular if it's a smaller office of the legislative officers, where there are not a whole ton of employees. What are the processes? Should the chair have shared it with the rest of the committee or not? I don't know the answer to that question.

11:00

Certainly, I think that at the very least we need to have a sense of whether or not the legislative officers have harassment policies in place in all of their offices. I think we need to take these sort of whistle-blower concerns seriously. You know, when this individual brought the complaint forward, they didn't know where to go. When it was brought forward to the chair, I believe that he forwarded it to the Clerk and the Office of the Speaker, and the Office of the Speaker was, like: "Well, he doesn't report to me. I'm not sure if this is the right process."

Now, this particular situation has been resolved, as I understand it, but I think it's very important that we all have a clear grasp of what the process is and whether or not it was followed, or if there's no process in place, then ensuring that there is one in the future.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cooper. You've raised this particular item for discussion. You've raised in general your concerns around clarity, I guess, regarding the process when a complaint is brought forward regarding an officer of the Legislature.

Do we have any discussion at this point?

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Chair, did we want to move in camera at this point? Is that the intention?

The Chair: You certainly can make that motion if you wish, Mrs. Pitt.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. Mr. Cooper, is that still your desire? We can discuss . . .

Mr. Cooper: Yeah. I'm fine to move in camera. I just might add that I believe that your motion, Mrs. Pitt, would have to include me in the in camera discussion.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Cooper, that would be my understanding from counsel as well.

Mrs. Pitt, do you wish to make such a motion?

Mrs. Pitt: Yeah. I will do that unless somebody wants to say something on the record before we move that.

The Chair: Mrs. Aheer.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. I'm sure everybody in here is quite concerned that there is nothing in particular that is already written down with respect to harassment. We are talking about people who have very important positions, high positions, a lot of power in their positions. My understanding would be that there has to be some sort of protection for people in these positions, the concern being that if that hasn't been indicated to the people that work in these particular positions, I think we very much need clarity on how that moves forward. Especially as legislators, we need to be able to make sure that we uphold those things for those people that are working in those offices for very powerful people.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Aheer. Certainly, I would agree that's the case.

At this point would we perhaps like to hear from Parliamentary Counsel or Ms Scarlett in general as to what provisions are currently in place, or is that something that we'd wish to discuss in more detail once we have a better understanding of maybe what some more of the specifics of the situation may have been?

Mrs. Pitt: I'd like to make a motion.

The Chair: Certainly.

Mrs. Pitt: I'd like to make a motion that we move in camera and include Mr. Cooper in that discussion.

The Chair: We have a motion on the floor from Mrs. Pitt that the committee move in camera and include Mr. Cooper as part of those discussions. Any discussion on the motion?

Ms Payne: Mr. Chair, I have a question.

The Chair: Yes. Please go ahead, Ms Payne.

Ms Payne: Does that, then, mean that the motion needs to specify that legislative staff will need to come into the in camera session as well, or does the motion as it reads exclude Parliamentary Counsel and others?

The Chair: My understanding is that as motions to move in camera exclude all people other than the committee, in this case the only exception would be Mr. Cooper. [interjection] Oh. Pardon me. You're asking sort of in regard to Parliamentary Counsel. I apologize. I thought you were referring to support staff.

Do we need to specify, then, that Parliamentary Counsel and other support staff remain in the room?

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes.

Mrs. Pitt: Can I amend my motion?

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Pitt: I move that we move in camera and include Mr. Cooper, all parliamentary staff, and Parliamentary Counsel for discussion.

The Chair: Including Ms Scarlett, Ms Tischer, Dr. Massolin, and Ms Dean?

Mrs. Pitt: Yes, please.

The Chair: Certainly. Thank you.

We have that motion on the floor.

All, with the exception of legislative support staff from individual caucuses.

Let's do it that way.

Thank you for bearing with us, everyone. Obviously, these are somewhat exceptional circumstances. We have that motion on the floor. Is there any further discussion?

Seeing and hearing none, I will call the question. All those in favour? Any opposed? Those on the phones?

The committee will move in camera as noted.

[The committee met in camera from 11:06 a.m. to 11:57 a.m.]

The Chair: The committee is back on the record.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the concerns raised by Mr. Cooper, are there any further comments or anything that any other members wish to bring forward?

Mrs. Pitt: Can I move a motion?

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Mrs. Pitt: Okay. Be it resolved that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices request that the chair contact the officers of the Legislature on the committee's behalf to request information from each office respecting workplace harassment policies and related dispute resolution processes in place for each office and that any policies obtained from the offices be provided to committee members.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Pitt.

The clerk will distribute copies of the motion to all members for your review.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Chair, if I could speak just briefly to the motion.

The Chair: Please go ahead, Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Cooper: Presumably, you'll be sending a piece of correspondence to each of the officers. I wondered if it might be reasonable in that correspondence to ask them to be prepared to speak about that policy at the November budget meeting or whenever that meeting will take place.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cooper. I don't think it would be unreasonable in the correspondence to note that members may raise it as a topic of discussion.

Mr. Cooper: Sounds good.

The Chair: We have the motion before us. Ms Dean is noting that there seems to have been some will of the committee to ensure that information gathered would include information about the officers themselves in the role that they play in the office. I guess, is there any discussion from members of the committee in regard to whether it is felt that is clear from the motion before us?

Mr. Cooper: I'd like the opinion of Ms Dean, if she thinks that needs to be added to the motion in order to ensure that we receive that information.

The Chair: Ms Dean, are you suggesting the inclusion? Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

Ms Dean has passed me a document in which she is making a suggestion for a possible addendum or amendment to the motion that after "related dispute resolution processes in place for each office" would be inserted "including the process in place if a complaint is filed against the officer" and that any policies obtained from the offices be provided to committee members.

Ms Payne: Excuse me, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes. Go ahead, Ms Payne.

Ms Payne: Sorry. Since I'm not a regular member of the committee, I don't have access to the internal committee website. So I'm just wondering if it might be possible – also, as I'm not in the room – to have the entirety of the motion read aloud again.

The Chair: Certainly. I will read the motion aloud again, including the portion suggested by Ms Dean.

Be it resolved that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices request that the chair contact the officers of the Legislature on the committee's behalf to request information from each office respecting workplace harassment policies and

related dispute resolution processes in place for each office, including the process in place if a complaint is filed against the officer, and that any policies obtained from the offices be provided to committee members.

That is a suggestion from Ms Dean. To be incorporated, that would need to be moved as an amendment by a member. Since the motion is Mrs. Pitt's, we need another member to move that. Mrs. Aheer. Okay. So Mrs. Aheer moves that we amend the motion. Any discussion on the amendment?

If not, I will call the question. All in favour of amending the motion as read? Any opposed? On the phones?

The motion is so amended.

We now have the amended motion before us. Is there any further discussion on the amended motion?

If not, I will call the question. All in favour of the motion as amended? Any opposed? And on the phones?

The amended motion is carried.

That having been addressed, are there any other items under other business?

If not, the date of the next meeting will be at the call of the chair. However, for scheduling purposes I'd note that we should anticipate that we will have the regular full-day meeting to be scheduled likely near the end of November to review the 2019-20 budget submissions of each of the officers. I will try to work with you to time that to correspond with the end of session so that we minimize the amount of travel required by members.

With that, then, that concludes our business for today. Do we have a member that would move a motion to adjourn? Ms McKittrick. All those in favour? Any opposed? And on the phones? The committee stands adjourned.

Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 12:03 p.m.]

