

[Chairman: Dr. Elliott]

[9 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: My next commitment is at 10 o'clock, and I wish to be out of here before that. Does that cause anybody a problem?

MR. MILLER: I couldn't agree more.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's my wish to use this meeting this morning as an agenda-setting meeting, to bring us back together after a long break over the summer, to say hello to each other. We'll miss some of our regular members, obviously, but we'll carry on until we're told otherwise. Several things have happened during the summer. I don't have an agenda or a list of items to circulate, but if you wish to make jottings, I can tell you the things I want to touch on.

First of all, Louise has a set of follow-up items. Since I haven't checked my list against this new one of yours, Louise, maybe we will go down my list and see if they are covered after. One of the unfinished items is the travel plans for our officers, and the natural follow-up will be travel plans for committee members.

MR. THOMPSON: What is the first one again?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The travel plans for each of our three officers, and related to that is travel plans for individual committee members. We want to look at a summary of our officers' terms of office, their pay scales, et cetera. That has been circulated, and other copies are certainly available.

Since we last met, Doug Blain and I put a price tag — John, did you have a question on that last one?

MR. THOMPSON: I just can't write as fast as you talk, Bob. Number 3 again?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Number 3 is length of office, pay scales, things like that. That's all on one page of paper. We circulated that, but we'll get it out again.

My next item is the simple word "budget" for our committee. Review of summer activity would be the installation of Brian Sawyer and the farewell to the old Ombudsman; I want to touch on those topics. I want to talk about the budgets of each of the individual officers. We have one of them, and the other two will be coming. We have a request from the Ombudsman to meet with us at an early date, and that's in keeping with our plans. It was our intention to have him come to say hello to us at an early date, and he is keeping in touch with me.

I'd like to establish a procedure for reviewing annual reports, either before or after tabling them in the Legislature, as these officers prepare them. We should have a system established.

Those are the jottings I have made of things that are on my mind. If we have others, we can add them on the end. I don't want to get into a heavy review of any of the items. They are just the things that I feel we have to address ourselves to. It's also my hope that we will see fit to schedule our meetings at our convenience, not try to cram many more things into the fall sitting, which seems to be extremely busy for me, with commitments from hour to hour.

Does anybody have any further comments on the points made this far?

MR. MILLER: That's an excellent agenda. There's only one item, and I don't know if it fits in here or not. It's whether or not we should set aside one day when we can visit the three offices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bud, that was my eighth point, and I thought it would be a natural follow-up later on. Thank you very much. I think that's part of our continuing communication. We did it once. I was embarrassed that I was not able to be with you when you visited the Chief Electoral Officer, and I have not yet been to his place.

Any other comments on the discussion to this point?

DR. CARTER: Before we go any further, Mr. Chairman, I think we should make a few comments with respect to our absent member, Grant Notley, for the sake of his memory as well as for the record, and that it be shown in the minutes. I know that you as an MLA and a friend of his have probably been in contact with the family. Perhaps a letter from the committee, over your signature, could go forward to the family.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comment on that suggestion?

MR. MILLER: I second that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll be very happy to follow up on that, David. Thank you. I saw fit to write in my weekly report that is in the press in my constituency, the Grande Prairie Daily Herald Tribune, a paper which Grant often published his weekly report in too, that we will miss him at this table, along with many other places.

Louise, do we require a motion on the previous minutes?

MRS. EMPSON: Yes we do. June 5.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. If I were to follow this, would I keep out of trouble? Is it all there?

MRS. EMPSON: Some of it's already been done, but I didn't want to cross it off until [inaudible].

MR. CHAIRMAN: I recommend that we follow the list of follow-up items as they appear, and we'll see how we make out with removing the items previously mentioned. Item number one on the list that Louise has provided is the report on attendance at the International Bar Association conference held in Vienna. This was left as an outstanding commitment. I move that it be taken off the record and we forget about it. That's not a motion. I wonder if that's . . .

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, since it was really Alex Weir who went to the conference, I suggest that we contact either the Ombudsman or Alex Weir directly and ask for a one-page summary of what happened and what was on the agenda. That's the only way we can try to evaluate whether that's a legitimate item to be factored into the Ombudsman's budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. My comment was

influenced by the fact that I assumed the only attendee was the previous Ombudsman, and he is no longer available to comment to us. Any other comment on number one?

MR. MILLER: I agree with David.

MR. THOMPSON: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That item will remain on this list, and we will follow through on it.

Item number two is discussion of the functions for the new and departing Ombudsmen. Some of us were able to attend both of those functions. I felt they were quite appropriate and very satisfactory. Are there any other comments on this?

MR. MILLER: I attended the function for the new Ombudsman; I missed the one for the departing Ombudsman. I must say that the one for the new Ombudsman was excellent, Bob.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I attended both functions. Like Bud, I thought the one for the new Ombudsman was very impressive. Let's say the one for the departing Ombudsman was very congenial.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we consider that item covered and go on to item number 3, discussion regarding salary increments of legislative officers? The guidelines that we have been using finally came from the Treasurer, dated July 20. They were what we as a committee expected; that is, a hold-the-line situation with respect to salaries and wages. I'm sorry I have to ask again, but I'm assuming this came to me as chairman. I don't know whether each MLA received Lou Hyndman's guidelines on fiscal policy. I'll leave this with Louise and ask that it appear as part of the minutes. That raises the question: do we as a committee have any further comment with respect to salary adjustments for the present fiscal year?

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, we always seem to have the same problem of having these officers' wages set at different stages. I still think the committee should make some attempt to have it correlated and co-ordinated somewhat better than it is. Maybe we can't, but I think we should have some discussion on attempting to pick a day so these people all work from the same base as far as their wages are concerned.

MR. CHAIRMAN: John, the first long sheet is the one that shows the topic you're referring to, the terms of office. For example, the Auditor General's term expires March 31, 1986. I'm sorry; it is down below, at the salary anniversary date. Is that what you're talking about?

MR. THOMPSON: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The salary anniversary date for the Auditor General is January 1 and for the Chief Electoral Officer is April 30. Would you like to identify that topic for further discussion at an early meeting, John?

MR. THOMPSON: Yes. Basically I think it would be

of value to the committee. It may not be possible; I don't know what all the different Acts are. But if we could do it without too much effort, I think it would be helpful.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll record that as an agenda item in the near future. We'll have some homework done on it. We'll ask Bob Bubba to help us out on that.

MR. MILLER: As a point of information, the Auditor General, like all of us, is looking forward to retirement. How much longer is it before he retires?

MR. CHAIRMAN: His term is March 31, 1986, which puts his retirement in our 1985-86 fiscal year. Thus when we talk about our committee's budget, you'll notice that quite a price was put in there for the search and select process, like we had to do with the Ombudsman. We can touch on that in a minute or so.

MR. MILLER: Is this the committee that would do the selection, as we did the Ombudsman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have no idea. I have no comment on that. I can tell you what happened with respect to the Ombudsman situation, but I would have to find out what our assignment would be with a new Auditor General. Yes, John?

MR. THOMPSON: Finish that; I have a different topic.

DR. CARTER: My educated guess would be that while the Ombudsman search committee was indeed made up of members from this committee, it was really selected as if it was from the Assembly at large. Remember that our opinion prevailed that it really should be people from this committee. Whether we can count that as a valid tradition to follow, that would be our course of action, if any of us are still around in '86.

MR. THOMPSON: On that point, whether we are or aren't is immaterial as far as this discussion is concerned. After serving on the committee for the search for the Ombudsman, I honestly believe that it's to the advantage of the search committee to have some experience on this committee. I know it helped me a considerable amount. I think it really helps the process to have the committee picked from the Legislative Offices Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Does that cover your question for now?

MR. MILLER: Yes it does. Thank you, Bob.

MR. THOMPSON: I have another point on item 3. As I understand it, we have a different setup with the new Ombudsman than we had in the past. Is that correct? He's on contract while the other fellow was on salary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. THOMPSON: We may need to spend a little time on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we identify that topic for next meeting and have David Carter address it for our benefit? Good point, John. I'm glad you bought it up. I hadn't flagged that one.

DR. CARTER: It was a good point until the assignment was made.

MR. THOMPSON: I had some concern at the time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can I move on to number 4 on the follow-up items? The chairman is to make contact with the Speaker with respect to the Chief Electoral Officer's annual report and the procedure for receiving it and tabling it in the House. I did not write him; I had a visit with him. The discussion revealed to me that these officers are operating under different pieces of legislation, and it's the terminology used in the legislation that the Speaker is using with respect to that officer filing the report in the manner in which it is done. I left it at that until we came back here to ask for clearer guidelines on it. Maybe I left it at that point because visiting with him on that particular occasion it didn't seem to be most important thing on my mind.

I'm back to this table asking for more guidance. If it's something we wish to have further guidance on, I'm going to ask Bob to pursue the topic through his office and come back to us with written clarification as to why these reports are filed in a different manner. Some of them seem to come to the chairman of this committee. The chairman of the committee then stands in the Legislature and either tables or files them with the Library, or whatever is required. The Chief Electoral Officer's report seems to go through the Speaker's office. All we're asking is, why the difference?

Would the committee please give me some guidance as to where you see us at this time? David, do you want to comment on that?

DR. CARTER: At various times I think all of us have said that we'd like to have the whole procedure consistent. Part of the inconsistency goes back, in addition to whatever the Acts might direct, to the fact that all these officers reported directly to the Speaker before there was such an entity as the Legislative Offices Committee. So maybe the only way we can get around it is to invite these various officers, over the course of time, to file through the chairman of this committee. In the meantime, we'll limp along with the inconsistency.

The other thing that needs to be noted, though, is that we can understand that the Auditor General — that's another thing that can be done, a concurrent type of thing that occurs, where he issues his report and does a press conference at the same time. Did he file in the House through the Speaker, or did you do that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I did that. The Auditor General does it through the chairman of this committee, and so does the Ombudsman. The Chief Electoral Officer is the only one we have identified as being different. Whether it's an historical item or a legislative item, I'm . . .

DR. CARTER: Then the new staff resource person can help us on that to see if there is any way around

it.

The other report that needs to be dealt with is our own report. Committee members should have a look at it before it goes to the House, not that there's anything terribly surprising in it — just a reminder that we as a committee should have a look at it before it goes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would also ask the record to show what date that is due, but I think we have plenty of notice from the office with respect to the due date.

DR. CARTER: I have word that the Ombudsman's report will be far less glossy and not as voluminous as in times past.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will there be a reduction in cost associated with that?

DR. CARTER: I understand that's part of the exercise.

MR. THOMPSON: On that point, Mr. Chairman, we're going to be talking about budgets and different things. What control should we as a committee have over the budgets? Is it a global budget that we just turn over to these people and they split it up the way they want to, or is there an area where we can make suggestions on such things as costs or set a cap on how much you should spend on things like annual reports? Or do we want to get into that type of thing? Those are some of the questions that come to my mind.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those are exercises we still have ahead of us. Those officers will come to us with their budgets, we'll go through them line by line, and we can comment on them. Remember that the Ombudsman's budget last year had an item under the B budget with respect to a computer or something to this effect, and we had an opportunity to discuss those things. We also had an opportunity to discuss funding for travel.

MR. THOMPSON: So we'll get an opportunity to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Some of the work ahead of us is to review these budgets. We have the one from the Chief Electoral Officer in now, and Bob has been in contact with the Auditor General and the Ombudsman. As soon as these budgets are available, we'll have a chance to go through them and then invite the officers in to explain them to us, or handle them whatever way we wish. Any further comments?

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, one of our problems in times past was that the budgets were arriving far too late. It's very encouraging to know that we already have one in. In actual fact, we should be requesting that the other two get them to us, and we're probably going to have to meet in November.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is exactly what we have done, David. Bob has seen the other two people. Mr. Henkelman of the Auditor General's office estimates that the budget will be delivered to us by November 6, and the Ombudsman's budget will be to us the week of November 13 to the 16th at the latest.

MR. BUBBA: One thing I might just mention is that perhaps when the committee is reviewing those budgets with the various offices, it might suggest that in future years the budgets be submitted by a certain date, say the end of October, so they have a lot of lead time on it, and that the expectation will be that the budgets are in by the end of October next year for the following year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comment on that suggestion?

DR. CARTER: One question, Mr. Chairman, through you to Bud. In your experience as a minister, what was the time line for getting the budgets constructed? Is October 31 sort of part of that acceptable frame?

MR. MILLER: Pretty well, David. We used to go to priorities to go over our budget in the first part of December, sometimes in the latter part of November. Unless we had it at least a month ahead of time so we could review it and go back and forth and dialogue with the individuals concerned, I think you run out of time. As far as I can see, the trouble with the budgets we get is that it has been after the fact, and we've never had the input we should have had. Whether or not they can do it by that time, I don't know. But I can see no reason why they shouldn't attempt to do it by that time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can this be a point of discussion as we meet with these officers this year?

MR. MILLER: Except that we're going to run out of time, Bob. I wonder if maybe it would be worth while to send them a memo.

DR. CARTER: What's the date on this one? October 23.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those are the two dates they've given us for the Ombudsman and the Auditor General. You can see them there, David: November 6 and November 14.

DR. CARTER: That's soon enough, because we can only deal with them one at a time anyway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that okay, Bud?

MR. MILLER: Yes.

DR. CARTER: Following on that, the suggestion is that we could try to get them for the end of October next year.

MR. BUBBA: I know that this year Legislative Assembly required its branches to have them in by Labour Day so Members' Services could start dealing with them, and they have.

DR. CARTER: That's really what we need so we could have some meetings prior to session. As you say, we'll discuss it with them when they come. We're making great progress compared to what it used to be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We were also making good progress in 1983. As chairman, I feel badly that

there was some slippage during August and September in '84. There were many reasons for that, which I can discuss at another time if required. But that's not important right now. The important thing is that we are recognizing these responsibilities that we are taking on. I think that's good, and we'll get them scheduled properly. That looks after 4.

Number 5: for November 1, 1984, to prepare a report for the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices. That's in the package. I wish to make some very, very clear statements here, and I would like you all to hear exactly what I'm saying. That's the one that's stapled together, and it starts off: 1985-86 working papers, a project.

I would like to have it very clearly understood that a budget was not prepared outside this committee. The activities of this committee were identified in earlier meetings, and all that the staff and I did was price the activities that were identified earlier. We attempted to price them out for purposes of meeting the minimum requirements of this assignment. We did not prepare a budget outside the committee. We bring this now as our interpretation at staff level of what it would cost to do some of the things that were identified by this committee in the minutes. To me it is important to say that. I hope it's acceptable.

This budget also reflects the comment I made earlier that if there are going to be added costs in the search and select process for an Auditor General, that funding has to appear some place in the system. We've accommodated the system by letting it appear in our budget.

Bob, how much time do we have to study this, comment on it, change it, before it is carved in stone? Have we really run out of time on it?

MR. BUBBA: If you want to make changes, I suggest that they be done very quickly, because Members' Services is already meeting on the estimates for next year. They are on General Administration now, and I don't know what order they're going to be following for the purposes of dealing with the various branches. Committees are lumped together as one of the areas they will be studying. I don't know when they're going to be dealing with it; I could find out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With the exception of one small correction in the addition of something, this is no different from what we mailed out to the committee members at the time it was put together — I'm sorry; it did not go to committee members. It was one of those notes I made to myself. Knowing what you know at this stage, I have to ask for input.

DR. CARTER: On page 4, I think we had better make certain that in any documents that go forward — that after the word "retirement" function for the Auditor General, we had better put a question mark in brackets. It's not necessarily the case that he will indeed retire. He might get extended. For this document to get out to Members' Services and from there to goodness knows where else, sure as guns it will come back that we're already planning on him being retired. Maybe there's another way. Let's take out the word "retirement".

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's take out the whole line and put in something different.

MR. BUBBA: Something like "contingency hospitality".

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's put it in as a hospitality item because we have one again to see tomorrow, what I call the MLA/officers mix. We'll put it into a hospitality item.

MR. BUBBA: Just put in "contingency hospitality" — how is that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is fine.

DR. CARTER: Perhaps any other of these papers that are out can be brought back and this page done away with.

On page 5, I assume that the daily indemnities has been factored in for those attending those conferences.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This was constructed primarily in retrospect, trying to build guidelines for the future about what we knew, because we didn't and still don't have information on some future plans. So this is what we did in effect.

DR. CARTER: If I may continue, page 6. I assume the advertising of \$30,000 is in case we get into the position of having to go for a new Auditor General.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That whole page 6 is devoted to the process.

DR. CARTER: Has that figure been checked out against what the advertising costs were for the Ombudsman search?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

DR. CARTER: The last question I have is page 7. Have we a figure of what expenses this committee indeed incurred in '83-84?

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to go back to page 6.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. I have two questions now at the chair.

DR. CARTER: I'll go back page by page.

MR. CHAIRMAN: David, do you want to hold your question a minute?

MR. THOMPSON: On this tentative budget that we're talking about here . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: What page, John Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: This would be page 6.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: Committee travel expenses. I know that you want to have a contingency fund in there of some kind. I would prefer, instead of putting it down as committee travel expense — because we did very well in holding down committee travel expenses in the search for the Ombudsman. I know it

may not go with the practice of the government, but I would rather have some way of putting it down as a contingency fund or something that was necessary. I don't know if we can justify both having people come here for \$9,000 and us travelling for \$10,000.

MR. MILLER: Why couldn't we just have it written in as "committee expenses" and delete the word "travel"?

DR. CARTER: Or "interview expenses". Take off the brackets there and just put "interview expenses" and make the figure \$19,000.

MR. THOMPSON: I would prefer something like that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Interview expenses at \$19,000. Does that create a problem, Bob?

MR. BUBBA: Actually, what will happen with this in a budget is that all these items here are under supply and services, and they will not appear altogether as you have them on this page. In your budget, the advertising will go under code 290, the materials and supplies under code 600, the travel under code 200 as well as the interview expenses, and the hosting under code 510. So it would all actually be spread throughout the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you telling us that for purposes of preparing the budget these must remain as an itemized list, as we have it now?

MR. BUBBA: It could stay this way now. But when the budget is actually published, once Treasury gets these figures they will be moved out. This page will disappear, but there will be other items on other pages.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're telling us that these are our working pages?

MR. BUBBA: Exactly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What does that do to your question, John Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: Fine. On those things, it helps me as it is here. I just didn't understand the process very well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like just one figure in there under committee appointment, Auditor General, which is \$50,000, and let it go at that. But I guess we can't show it that way; we have to break it down.

DR. CARTER: Well, again, this working paper goes to Members' Services?

MR. BUBBA: That's right.

DR. CARTER: That's why John Thompson's question is still very pertinent, because of what leakage can occur over there.

MR. THOMPSON: I would prefer just lumping them together.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Interview expenses, \$19,000.

MR. THOMPSON: Interview expenses, and leave it at that.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, could I ask a question? The Ombudsman search committee budget was apart from the Legislative Offices committee budget, was it not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Because it was a late item, if I remember correctly, and therefore it was treated separately and came in as an afterthought, I think. Do you want to pursue that point further?

DR. CARTER: It was as a separate item. It wasn't under this committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was separate because it was an afterthought.

MRS. EMPSON: But it had to be included with the committee because now this committee hasn't been instructed to appoint an Auditor General. But we still have to provide the funds.

DR. CARTER: Okay. If any comments come up on that in Members' Services, I think we have to have that pointed out. It's similar to an addendum, but we've subsumed it for administrative cost forecasting. It may well function separately from the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: David, you've brought up an extremely important point. We have made assumptions. Because of the historical record of this committee, we've made assumptions that we're going to have to include this in this committee. Is that correct, Bob? Did we actually check this out that we have to include this? Maybe we're going beyond the end of our tether in even thinking about this, because nobody has asked us to [inaudible].

MR. BUBBA: I see. The only other place where it might go is under the Auditor General's budget. That's the only other place I could see it going, but I doubt that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As I say, we know what happened last year with the Ombudsman. That's why we were doing this.

MR. BUBBA: Exactly. There's a precedent for it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We thought we were being very helpful in extending ourselves this far. Maybe we should . . .

DR. CARTER: I think it's good planning to have it there, and we can make some inquiries as to whether it should stay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bob, do you get the tone of that question? I think we should search that one out and make sure. If we're working too hard at this job, maybe we should just back off on those items until we're told to.

DR. CARTER: I think it's great to have foresight. I think other things around here have been suffering from lack of . . .

MR. MILLER: You're dead on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Where are we now with item number 5, our budget for the standing committee?

MR. THOMPSON: That about fell into your coffee cup there, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It wouldn't fit, John.

I'd like to ask the question: does anybody see any possibility at all of a short follow-up meeting on the topic of this budget, outside of what we're doing right now? Do you feel comfortable at all with what we have seen and said at this meeting, that we can let this proceed through now?

DR. CARTER: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: John, how do you feel?

MR. THOMPSON: I feel comfortable. Because I asked a question doesn't mean that I oppose. It's just a clarification.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't ever stop asking. The Attorney General said something the other day that I thought was one of his quotable quotes: if you don't understand it, ask; I might not be able to answer, because I don't understand it either, but that shouldn't stop you from asking or me from answering.

MR. THOMPSON: That sounds like the Attorney General, all right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm going to ask for some more guidance now. Are we at a stage where we need a motion to lock this in and send it on its way with the comments we have left with the staff?

MR. BUBBA: As far as the budget is concerned?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. BUBBA: It's done. It's already in the budget books.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. BUBBA: So I suppose if you were to move a motion approving it, it would be good for purposes of this committee.

DR. CARTER: Before making that motion, was there an answer to my question? What were the actual figures of '83-84?

MR. BUBBA: I'm sorry. I don't have them, but I could find out and report.

MRS. EMPSON: Did you have a budget for '83-84? I don't think so.

MR. BUBBA: That's what I was wondering. I think that may have been one of the last years of the lump sum.

DR. CARTER: What were our actual costs incurred? Can that be extrapolated?

MR. BUBBA: I could try to find out. What they were doing up to a year ago was budgeting a global amount for committees — I think it was something like \$100,000 — and found themselves in a lot of trouble on that because the committee expenditures started going over. So only in the last . . .

DR. CARTER: And because the committees were not consulted at any stage of the game.

MR. BUBBA: That's right. I believe this is only the second year that committees are requested to provide estimates for their activities in subsequent years. So it may not be possible to find out. I could check.

DR. CARTER: Thank you.

MR. MILLER: Did I understand you to say that this has already gone forward and actually what we're doing here is after the fact?

MR. BUBBA: It's in the budget books which Members' Services is currently looking at, yes. They have not considered the budgets of legislative committees yet. If you decided you wished to make some changes to this, I suppose we could resubmit some pages.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was my understanding.

MR. MILLER: I don't like that approach personally. Here we've been discussing when we should get the budget of the Auditor General and the Ombudsman. We're thinking of October 30. If this is the process that's going to be followed, we have to have their budgets in at least by the middle of September.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, Bud. Are you not talking two different things — the process that the other budgets go through. They may be on a different time line. Are the budgets of the officers on a different time line? That's my question.

MR. BUBBA: What happens is that the budgets of the Legislative Offices ultimately of course become part of the Legislative Assembly estimates. Members' Services deals with general administration and legislative committees, and this and that and the other thing. This committee deals with the budgets for the three Legislative Offices.

MR. MILLER: I appreciate that.

MR. BUBBA: Once this committee has finished doing that, it hands them on to the Speaker. Those are rolled up into one budget. So as long as there's some rough equivalence between the time this committee completes its consideration of Legislative Offices and Members' Services completes the estimates of Legislative Assembly, everyone is satisfied.

MR. MILLER: Except the members of this committee.

DR. CARTER: That's right.

MR. BUBBA: For purposes of its own budget.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I think Bud is entirely

correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I do too.

DR. CARTER: We're demanding it of other people. We need to have it for ourselves. Part of the explanation is that it's been sloppy procedure in time past. There's been transition in staff this year. We're further ahead than we've ever been, but we want it to be two months earlier next year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes we do. Now you're talking our budget.

DR. CARTER: Ours.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then I think we have to zero-in on the budgets we're going to receive from the officers as a separate statement. But there's no doubt about it that we want to be able to look at this if we're going to have effective input. I'm repeating myself. I don't consider this as much a budget as a pricing out of activities as identified in previous discussion. That's not really the way I want to go in the future.

DR. CARTER: I think we're making great progress. We just have to pick up the pace.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. THOMPSON: One general question. We present this to Members' Services. What is our link to sit with Members' Services and answer questions or explain or justify — call it what you will. Where is the interface with this committee with Members' Services when they're discussing our proposed budget?

MR. CHAIRMAN: John, my answer to that will use an agricultural term, which you and I can communicate in. Since we're plowing new ground, we have no idea of the width of the furrow.

MR. THOMPSON: I'm as confused as I was before I asked the question.

DR. CARTER: It also has an agricultural connotation of fertilizer.

MR. THOMPSON: If we are plowing new ground, it's an area that I think will be coming up in the future. Really, it's pretty hard for the Members' Services Committee to understand this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's an excellent point. It's all part and parcel of the total discussion that David Carter was on a minute ago.

Aren't you glad you're with us?

MR. BUBBA: I could mention one thing. In the past, Members' Services, in considering the estimates of various other branches of the Assembly, has had occasion to consult the branch heads and ask them about certain items, even to the point, I believe, of having them to the meeting. The other source of information that has been used in the past has been the Director of Administration, who has gone over these items and, if he or she had any questions or queries about them, would go back to the author of

the budget and inform himself, since the director attends those meetings, and be able to provide some background if those questions arose.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm asking for guidance. How does everybody feel? Is the discussion acceptable to this point? I also point out that it's 10 to 10. We're not going to leave any item ignored; they might be deferred to a later meeting for further discussion. I'd ask you to look at item number 6. We're going to make contact with the Legislative Offices with respect to annual conferences. That item is attached. Underneath you'll notice that we're still looking for dates on some of these items. There is a November, December . . . I'm sorry; that's looking ahead into 1985. The one we were short until recently was a 1984 item. It's number 8.

So, item number 6. We have the information on the Legislative Offices with respect to meetings in 1985, and that's attached. Can I leave that one for now? Thank you.

Item number 7, report on the findings re monitoring by Standing Committee on Legislative Offices of the functions of legislative officers. That was where, as I recall, we were going to ask staff to check with other provinces, other jurisdictions, as to how the standing committee like ours monitors the activity of their respective offices.

MR. THOMPSON: I want to speak to this when you're finished.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very good.

MR. BUBBA: Mr. Blain [inaudible].

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. That's what that memo from Mr. Blain is all about. John, do you want to pursue that now?

MR. THOMPSON: I feel somewhat uneasy about the boundaries committee. I would like to get some research done on this. I don't know whether the Chief Electoral Officer is required by law to be a voting member of that committee. It reminds me a lot of the referee making the rules. If it is required, obviously it's out of our hands. But I really think that the Chief Electoral Officer should not be a voting member of that committee. I think he should be used as a research person. He should be at the meeting more or less as an observer and to give input. I have real problems understanding why the Chief Electoral Officer is a voting member of that committee, and I would like to get some research done on whether it is a legal requirement or not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We'll accept that as a request, John; no further debate right now. Is that acceptable?

MR. THOMPSON: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to ask another question and embarrass myself. Did the letter from Doug Blain dated August 30 go out to committee members?

DR. CARTER: We got it this morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wish to offer that as the

explanation at this point for item number 7. We can pick it up and review it for discussion next time. We're back on the agenda. Item number 8: committee representation to the chief electoral council conference December 2 to 5. That's going to be in Seattle, Washington.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, perhaps we could discuss items 8 and 10 concurrently. The first question is, have we built into the present year's budget enough money to send people to both of these? If so, one or two?

MRS. EMPSON: Mr. Blain did that last year. I don't know whether . . .

DR. CARTER: That means none of us knows. Okay. Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a minute. Let's make sure the question is recorded, because I think there is an answer. I don't have it at this point. I think it's built in. But I don't have the answer. I can't confirm that right now. I don't have that information with me.

DR. CARTER: So we don't know whether we've built in to cover two or one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've built in primarily, with the exception of the International Ombudsman Conference, two for Canadian conferences and one for the States. David went to the chief electoral officer meeting last spring.

DR. CARTER: December.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it a year ago already? Down in the deep south.

It was agreed that we would send him again this time. That's built into the budget. If we think it's close enough that we can send two for the price of one, that sort of thing, that was where some of the flexibility was left in our process a year ago.

DR. CARTER: Along that line, there's our problem about not having a budget. If there are sufficient funds left in whatever our projected budget supposedly was, I hope we can send two to Seattle and two to Ottawa.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, we didn't spend all the money that was allocated for selecting the Ombudsman. In fact we must have spent only about half of the projected cost. I agree with David that we should have representation at these, and if we haven't got money in the budget, take it out of what we saved on the Ombudsman search.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In response to this topic, I think the important thing is that we have identified those conferences and we have identified participation and attendance. I recommend that we proceed with the decisions we make at this table with respect to sending representation, on the assumption that they have been covered in our budget. We went through the process, and I have no fear that it's there. So if we work on that assumption, if you'll accept that, would we be prepared to make decisions at this time with respect to deciding how many would go? Then



we can determine who might.

DR. CARTER: I'd like to make a suggestion. No matter how we slice it, one of us is going to have to have his name on the list. I'd suggest that with the Ottawa thing, we go Purdy and Thompson, and as an alternate if neither of those can go, you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the one in Seattle, that would be Miller and Carter, and Anderson as the alternate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. There's a suggestion. Do you have any further comment on that topic?

MR. THOMPSON: Personally I would prefer going to Seattle than to Ottawa. The thing that comes to my mind, Mr. Chairman, and it gets back to our budgeting process — if we have to prioritize these meetings and decide where who goes, and things like that, you bump up against going out of the country to some degree. As I say, if we have to prioritize. So I suggest that if we have a problem with funds, we give Ottawa leading priority, and then if we're able to do it, send somebody to Seattle. I see nothing wrong with the names that were picked.

I'd like to make one suggestion, though. As far as I'm concerned, I would feel more comfortable if I didn't go to either one of these, because basically I just finished coming back from a CPA conference at the Isle of Man. I realize it is an altogether different function, but at this present time, after just coming back from the Isle of Man, I don't feel I would want to go on one of these trips. I really think another member of our committee should go to either one of these things.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you accept this under the circumstances with which this committee operates now? Would you accept the suggestion that we ask David Carter to co-ordinate this particular question with the members and to follow up, on his suggestion, between now and the next time we meet and proceed to make some decisions?

MR. THOMPSON: That would be good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I can also tell you, David, that during the period of December 2 to December 7 I will be tied up with the South Saskatchewan River basin hearings at the Alberta Water Resources Commission, and I will be grounded in the Alberta metropolis of Hanna. So my name is not available.

Do you want to cover that good suggestion of the chairman with a motion?

MR. THOMPSON: I'll make the motion that we have the vice-chairman co-ordinate it and check out the availability of funds and if we need to . . .

MR. MILLER: I second it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have a seconder, and since there's no objection, I declare the motion passed.

DR. CARTER: If it comes to a matter of money, we'll send one to each place, one there and one there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, David. Can I go on to number 11 and have the approval of the minutes of

June 5, 1984?

DR. CARTER: I so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, David. Any questions on the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Could somebody remind me again; does this particular committee require a seconder on our motions? Thank you.

Item number 12, which you don't see on your list. Your chairman has worked on this committee on three different days: August 28, September 5, and September 6, for which I require a motion to cover my expenses on those days.

MR. MILLER: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion on that motion?

MR. MILLER: Date of next meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I remind you that at noon tomorrow we have the MLA/officers mix. That is my word; I don't know a good word for it. It's a hospitality item where the MLAs will be having lunch with the officers, and we all have our invitations.

I need everybody's help on the next meeting. I think it should be after the Legislature closes, and I see dates like November 9, 19, 20, 21, and 23. Will the Legislature be closed the week of Monday, November 12?

DR. CARTER: I doubt it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I've made my contribution. John Thompson, do you want to pick it up from there?

DR. CARTER: The 12th is a holiday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes it is.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I think we're overly optimistic if we think we'll be closed before November 16. I'm sure there's going to be a lot done. There would have to be a speed-up of the Legislature if that happened. So I think we'd better be looking more into the 20s of November.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does Tuesday morning, November 20, at 9 o'clock fit?

MR. MILLER: Not for me.

DR. CARTER: It does. We have one Legislative Offices' budget in already.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes we have.

DR. CARTER: We want to try to get through this before December, so maybe we have to have another meeting either next week or the week after.

MR. THOMPSON: I see no problem. In fact, to tell you the truth, I think we should set our meeting for

Tuesday morning, whether the Legislature is sitting or not.

MR. MILLER: On the 6th?

DR. CARTER: Let's go for the 6th and go for the first budget, if we get caught of it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very good. I have to point out that on the morning of the 6th I will not be here, so you can count me out. I have the water resources hearings for southern Alberta. I'm co-chairing them with Henry Kroeger, and it has really messed up my schedule.

MR. MILLER: Is that in Edmonton or somewhere else?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's in Calgary and High River.

MR. THOMPSON: How about the 13th?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The week of the 13th is Lethbridge and Taber.

DR. CARTER: You guys really shouldn't be meeting in session.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Premier and Mr. Kroeger make these arrangements, Dr. Carter, and I am a bystander.

MR. THOMPSON: The comment is still valid.

MR. MILLER: What day have you got, Bob?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I've got November 9, and then with the 12th being a holiday, I drop down to the 16th and then the week of the 19th.

MR. THOMPSON: I could meet on the 9th.

DR. CARTER: Friday afternoon?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're talking about there Friday afternoon, after the House closes.

MR. THOMPSON: I may get hung up on the School Act review. I was going to try to work on Friday and Saturday of that week, but that is out now. It was a tentative arrangement, so you have priority here, because I've got a blank spot on my date book.

DR. CARTER: If we could go roughly from 1 o'clock to 2:30 or 3 — does that fit your schedule?

MR. MILLER: On Friday?

DR. CARTER: On Friday the 9th.

MR. MILLER: Yes, as long as we quit by about 2:30 or 3. I would like to get home.

MR. CHAIRMAN; We'll make it our business to quit at 2:30.

DR. CARTER: If we can prevail upon the good graces of Louise, we could have a sandwich or a bowl of soup or something.

MR. THOMPSON: It starts at 1? Okay.

DR. CARTER: Or if the House closes, earlier.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the House closes, we'll be out earlier. Does that cause a problem with our recording device? Right. Any others? All right, I have 1 o'clock to 2:30 on November 9 identified for Leg Offices.

May I suggest, Bob, that as these budgets come in, we also get them distributed to committee members immediately.

MR. BUBBA: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chief Electoral Officer's is there, and we'll get it out to the committee. I'll give it to Louise and get it done.

MR. BUBBA: We'll be delivering the others to you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And we'll get them out as soon as they come.

MRS. EMPSON: Do you want to meet with the Chief Electoral Officer?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a question. Will we want a minute with the budget before we meet with the Chief Electoral Officer, or if we study his budget in advance, can we have him here at that time?

DR. CARTER: If we've got his budget, let's have it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll meet with him on that date. Shall we have a half hour ahead of his arrival? So we'll have him come at 1:30? Thank you.

DR. CARTER: And if we get out earlier we can do some other committee business.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Thank you very much. That completes the business as I have it here today. Do we have to have a motion for adjournment?

[The committee adjourned at 10:05 a.m.]