

[Deputy Chairman: Dr. Carter] [10:08 a.m.]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We expect that the chairman will join us fairly shortly, but in the meantime we could perhaps get started.

Members of the committee have a follow-up item agenda beside them, and I suggest that we go immediately to number 4, since we have the Ombudsman present with us so we can discuss his budget. Perhaps in the course of that discussion we can also bring in item 1, which, in fairness to you, Brian, is Discussion of the International Ombudsman Institute, as a result of your letter with regard to your trip to Australia. Perhaps we can discuss that after we've gone through the budget.

We're glad to have you with us, now that you've been in office over a year. You've become the senior member — well, not quite, not until Mr. Rogers leaves. We're glad to have you around. If you'd like to take us through your material, even though it has been circulated, members will feel free to ask you questions. Would you like to commence, please.

MR. SAWYER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The first point I should mention is that Mr. Joe Pennett would normally accompany me on this foray because he is responsible for putting together the nuts and bolts of this thing. I set the general guidelines, and he does the details. His heart has been acting up over the last few days, and while he was prepared to come in, I strongly urged him to stay home and take it easy. If there is some precise, detailed question on some exotic component of this spread sheet, I may have to get back to you later on, but I can certainly talk about the general thrust of the budget. Indeed, the explanatory notes deal with changes, either up or down, and they're attached just under the spread sheet.

It's basically a stand pat budget. It reflects a reduction of one position in man-year establishment, one secretarial position in the Calgary office, because I was of the opinion that there wasn't enough work there to justify having two full-time people. It also reflects that I moved the second investigator position, which is an investigator/solicitor position, to Edmonton from Calgary, because, here again, the need for two investigators down there was questionable. What we were doing was referring some solicitor-type questions to the

Calgary office, and there's no reason, if we need a second solicitor, that that person shouldn't be up here.

The fact is that I don't think we need two solicitors. I'm in the process of trying out one person who has worked for government for the last four years, a solicitor by the name of Bernie Doyle, who currently works for Dr. Reid's office. He comes over a couple of times a week to test things for him and for us to test his output. That's going to continue till the end of the year. At the end of that time I'll make a decision as to whether he should perhaps come on board. I want to get back to that a little later, because personnel is one of the things I'd like to talk about with the committee.

This budget reflects a reduction of one person-year, and there are some adjustments in the remainder. There's a very slight reduction in travel expenses, because I don't think we need quite as much as was provided, and some shifts of money from one category to another, but that's simply a bookkeeping item.

The other principal thing I'd like to mention, though, is that we are funding three positions which at the moment are vacant. I've had some interesting discussions about this with my staff. It seems to me that the general practice at all levels of government — municipal, provincial, and federal — is that once you get a position on your establishment, you hold on to it at all costs. If circumstances change and you don't need to fund it, there are all sorts of things you do. You can hide it, disguise it, call it something else, or even keep the position and let some of the money go.

Right now, we are functioning with 14 people. Up to now we seem to be doing not badly with that number of people, because our complaints are down somewhat. Also, with our word processing equipment and some policy changes, we are not opening as many files. The files that we do open, we can handle more expeditiously with the word processing and the whole system. We had a young man as receptionist/secretary. He was good too. He left to travel the world for a year, and I think that is a good thing to do when you're 23. I wondered why he couldn't take me with him. The remaining staff said, "We don't think we need to replace him at this time." The word processors are so good that there isn't the dull, repetitive typing that used to have to be done,

and as a result the existing staff can handle it. As well, we haven't replaced one of the investigators who retired not quite a year ago, because I was waiting to see if we needed to replace him. I haven't yet replaced the second solicitor position that I moved from Calgary either. But in essence, each of those positions is funded in here to a lesser or greater degree, because that's the way it's done.

What I want to suggest to you is that I could probably cut another \$50,000 or \$60,000 out of this budget and cut the positions as well. The only thing is that things can turn around rather rapidly, and if they do and I need to have somebody on board — under contract, for instance — I need to be able to do it reasonable quickly and not wait for 15 or 18 months until the system allows me to replace the position. So I want to lay that on the table for you and ask whether you want me to wait. The general staff consensus is that right now we could probably cut at least two, if not three, positions out of the budget. But if it changes and we need them back, what do we do? That's the standard response. My answer to that was, I'm going to talk to the committee and see if we can't be a little more flexible within the system than has heretofore been the case, either by putting some funds in the contract portion of the budget or by getting an undertaking that if I need \$20,000 or \$30,000 to fund a contract position for part of a year, it will be possible to get that on relatively short notice. You know better than I whether it's possible to do that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Do you want comments saved up, or do you want to deal with that now?

MR. SAWYER: Let's deal with it now.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I've never been able to understand government budgeting. When I was on the school board, we always had what we called a contingency fund built into our budget for just the type of thing you're talking about. That's verboten as far as government budgeting is concerned. From my point of view, after hearing what we've said, I think we should have an unofficial contingency fund. The other side of it is that if you get caught short, you're running around wanting a special warrant and that type of thing, and that is not much fun. From my point of view, a

responsible man should have the flexibility to have what we used to call a contingency fund. If he's responsible, he will use it; if he isn't, he will turn it back to general revenue later on. That's my position.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Bud, what's your experience, having been in cabinet?

MR. MILLER: I have to agree with what John has just said, Mr. Chairman. I never did like the way they struck the budget. It seemed to me that when you went before priorities to get your allocation of money, it was a little too rigid. There was a tendency, I guess I would say, to build in a bit of a cushion. I think that you're telling us that you have this cushion; the chances are you won't need it, but if you do, you want it to be there. I am wondering if we couldn't move it around within the budget, so you would have it identified as funds for contract personnel if needed. It would more or less be a paper transaction from one subprogram to another.

I think we all appreciate the fact that you are budget-conscious and that you have come in asking for less money, which is very much a plus as far as we're concerned. Not many departments will do that. It shows that by reorganization and by utilizing staff to the maximum ability and giving them the tools to work with, savings can be made. This is the first time I've ever been on a board or sat at a meeting where there has been positive proof that by getting better equipment, you could cut staff. I've sat and heard people discuss needing computers and word processors and all this other highfalutin stuff, but it never reduced staff. They always seemed to have more staff. You've come in and shown where a reduction can be made if you address your mind to it, and I congratulate you on that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Bill, from the Members' Services point of view, it doesn't raise any problems?

MR. PURDY: No, it doesn't. The only question I would ask Brian is: do you anticipate a budgetary surplus in the old budget, at the end of March 31, 1986?

MR. SAWYER: Yes.

MR. PURDY: You do?

MR. SAWYER: That's from unfilled positions.

MR. PURDY: It will probably reflect about the same as you are now budgeting for '85-86.

MR. SAWYER: That's a question I'm not certain about. There are so many columns on this budget sheet, and we talk about forecast input and then '85-86 forecast. I'm not clear what the difference in that is. That's why I wish Joe were here.

MR. PURDY: The forecast input is the figures you put in.

MR. SAWYER: Where does this '85-86 forecast come from?

MR. BUBBA: That's what you budgeted last year.

MR. SAWYER: It's not a forecast then; it's a budget.

MR. PURDY: It's a budget of last year. If you look at both lines, the '85 estimate and the forecast are the same. That shows up in all budgets.

MR. SAWYER: Then the forecast input is our figure, this figure at the bottom on the sheet, \$680,400. That's the Edmonton office. For the two offices together, it's \$841,000.

MR. PURDY: Where did you pick up that figure?

MR. SAWYER: It's on the sheet. That's the the two offices, Calgary and Edmonton, combined.

Part of the problem is that our budgets for this year and for next year reflect, in essence, 17 positions: 15 on salary and two on contract, plus the equivalent of one man-year for wages; that is, temporary help and so forth. The actual positions we're talking about are 17. If we were to reduce that to, say, 15 or even 14 positions — because, in effect, we're functioning now with 14 bodies. While we're reasonably busy now for that simple reason, that we've got reduced staff, we seem to be able to cope. I don't know what's involved in reducing those numbers to the satisfaction of PAO and whoever it is over

here that looks at these things. But that's what we would have to do.

I agree, Mr. Miller, that we could increase the contracts portion of our budget for contingency purposes. My understanding of this whole budget process is that money that's allocated to salaries, contracts, or wages has to remain there; you can't take it and buy another computer or anything like that. It has to stay in. I have no problem with that. A contingency fund won't be for travel or other things. It will be for people only. I'd be prepared to reduce the man-years and the money involved, but I need some assurance that somehow we've arranged to cover the possibility of a sudden and unexpected increase in the workload or some special investigation or whatever we need.

MR. PURDY: I think Bud's suggestion, that you transfer it between code 001 and 130, is right on. Take some of your salary positions out and put it into code 130, and it's workable that way.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It would give you more flexibility.

MR. SAWYER: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: But I agree with keeping the money in the total budget, because the lifetime of this particular committee might not be terribly long and we can't offer any guarantee to be binding upon our heirs and successors.

MR. HIEBERT: In any budget you always have the lines, and of course the biggest line is wages and salaries. Far too often — and I'm going to underline some of the comments that have been made — people will retain staff just because they were there, always for the potential problem. You're not really talking budget per se in that sense. You're talking about responsiveness and flexibility. You can have a year in which you cannot justify what has happened on a staff basis, and the following year you could find yourself in a quagmire of problems and you are short.

Therefore, I applaud you in bringing in a budget which says, yes, we can work with less staff and therefore decrease our budget line. In my view, it is totally justifiable to put it under a potential contract line, and if there is an excess left in the budget, it is explainable. It

can be justified again in the following year, and that really reflects the type of business you're in. Your office has to have a responsiveness when the problem occurs, not on an ongoing basis.

I would doubly underline what Dr. Carter said. I don't think you can let it happen by chance and goodwill. I think it should be stated in a budget line so that you have the confidence and the assurance that it's there when you need to tap it, and yet if it's not needed, it comes out as a surplus at the end. I think it's fully justifiable to this committee and would be to a future committee. Because of the way things are changing, I think it's important to include it now so that you're not grasping for straws if you need it at another time, because people and circumstances change.

I heartily endorse what you've brought before us.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The matter of having to go to special warrants was pointed out by John Thompson earlier. It can be done, but it's a long and difficult process, and it's politically sensitive.

MR. PURDY: That's right. Sometime in the next 18 months we will be in the midst of an election, and once you get into that -- Brian could get into a situation during a election campaign where he needed some extra dollars and he wouldn't have the capability because cabinet wouldn't have the authorization to do it. When the Legislature is sitting, too, there's no question that it can be passed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is that sufficient direction?

MR. SAWYER: Yes. Now, do you need a final figure today, or is it something I can write to you about, giving you a reduction in man-years and in money? I would prefer to have one further discussion with Joe Pennett before I do it, but I could indicate that there are . . . Do you have this sheet in the stuff we sent you? I think you must have.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, we do.

MR. SAWYER: The three positions that are currently vacant are down in the middle.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This is the one that has the names of the employees on it? It's the third page in the second section.

MR. SAWYER: Yes. The three positions that are currently vacant -- you see the one that is indicated as being vacant there, for which the salary provision is \$24,000-plus. The next one is Lerbekmo; that's the lad who is now in Australia or Hong Kong or someplace. The third one is Lorraine Howard, who was solicitor in Calgary. There's \$90,000 there, in those three salaries, in positions that are not filled. I have a feeling that if I could reserve about \$35,000 of that, which would be the salary of a senior investigator if I had to hire somebody under contract, I could probably cut those three positions out and increase the contract amount by about \$30,000 to \$35,000. But I'd like to talk to Pennett first. He's a little more cautious than I am about this. But I think that will fly.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That's an acceptable routing. As soon as you get it back to us, we'll have to have another meeting so we can give the final approval to the budget. We'll set another date.

Along the line of staff, could I ask you: are things working out fine on your exchange with Mr. Weir and the other fellow out of social services and the salary exchanges?

MR. SAWYER: The salary arrangements are that social services picks up Mr. Arcand's salary and I pick up Mr. Weir's salary. In any event I think they're about on par, because Mr. Arcand is paid at the assistant deputy minister level and Weir is paid as a senior solicitor.

I haven't talked to Weir for some time. I am quite satisfied with Mr. Arcand's output and enthusiasm. I'm really impressed with his attitude since he came over. He pitches in very willingly on anything that needs to be done. He doesn't go around acting like an assistant deputy minister and therefore above it all. He really pitches in. I wouldn't be at all unhappy if he were to stay, if that meant that Mr. Weir was to stay over at social services. Whether that comes to pass remains to be seen.

But Mr. Arcand is aware that if he did stay, he couldn't stay at his present salary level. It's just not in the cards. I think he is mulling that over at the moment, because he tells me he is much more content to be working where he is

now than where he was before. If you think of the psychology of it, I guess that's sort of understandable. His attitude about it is very mature.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Was that to be on a one-year basis?

MR. SAWYER: It was a two-year arrangement.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That would take you into '87 sometime.

MR. SAWYER: That's right. That was the other thing I meant to talk about. Joe Pennett, who has been there for 15 or 16 years and is really dependable, keeps me on the straight and narrow. I'm inclined sometimes to go off in three different directions at once, and Joe is very solid and reins me in. He is 63 and he told me — he hasn't told his staff — that he is thinking of retiring finally next summer. With his heart acting up now, he just may speed that up.

The only person in the office who I would consider putting in his place is Marcel Arcand, if he wanted it. If he did want it, that means we would have to accelerate the decision about him and Weir. So there are a number of contingencies I have to think about. Marcel is certainly experienced in government and very conscientious. He's conservative, and I like having somebody who is conservative as my administrative officer, because as I say, it keeps me honest.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That's small "c". Is that correct?

MR. SAWYER: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There's that concern about the minutes of the committee being read in public.

Do you have other general comments on the budget, or are you ready to entertain some . . .

MR. SAWYER: Well, there's not much else in here. As I say, it's mostly bookkeeping, shifting around between lines on the budget. Other than salaries it's basically the same amount.

MR. PURDY: Have you shown any salary increase at all for any of your 15 positions?

MR. SAWYER: No. Well, the statutes are in there.

MR. PURDY: That's what I mean. Okay. But you've showed no COLA increase or anything like that.

MR. SAWYER: For any of the positions in the office.

MR. MILLER: Brian, I'd be interested in what you look for when you're looking for a person to come in and be an investigator on a contract basis. Where would you go to find this person?

MR. SAWYER: I've said all along that they can come from anywhere. The sad, simple truth is that unless they have investigative experience, they're usually starting from a long way back. They need to be skeptical and curious, and they need to be prepared to continually ask questions.

MR. MILLER: Sounds like my wife. A perfect candidate.

MR. SAWYER: Is Margaret in the job market?

Over-riding that, I look for a couple of things. I look for good communication ability, both verbal and in writing. If they can't deal with and communicate with people well in both those contexts, the good work they do sort of suffers. They get people riled up or they're misunderstood. I'm very fussy about the writing that goes out of the office. I want them to be able to write well, and that's a rare commodity these days. The other thing I look for, and it's always been a personal thing with me, is somebody who I think has a sense of humour, who doesn't take himself or herself so seriously that they're going to be self-righteous about what they're doing or trying to do. That's the sort of mix I look for.

I said when I came up a year ago that I wasn't going to hire any ex-policemen, because there were enough around. Yet the simple fact is that if you find the right kind of ex-policeman, he generally is going to have the kind of background you need. So I'm betwixt and between on that.

MR. THOMPSON: Are you through, Bud?

MR. MILLER: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is that your question?

MR. THOMPSON: No. Basically, Mr. Chairman, what I was interested in was not to do with the budget per se but with why there is a falling off in the Calgary area over the Edmonton area. I'm not talking about the administration people and all that, but apparently the inquiries and complaints coming into Calgary are not — that's why you're cutting back, obviously. Do you feel there is any reason for it? Is the government doing such a good job that everybody is happy? Can you see any particular reason why the Calgary office is not being used to the same extent the Edmonton area office is?

MR. SAWYER: Well, I don't know that there's any change in the amount of work going to the Calgary office. I can put an investigator down in Calgary and then channel files down to that investigator. Frequently, the investigator will have to come up here to complete the investigation, because this is where the government records are. I'm aware of the desirability of maintaining an office in Calgary. We should be able to provide on-site service in Calgary. But I think all along we could probably have done that with an experienced investigator and a dependable secretary/receptionist, which is what we have at the present time. If there is a need to supplement the staff, I can easily send one of the investigators here down there for a week. In fact, the man from Calgary is on an extended leave. He's over in Europe right now for seven weeks, and the staff from here has been taking turns going down there for a week and manning the office. It's an easy thing to do, and it's still cheaper in the long run to do it that way.

I don't know that there's a tailing-off of the Calgary operation specifically except it's just a reassignment of work. We were constantly funneling stuff down there, and they were having to come up here to finish their investigation. It seems more logical to just have one down there who can travel the southern part of the province as needed, make such inquiries as are needed, and come up here when required.

MR. THOMPSON: More administration.

MR. SAWYER: It's more administration, yes.

MR. HIEBERT: I'm just going to pick up on the remarks that were made with regards to John's inquiry. I suggest that when one is interpreting the number of complaints being down, I could view that possibly as a good thing. I know, Brian, you can't give the response, but I think I can interpret what I read. We don't know how many of the other complaints were frivolous, and we don't know how much of it was drummed up. I think the role of the office is to be there and let people respond to it. So I think there are other ways of making an interpretation as to what's happening, because that's been a concern I've had as a member of this committee.

I'd like to touch on another area, and maybe this is not the time. Since we're talking about the office, personnel, and so on, if you remember when we were going through the process of selecting the Ombudsman, a great deal of effort was spent on that area of how things were going to work in the office with the incumbents, with the people who are still there. You've now had a chance to assess it. What is the environment like? How is it functioning? Could you just give us some feedback with regard to that concern we raised at that time?

MR. SAWYER: I'm generally satisfied with the staff that's there. There's probably going to be another retirement relatively soon. I am more than ever convinced that the effective functioning of an Ombudsman office should be based on a regular turnover of people, the Ombudsman and all his investigative staff — not the administrative staff. They should be permanent to bring consistency. But I'm convinced that a turnover of people periodically will avoid the complacency that inevitably sets into any investigative group. If things become routine, if people's problems become routine, then you can become an apologist for the department. You can rationalize everything that the department does because you've seen it 20 times before. I think you ought to have that skeptical questioning in your mind all the time when problems come up, so that you go at it fresh and hard and don't take things for granted.

So I think a regular turnover of staff — and I'm talking about every three, four, five years, or something like that — on a rotational basis is

desirable. To do that, it's going to cost something extra, because the kind of people you're going to draw, if they're not looking for a permanent career, would at least want some short-time rewards that make it worth their while to do that for a short period of time. I haven't talked about this to anybody else, but I think that at some time or another we should look at the salary structure for the investigators. I would rather have fewer investigators who are well paid and who go out and do a bang-up job than a lot of investigators who are paid just an average amount but for whom the paycheque is the be-all and the end-all. So at some stage we should look at the salary structure.

I'm convinced that even in boom times I can draw the kind of people who are curious, skeptical, and all of those things to do a job. I've got some skeptics in the office who have been there for some time, but there is a tendency for everybody to say: "Oh well, here we go again. I know what the response is going to be here. I've done this before." That bothers me.

How's the attitude in the office? I think it's pretty good. I think you have to ask the other people, find an excuse to buttonhole somebody from the office and ask them, preferably over three drinks. You always get a better, more candid answer at a time like that. I think the morale is good. We're running a pretty relaxed shop. There's no complaint about overwork, and that's because I don't think anybody is overworked at the present time. I think it's pretty good.

MR. HIEBERT: I appreciate that overview.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The total overall budget: you've got the explanatory notes there, and it's great to see things reduced and also the use of the word processors as coming into play, as being good functioning, especially the linking together of the Calgary and Edmonton offices. I'm sure that all members of the committee have taken due note of the decrease of \$8,000 in category 200, travel expenses.

Any other questions or comments in regard to the budget?

MR. PURDY: Do you need a motion now to accept that, or are we going to come back to

the final figure, Mr. Chairman?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We'll come back at another meeting after we've had the letter of response from the Ombudsman's office. At that time we'll just have the motion to approve. So if we could have that at your early convenience, because we'll have to strike another meeting at the end of this meeting to put it together.

Have you any comments with respect to item 1 on our agenda, as I noted to you earlier, after your trip to Australia — was it a regional meeting or just a preliminary meeting? — with regard to the International Ombudsman Institute?

MR. SAWYER: It was a committee meeting. You might recall that I was appointed to the board of the International Ombudsman Institute before I became an Ombudsman, so I found myself attending the meeting in Sydney and Canberra. The meeting in Canberra was a meeting of the committee to decide the topics and the venue for the 1988 International Ombudsman Conference. I'm not a member of that committee, but I was invited to participate as an observer. I was down there primarily as a member of the IOI committee that was meeting in Sydney.

I am probably the wrong person to be on a board like that. I can't help but feel that we spend an undue amount of time worrying about other people's problems, worrying about whether there is or should be an Ombudsman in other locations, worrying about how to promote Ombudsmanship throughout the world. While I think the IOI should provide a referral service for anyone who comes to it seeking information, I think we shouldn't be such vigorous advocates of something we think is right, because what we're doing is promoting. It just bothers me to be doing that.

I think the board of the IOI spends a whole lot of time debating the same old questions year in and year out. Some of you attend meetings, and you're aware of this. I largely think it's a waste of time. That's not a view that's universally shared, although I think there is a surprising concern amongst those I've spoken to who attend and raise the same kind of question: "What are we doing here? Why do we do this?" It promotes professionalism amongst Ombudsmen. There's no question about that, and that's a plus. Whether it warrants the time

and expense of doing it, I'm not sure.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Would it be fair to say that to have the conference every three years. . .

MR. SAWYER: Four years.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Four years. That has a use. It could then update a number of new Ombudspersons and also the matter of some of their staff. But it appears from your letter that the principal reason for the meeting in Australia — and you have in brackets "only?" — was really just to decide where to make the arrangements for the next one, which at that stage of the game was three or four years away.

MR. SAWYER: That's right.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That's one of the concerns. How often are the regional meetings being held? Do they have another one scheduled before Christmas or one for next year?

MR. SAWYER: No, they don't.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That would be legitimate concern to come to committees that are responsible for relationships with the Ombudsman, no matter what the jurisdiction.

Further on in your letter you also mention about their trying to raise \$1 million to establish a foundation. Has any action been taken on that? In the last paragraph the comment is made that the current Ombudsman, who has been pressured into carrying on as the executive director of the International Ombudsman Institute . . . You mention that perhaps this onerous responsibility would terminate at the end of this calendar year. Has there been any more comment on that item?

MR. SAWYER: I haven't been informed of any development in that at all. The question of funding: Canada — Ontario and Alberta, particularly Alberta — has heavily subsidized the establishment and operation of the IOI. I think everybody is conscious of the imbalance in funding that has gone on, but nobody can come up with a satisfactory solution. That's one of the things that remains unresolved. I suspect that they've been discussing this at previous

meetings on and on back into time. At least Frank Jones indicated that. There is nothing new about this discussion. You get new people who come in every four years and to them the subject is new, but the subject is not new. It's just new people discussing the same thing and not having an answer for it, because there may not be a satisfactory answer.

Look, let's be candid. Conferences every four years provide everybody with an opportunity to go to some new place, visit, and meet some new people. But what of substance is accomplished? I don't mean by that that there is nothing accomplished. There is something accomplished. It's useful to meet these people and to know that there's somebody you can correspond with. Whether a conference framework is the best way to do that is questionable.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Continuing with the candour, I think that once in four years for that kind of gathering is quite legitimate. The real concern is the steering committee that seems to be meeting in far-flung corners of the globe with great frequency. That could not be justified.

MR. SAWYER: I don't think it's a great frequency, Mr. Chairman. They had a meeting in April, and presumably there is not another meeting scheduled until '88.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: At last report.

MR. SAWYER: At last report.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this is on a little different subject, but it's still conferences. I was at the Ombudsmen's conference in Quebec City. I would be interested in getting your assessment of how you yourself felt about that conference.

MR. SAWYER: I have to repeat that I'm not a particularly good conference-goer. I get bored very quickly, and even the socializing tends to bore me. But I feel that that was one of the better conferences I've attended. It was well organized and well run. The idea of an independent chairman really appealed to me. I found myself participating and arguing a lot more than I normally do at that sort thing. So on balance I found the conference in Quebec to

be a reasonably positive thing from my point of view.

I don't know that I learned anything specific as it applies to my work that I could bring away, but I certainly got to know the players and felt good about talking to some of them about some problems or approaches. All in all, I felt the Quebec conference was much more useful, for instance, than the Stockholm conference. I brought more away from it. I think the national conferences are a pretty good idea. If I'm being inconsistent with what I said before about the other one, I'm sorry.

MR. THOMPSON: We're all inconsistent.

I have a couple of concerns. Like I said, it was the initial conference I went to. One of the things that bothered me was that there seemed to be a kind of crusader attitude, that they had to protect the people from their own brethren. Another thing was that it seemed like some of the people, not all of them, were interested in trying to get a little level of government of their own going. I don't know whether those are accurate observations or not, but I would have felt far more comfortable if more elected people had been there as observers, just to see what was going on.

I'm not an Ombudsman, so I don't come from that side of the table, but I was concerned with the fact that they have to protect the public from the big, bad government out there that is trying to subvert them. That was my concern, and I still have it. As far as I'm concerned, not all but some of those people seemed to really take the burden of the world on their shoulders. Maybe that's what you have to do as an Ombudsman; I don't know.

MR. HIEBERT: With regard to the international institute and the steering committee and so on, where did the dollars for people to attend that steering committee meeting come from? Does that come from your budget, or did it come out of the IOI budget?

MR. SAWYER: It came out of my budget.

MR. HIEBERT: Is that true of the former Ombudsman as well? Did it come from your budget?

MR. SAWYER: Yes, I would assume. The arrangement is that accommodation and meals

during the actual meeting of the steering committee are paid for by IOI, but transportation to and from, which in the case of Australia was far and away the biggest portion of it, is from the individual's budget.

MR. HIEBERT: Is your concern about these international steering committee meetings reflected in your budget? In other words, is it reflected in the budget that there will be no such thing coming up?

MR. SAWYER: No. The budget for travel expenses is a gross amount.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Previously it was very gross.

MR. SAWYER: That's an editorial comment with which I'd prefer not to be associated.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I'll take full credit for it.

MR. SAWYER: The budget for travel has been reduced but not for that reason. Globally it was a little larger than it needed to be.

MR. HIEBERT: The second question I'd like to raise: if the block funding that goes to the IO Institute at the University of Alberta were radically cut, what would the implications be?

MR. SAWYER: There are two possible implications. One would be that the government of Alberta felt that it had contributed enough and that, in the absence of contributions from other member nations or provinces, it was unrealistic to expect Alberta to continue. That would be one implication.

The second implication, frankly, might be that the committee was getting at Dr. Ivany, who as executive director is funded by the IOI. Whether or not that was the rationale behind the decision to cut would probably be discussed around the table.

The result of a cut would be not very significant for a couple of years, because there is some reserve funding that would carry them on for three, four, or five years perhaps.

MR. HIEBERT: The reason I asked that is that you mentioned the role of the international office and that maybe people should be coming

to it when they are seeking the information as opposed to its being an advocacy office trying to push the concept of Ombudsman throughout the world. If one agrees with either position, in my view it should have some budgetary implications, because you're changing the role, nature, and thrust of the office. That is why I asked the question, to sort that particular idea out.

MR. SAWYER: The expense of running the office is not all that high, truthfully. They are currently paying an executive director's salary, and I don't know what it is — probably \$40,000 to \$50,000. They have part-time secretarial help and the library, but part of that is donated by the university. There is a cost for producing the publications, but they recover a fair part of that through the sale of those publications. You get on mailing lists, and you get this stuff back. Then there are membership fees. The membership fee this office currently pays is \$1,000 a year. That provides funding for the operation of the office as well.

There are probably reasons against it, but it seems to me that the office ought to be in Stockholm. The home of ombudsmanship is Sweden; it's been there for 275 years. If one is living in Tanganyika or someplace and think you want to start up an Ombudsman's office and find out something about it, you go to Sweden. Everybody knows that it's a Swedish name, a Swedish word, and a Swedish institution. My understanding is that when they were setting up the IOI, the Swedes wanted it but couldn't get the money to fund it, whereas Canada, and Alberta specifically, was prepared to establish it and fund it. So that's why the office came here. Dr. Ivany showed lots of initiative in doing just that. But I really think that if it could be arranged without anybody getting their nose out of joint, the thing should be moved to Stockholm.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We accept the motion for [inaudible] funding.

MR. SAWYER: Then, of course, I could travel to Stockholm three or four times a year to research the library.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We have already searched that out. You realize, of course, that it would take long enough to move it there that

it would be after your contract period is up.

MR. SAWYER: There are some very dedicated people on the international committee. Dr. Bernie Frank, who is a lawyer in Pennsylvania, is president of the IOI this year. He's a very conscientious man who is seeking to do more and more for the international Ombudsman community. The problem is that it's not one community; everybody is different. They do it differently in Pakistan than they do in the States, than they do in Sweden, than they do here. It's hard to find a whole lot of common threads, other than a general willingness to investigate complaints and make reports. The systems differ.

MR. MILLER: I was going to suggest that at the next Ombudsmen's meeting you have somewhere in Canada, they should open it by singing Onward Christian Soldiers, because it just seemed to me that it was them against us through the whole bloody meetings. At every meeting we went to, they were thumping their chests about how they're taking on the government in this or that aspect.

I was wondering if consideration couldn't be given, when you have these conferences, to having MLAs or somebody from government there to defend themselves in a panel discussion. Johnny and I sat back there and were literally appalled at some of the statements that were made by some of the Ombudsmen from other provinces. It was just incredible that we had to sit there and listen to some of that garbage they were spewing out.

If we're going to have these conferences and if the Ombudsmen are going to be responsible individuals in their respective provinces, they should be able to defend and the MLA or representative from government from the various provinces be able to respond. I make that as a recommendation, Mr. Chairman.

MR. SAWYER: Well, I suspect that there's some question in the minds of some Ombudsmen whether MLAs ought to be there at all . . .

MR. MILLER: Yes.

MR. SAWYER: . . . and whether it isn't appropriate for the various Ombudsmen from across the country to get together and flail away at whatever they think they're objecting

to. The system in most provinces doesn't provide for a committee such as this that would have representatives, so I don't know what would be the end result of having more MLAs. Would it become an adversarial process at the discussion? And is that desirable? I don't know. If I go to a meeting like that, I don't want to be an apologist for the MLAs or the bureaucracy, but I certainly don't want to go there with the idea that we're taking everybody on.

I think there were others there who feel the same way I do. I have trouble naming six, but I can quickly name two or three who I think have a similar attitude. The chairman, Dr. Yves Labonte, is a pretty reasonable, sensible guy. I think Dan Hill from Ontario operates on two levels. He operates on a political level; he's a very astute small "p" politician because of his background in civil rights. But I think he's more practical than maybe came across at that meeting. I hope he is, anyway.

Certainly, if MLAs want to attend, the problem is: would the Ombudsmen want that to happen? I don't know. I have no problem with it, but then we've always been pretty candid in the discussions we've had. So maybe I have no undue concerns about what's going to happen when we're talking about various things.

DR. ELLIOTT: Did having members of our committee at any of the meetings we've been at with you cause you a problem in any way?

MR. SAWYER: No, not really.

DR. ELLIOTT: If we're the only province that sometimes has members of our committee tag along — pardon the expression — with our officers to their respective annual conventions or whatever and it's going to cause embarrassment or any problem, I think we should hear about it to make sure we know what we're up to.

MR. SAWYER: It certainly doesn't cause any problem to me, and I haven't had any feedback from my colleagues to suggest that it's a problem to them. That's all I can say.

MR. THOMPSON: Actually, Brian, I think we are — everybody thinks they are unique, but in one aspect we are: we have a closer relationship of the Legislature to our

Ombudsman than many other governments do. Possibly the concern you had about bringing in some MLAs who don't have a real feel for or understand the office very well would cause some problems. I hope that other Legislatures would pay more attention to and support the office of the Ombudsman, and then I think you would have less of this confrontational type of thing. But I don't know.

I want to wind up by saying that we were with the delegation from B.C., and they were very impressed with Alberta's Ombudsman and were wondering how much it would take to hire him away.

MR. SAWYER: Only money.

MR. HIEBERT: On that point . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The money or hiring him away?

MR. HIEBERT: On the point that Bud raised, I think it would be difficult to try to encroach on the program. To monitor, all you would want is observer status. I think the recommendation that Bud made that as a program item you might want to have some MLAs have a panel or something for the stimulation of the group so that there was an appreciation of the other side of the coin — I'm talking about it only as a program item. But in terms of the Ombudsman meeting, it should only be an observer status.

I think we are unique in this province, as John indicated. In fact, quite frankly I think it's at the demise of the other provinces that they're not monitoring.

MR. SAWYER: That raises a neat possibility. Gerry van Berkel, who was at the conference in Quebec, is solicitor to the privacy commissioner, and he's responsible for pulling together next year's conference, which is in Ottawa. He wrote me last week saying, "We agreed on these subjects for the agenda for next year, but have you got anything else?" I went back to him with a couple of suggestions, but frankly they weren't very good suggestions. It seems to me that a very good suggestion is to solicit input from some MLAs across the country, not just from one province, to participate in a discussion about participation in the Ombudsmen conference: the Ombudsmen as officers of the respective Legislatures and the

relationships between them and the MLAs. It seems to me that's a very good topic for discussion, in which this whole subject about future participation, among other things, could be discussed.

I think I'm going to suggest to Berkel that he look at that as a possibility. If there are attendees from other provinces, they could get together a panel or a duo-component panel to discuss exactly that: what is the role of the MLA with respect to Ombudsman offices across the country? The more I think of it, the more I think that's a really good subject.

The only regret I have is that the representation from here is uni-party.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gurnett was there. Didn't he go to Quebec City?

MR. SAWYER: No.

MR. THOMPSON: But you could obviously have an opposition member on the committee.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I thought we approved him to go.

MR. THOMPSON: I don't think he could go.

MR. HIEBERT: He was asked and couldn't go.

MR. MILLER: He had another commitment.

MR. THOMPSON: We always do that.

MR. SAWYER: I'm talking philosophically now. That nails down the reality of its being a legislative office, and I think that would be desirable. We could always go to different governments in order to get a mix.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any other questions, gentlemen?

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, I should add that I accompanied our Ombudsman to Vancouver to a meeting where this particular topic was touched on, and I presented a small paper at that meeting. That was in 1983. The topic was introduced. I think your suggestion is a good one and that a meeting could be held with more structure and purpose than that one. But the topic was introduced. Grant Notley, Dennis Anderson, and I were there.

Talking about confrontation, the Ontario group came and brought their entire committee, along with legal counsel from the committee's point of view. That was the way things were in Ontario at that time between their Ombudsman and their committee. They had their lawyer sitting with the committee at all times to help protect them from their Ombudsman.

That was what I observed at the meeting at that time. It's been touched on, and we can refer to the minutes of that meeting. I think it's an excellent idea, and we can build on it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you, sir, for coming to be with us this morning. We will have your letter, and then we'll get a meeting together and have the budget approved and pass that on.

MR. SAWYER: All right.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That conference next year is supposed to be in — what? June in Ottawa?

MR. SAWYER: I'm not sure if they set a date.

By the way, I don't know if I informed you that I agreed to host the 1987 conference here. It was Nova Scotia's turn, but Bill Campbell doesn't expect to be Ombudsman in '87 and didn't want to commit his successor. I said we would do it, because it would have been Alberta's turn next. We've considered alternatives. We considered Jasper, Banff, Calgary, and all of those places, but I think we'll do it here. I'm going to see if I can't get the conference room at Government House, where the first international meeting was held. It's such a marvellous location. I think Alberta is beautifully presented to the rest of Canada in that conference room and in that building. That's what I'm planning to do.

One other thing, if I could raise it while you're here. There is an outfit — I don't know if it's a society or what — called the mediation and arbitration something, something, based here in Edmonton. It's a group of conciliators, arbitrators, and mediators who are on the roster to be arbitrators on demand, and it's governed by the Arbitration Act and so forth. There's also an international group with headquarters in the States. I think I'm going to get a membership in the local group to get on the mailing list and to attend seminars they might

run on the whole business of conciliation and, dare I say, arbitration. I had some exposure this summer to the whole business of what arbitration is all about, and I find it fascinating. So I'm going to do that. If it's possible, I may also look at the U.S. based outfit, again to get on the mailing list, to see what they have to talk about. I assume that I don't need authority to do that, but I thought I would mention it anyway.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just the number of trips.

MR. SAWYER: The first conference is in Minot, North Dakota. I'm not going.

Thank you.

MR. MILLER: Thanks, Brian. Good seeing you again.

MR. THOMPSON: Well, we got that off our chests. We keep on doing it. Of all the meetings I've gone to, that was probably the most worth while to me. When you talk about education, I got an education there.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It's your meeting, Mr. Chairman.

DR. ELLIOTT: Would you please stay with this topic until we find out where we go next? I'll pick up a new topic when the time comes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay.

On number 4, we'll get the letter back, and we'll have to give ourselves a meeting within about two weeks.

We discussed item 1 this morning. May we now allow the matter to drop from the agenda?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[Chairman: Dr. Elliott]

MR. CHAIRMAN: There we are. We've completed items 1 and 4. My apologies for the delay this morning.

Item 2 on my agenda is that the chairman was to consult with the Provincial Treasurer regarding some financial recognition for the Auditor General. I did that by memo, and I do not have a response. In the last couple of weeks the Treasurer, like others around here, has not

been an easy person to get hold of, so I chose to use the mail. Maybe that was a mistake too. We'll carry that through to the next agenda.

With your approval we'll go on to the topic of the Auditor General, item 3. We have in front of us the letter where he requests the authority of the committee to vary fees chargeable to certain irrigation districts and encloses a copy of the approval "for the consideration of the Committee, and if the requested authority is granted, for your approval." That doesn't seem to make sense right now, but that's what it says.

Any comments or questions? Has anybody had a chance to look at it yet? David, would you start, please?

DR. CARTER: Through you, Mr. Chairman, to John Thompson. We've been doing this for a long time, and you're the guy who is our irrigation expert. A lot of this is in your constituency or nearby. As you look down there, I see that we're moving some of them up \$100, some \$50, \$200, \$50, \$400, \$25, and \$400. In the case of Ross Creek, we've got them at \$350; they're almost at \$398. Can they afford to go to the full shot? Can we get rid of some of this stuff? Can Raymond Irrigation District be moved up? I think we really need to hear from John. If he thinks all of these are fair, that's okay. Or let's move it up; let's keep on going.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I've always had a problem with the irrigation districts being lumped in. I know that's under the Irrigation Act or some Act, so we have to live with what's in the Act. I think we have to get it closer to the real figure than we have in the past. Basically, a lot of these smaller districts -- and most of them are here -- have no realization of the cost. I find it very appalling that it costs the Magrath Irrigation District close to a dollar an acre to get their books audited. What I'm trying to say is that once it becomes apparent to them that it's a real cost, they're going to make a bigger effort to keep their books in shape. Surely a district the size of Magrath should be able to have an auditor go over those books and not have to look in a shoe box to authenticate what's there. I have no problem with this.

DR. CARTER: Do you want these figures to stay the same, or do you want to go down them

individually and you suggest what the figure ought to be?

MR. THOMPSON: There seems to be quite a jump there if we go up . . . It goes up \$100. I see nothing at all wrong with that. I would lump it as one thing.

DR. CARTER: Do you want to go higher?

MR. THOMPSON: I think we should go a little bit higher on all of them.

DR. CARTER: Could you go to \$1,500 on Aetna?

MR. THOMPSON: I think that should be \$200 a year for the next two or three years. In fact, I think it's better to phase it in than to make that big jump. There are only about 50 people in that system. It's a very small system, and it would give them problems to go \$400. Four hundred dollars doesn't seem much here, but it would be noticeable to them. Two hundred dollars a year for two years wouldn't be out of line.

DR. CARTER: In that case, instead of \$1,200 it would be \$1,300.

The next one, Leavitt.

MR. THOMPSON: It's about the same class. I think it should go up from \$550 to \$650. Magrath can go up \$300, I would think, instead of \$200.

DR. CARTER: So that would make it \$2,800.

MR. PURDY: No, \$2,600.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, with the increase in costs, at this rate there's no way we'll ever come close to their being self-supporting in this one aspect. If there are 40 people in Aetna at \$2,100, that's \$50 apiece. Is that unreasonable?

MR. THOMPSON: Not really. Most of these are in my constituency, I'm sorry to say. United, Raymond, Mountain View, Magrath, Leavitt, and Aetna are all in my constituency.

DR. CARTER: Have you decided whether you're going to run again?

MR. THOMPSON: Yes, I made the decision several months ago.

DR. CARTER: If you're not going to run again, maybe this is our best political time to be able to jam it.

MR. THOMPSON: Well, I would hate to see it go up to actual cost.

DR. CARTER: Just a comment, not a recommendation.

MR. THOMPSON: I know, but Aetna would have to go up \$1,000. I think our goal as a committee, if we're responsible, is to get these costs close to the realistic figure. I really do. I've always said that, and I still say it.

MR. PURDY: On that point, John and Mr. Chairman. If everything is in order, and they don't have to take it out of a shoe box and put it all together, the cost seems awful high to me, even \$600 for United, which is not a big district. I look at the credit union I'm a director of — \$34 million, and it costs us \$14,000 a year to have that done. If these two would get their books in shape, their costs should plummet to nothing.

MR. THOMPSON: Maybe the best way of doing it is to start making them feel the pain, but how much pain at one certain time? I would hate them to get the idea that they're just paying for the inflation factor. I think there has to be a punitive factor in there too.

MR. PURDY: There should be an incentive for them.

MR. THOMPSON: Or incentive. That's a better word.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that Mr. Thompson and Mr. Purdy become a subcommittee to come back for our next meeting with what they think these figures really ought to be. We'll have to meet again in the next couple of weeks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hear the recommendation. Would this committee be working with the Auditor General to get some feedback that they can bring with them? I like the reference to

the word "incentive." The objective here is to get these various irrigation districts to pay the actual cost or to get them into a bookkeeping system where the Auditor General would audit these books at only a very few dollars if the books are set up in such a way. Is that what was implied in one of the comments here? Could that be worked into the discussion or recommendation in such a way that the message would get back to the people? Is it our responsibility to get that message back to the irrigation districts when we approve these budgets? I'm asking now because I don't know.

MR. THOMPSON: I don't know if it's up to us to start going quite that far, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If it's going to be one of the reasons for our making decisions at this stage, I was wondering. . .

MR. THOMPSON: I don't mind going and talking. I'm sure I will get feedback from these people, and I don't mind sitting down and saying, "Look, you've been subsidized for years and years." I have brought this question to their attention on at least three different times, and instead of getting an accountant to do their books, they get a sister-in-law. I really don't think that we're going to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's how you keep peace in the family.

MR. THOMPSON: I know. The total amount isn't much. I'm more on the principle than I am the actual dollars involved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do we generally have approval on that recommendation?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. With that we are down to item 5: approval of Standing Committee on Leg. Offices of the 1986-87 budget estimates. Can I draw your attention to the estimates, that were prepared by our good support, at our request, on what it costs to run our committee? Bob, would you mind going down this list and walk us through it? We'll interrupt item by item as we see fit.

MR. BUBBA: Code 120, Wages. Something was

put in in '85-86 to cover the clerical component of choosing new legislative officers. Since that won't be done during '86-87, I took it out. However, in the case that any extra clerical assistance is required during '86-87, I have budgeted a global amount for the service of all committees elsewhere, so that support is there in case it's required.

Code 140, \$750. Nothing was budgeted there last year. Because of the Members' Services Committee order to make the code 900 allowances paid to MLAs as members of committees pensionable, I had to put in \$750 there.

Conference fees I covered under code 150, and that reflects the actual conference fees that are being paid in the current year.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, if we could go back to 140. Is that just since the legislation was passed making it possible for the per diem that we as members get, or is it retroactive for a couple of years?

MR. BUBBA: My understanding is that it's in effect from the time the order comes into effect.

MR. PURDY: No.

MR. BUBBA: Does it go back?

MR. PURDY: I stand to be corrected, but I think it goes back to when a person was elected. You can pay that amount back.

MR. BUBBA: Oh yes, in terms of back contributions.

MR. PURDY: Yes. If you've been a member for 14 years, Bud, and if you've sat on four or five different committees and received X number of dollars, I understood when we passed that order that you should write a cheque to the Provincial Treasurer for that back, and you'd be eligible for that pension.

MR. MILLER: Gee, I'm glad I came to the meeting today to hear that.

MR. THOMPSON: Nobody has asked for a cheque yet, Bill.

MR. PURDY: No, but I think you have to do

that. When I assumed the duty of Assistant Deputy Speaker or Assistant Deputy Chairman, whatever you want to call it, they made that pensionable by legislation. Then I had the opportunity to subsequently write a cheque and pay the pension back to them, which I did, when I took that duty over in 1979. As I understand it, all the select and standing committees of the Legislature are eligible for that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I recall writing a cheque the last two years to do just exactly that, to pay my portion of this very type of thing.

MR. PURDY: But you have to ask for it.

DR. CARTER: Who is our contact person?

MR. PURDY: Chuck Eliuk in the Legislative Assembly office.

DR. CARTER: So \$750 wouldn't be a big enough amount. That's Bud's point with this. Aside from the three of us sitting here with our puzzled looks . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have they got back pay?

MR. PURDY: You wouldn't be taking in the back pay. This would be for the 1986-87 estimates, where costs were pensionable based on \$17,325.

MR. BUBBA: Based on \$9,900.

MR. PURDY: Pardon me?

MR. BUBBA: Based on \$9,900, the allowances.

DR. CARTER: Where's our \$9,900?

MR. BUBBA: I'm sorry. The \$17,325 breaks down into two figures: \$9,900 for allowances, plus expenses, \$7,425.

MR. PURDY: Oh, I see. Okay.

MR. BUBBA: So it would be 7.5 per cent of \$9,900.

MR. PURDY: Yes.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, to Bill on this. He seems to be our resident expert. On

those back payments, from our position back to '75, the MLA pays the total — here we have it split. Some of it is paid from the government, and some of it is paid from the MLA.

MR. PURDY: John, say in 10 years you had received hypothetically \$1,000. You would have to pay something under \$200 to bring that pension in. That's the way I understand the system, based at 5 per cent.

MR. THOMPSON: I'm going to be in contact with that pension board here in the near future.

MR. BUBBA: If the committee would like, I could bring something back, maybe in writing, to the next meeting that would set that out.

MR. THOMPSON: I would appreciate it.

MR. PURDY: It would be a good idea. As I say, I may be confused on it a bit, but . . .

MR. BUBBA: All right. I'll get something on that.

MR. MILLER: Could you also look into it? As Johnny said, you're kind of the resident expert.

DR. CARTER: Do you want us to do it individually, or are you also willing to make the inquiry on behalf of the three of us?

MR. PURDY: What I'll do is make an inquiry of exactly what the order states that we signed some time ago and see when it's retroactive to. Then individual members can take it from there after I get the answer back.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Carry on, Bob, or were there any other questions? Okay, carry on. We're down to . . .

MR. BUBBA: Code 200.

DR. CARTER: Excuse me. Code 150: we've got ourselves lined up to send two people to one conference in Montreal this year, and the registration fee is \$395 apiece.

MR. PURDY: Mine is something too for Chicago.

DR. CARTER: Is there a conference fee for

that one too? That's \$200 apiece, and there are three going to that. We haven't had to pay conference fees at Quebec City or places like that, or did we? That figure would have to be readjusted for our next meeting as well.

MR. BUBBA: I'll see that that gets incorporated. That would go up to \$1,400?

DR. CARTER: It looks like that, anyway.

MR. BUBBA: Code 200, Travel Expenses, totals \$15,250. That involves attendance at conferences as follows: to Legislative Auditors, one delegate; to Ombudsmen, three delegates; to Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation, two delegates; and to Council on Government Ethics Laws, two delegates. There is also \$1,500 for contingency travel and \$2,000 for mileage. That's based on an actual figure I did from last year mainly for members attending meetings.

The total for that is \$15,250. You will notice it is down significantly, and the explanation for that is at the bottom of the page.

DR. CARTER: Could you go over the list again, because I don't think you've got enough in there.

MR. BUBBA: Okay. The conferences are Legislative officers, one delegate . . .

MR. MILLER: Whoa, just a minute. Leg. officers . . .

MR. BUBBA: Legislative Auditors.

MR. MILLER: We have two going, do we not?

DR. CARTER: Or is that the one where we've always been sending the chairman up to Whitehorse?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was when I went to Whitehorse and travelled alone from this committee.

DR. CARTER: And Toronto. So we've been only doing one to that one.

MR. BUBBA: Ombudsmen is three delegates, Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation is two delegates, and Council on Government Ethics Laws is two delegates.

DR. CARTER: This year it's three.

MR. BUBBA: This year it's three. That would go up by 50 per cent again.

DR. CARTER: I don't know. Part of that is that you have to — perhaps you've already done it. For example, if you're sending three to the Ombudsmen's conference, you have to run your figures based on getting to Ottawa. We don't know where the Canadian auditing foundation will be, but it's likely to be Toronto. Legislative auditors — did you decide where your conference is next year, Bob?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vancouver. I'm sorry; Saskatchewan and British Columbia are trying to sort that out.

DR. CARTER: Then take the furthest point. This one on governmental ethics — I'm quite certain that if you phone over to the Chief Electoral Officer, they don't know where the next one is either.

MRS. EMPSON: They decide at the December conference where next year's is going to be.

DR. CARTER: Last year was Seattle, this year Chicago. You'd better compute some southern United States point.

MR. BUBBA: I believe I based it on either New York City or Washington.

DR. CARTER: Maybe you should base it on Florida.

MR. BUBBA: And three delegates?

DR. CARTER: At the moment. That would help tighten that figure. When do we have to have this thing approved, anyway? As soon as possible. So it would be after they decided in . . .

MR. PURDY: Members' Services is meeting next Wednesday on this budget.

MR. MILLER: On this budget?

MR. PURDY: Is that right, Bob?

MR. BUBBA: That's right.

MR. PURDY: We don't anticipate that we'll be passing it that day. There will be unanswered questions that will have to go back to the staff.

DR. ELLIOTT: We're probably going to be submitting this — it will probably go all the way through the process without having all our information, such as the location of that ethics laws conference.

MR. PURDY: We'll just have a global amount of money to pass; that's all.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, through you to Bob. I'm sure the Chief Electoral Officer knows who is bidding to have the conference location. Then estimate it from the furthest point in the United States. Okay?

MR. BUBBA: Okay. The reason \$30,000 was included in last year's budget was for advertising in respect of the selection of a new Ombudsman, so I've left that out.

Professional, Technical and Labour Services

...

DR. CARTER: Auditor General.

MR. BUBBA: Yes, Auditor General. The figure for the independent audit of the Auditor General's office is left the same for next year.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, just on that point. Why doesn't that come out of the Auditor General's budget?

DR. CARTER: We had that discussion with Bill Rogers. I gather it has been the practice, but I think we should indeed continue to question the practice.

You have another question implicit, that you and I have discussed before. It's the matter that \$11,000 may well be too low. If I read the search committee for the Auditor General correctly, we're darned well going to change who the auditor of the Auditor General is. Was any phone call placed over there, Bob, to see if that figure would remain constant or that figures have been going up?

MRS. EMPSON: If I may, the figure last year came in lower than \$11,000. It was only \$9,000; it went down.

DR. CARTER: Okay, but you didn't have any conversation with them?

MR. BUBBA: No, I didn't.

DR. CARTER: So \$11,000 may be okay. Thank you.

MR. BUBBA: The reason Hosting is down is that there was a certain amount of hosting that was included last year in respect of the choice of new legislative officers.

Materials and Supplies: there was a component last year for this purpose in respect of the selection of new legislative officers. As in the case of Wages above, there is a global amount that is budgeted. It's not shown here, but it's for the use of all legislative committees. So it's not uncovered.

Code 900, Allowances and Expenses: on the basis of current committee activities, budgeted for 11 meetings plus conferences. The \$17,325 figure breaks down to \$9,900 for Allowances and \$7,425 for Expenses.

DR. CARTER: But for at least one of these conferences you had two people going instead of three, so that would change the factoring in there.

MR. BUBBA: Yes.

DR. CARTER: Whether you should round that off at \$18,000 or something like that, I don't know. I think the Hosting should go higher. It looks like we're practising to be the Ombudsman by trying to reduce our budget, but to do it by almost 50 percent is energetic.

MR. THOMPSON: He's getting more picturesque as time goes by.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman, I also have some concerns about the Payments to MLAs, which includes the expense end of it, at \$7,400. I think that's low.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The expense side.

MR. PURDY: I think both the expense and the per diem are low.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Low in the estimate or low in actual payment?

MR. PURDY: Well, even if we're basing it on 11 meetings plus other activities, that's low.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I see. This is based on full attendance, and as you can see, our meetings are very, very seldom, if ever, fully attended. So that's one place where that . . .

MR. PURDY: Okay; funds are going to be there.

DR. CARTER: Another question, Mr. Chairman, to Bob. Can we not break that payment out as to what are payments and what are expenses?

MR. BUBBA: Yes.

DR. CARTER: Do we have to run this in as a . . .

MR. THOMPSON: Global figure.

MR. BUBBA: No, I could . . .

DR. CARTER: I'd appreciate that.

MR. THOMPSON: People just assume that it's all payment.

MR. PURDY: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Take-home pay. Any other questions?

MR. MILLER: Could you boost the Hosting back up to a more realistic figure, \$2,000?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did you hear that, Bob? Hosting, \$2,000.

MR. BUBBA: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. And break the Payments to MLAs, code 900 — would that be two figures under the same code, then?

MR. BUBBA: Yes, it would be Payments to MLAs. Allowances are currently \$9,900, and Expenses are \$7,425. That will be increased to reflect one more delegate attending the Council on Government Ethics Laws.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bringing that \$15,250 up to

what? Oh, you haven't figured that out yet.

MR. BUBBA: That's a four-day conference, so it raises it another \$400 — \$10,400.

Can I be excused for one moment, please?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Go right ahead.

MR. BUBBA: Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: You'll find a brand-new budget when you come back, you know.

MR. MILLER: I think we're underestimating the cost of accommodation when we go to these places.

DR. CARTER: The exchange on the dollar is another question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question was just asked, as you were coming in, whether we've allowed for the exchange rate, Canadian versus American dollars, in our travels.

MR. BUBBA: As far as fares are concerned, I got those as much as possible in what it would cost to travel from here to there in actual figures.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Including hotels and so on?

MR. BUBBA: Yes, figures for the hotels as well.

DR. CARTER: I think the committee should get paid in American dollars when it's going down to the United States. Please record "laughter" on the transcript.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How do you spell "snicker"?

DR. CARTER: One of the other questions, Mr. Chairman, since we're not having a fall sitting of the Legislature: are we going to try to host a reception of Legislative Offices for the three officers to meet members of the Assembly before Christmas?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's my intention to have our committee host another one of those gatherings. "When" is the question because of no fall sitting. I see no problem working it in with the sitting even though it's next spring.

DR. CARTER: Or if we know when there's a caucus sitting of government members prior to Christmas, we could work it around that.

MR. THOMPSON: Either prior to or just after it. Prior to is better than after.

DR. CARTER: But that's one of the factors in this budget for Hosting, is it? It does take into account that we'll do one for all three officers of the Legislature each year?

MR. BUBBA: Yes, that is incorporated. The way the division is right now for the \$1,250 is \$500 for Catering at Meetings, \$500 for MLA/Legislative Officers function, \$200 for Other. So raising it to \$2,000 would cover off any unexpected contingencies.

MRS. EMPSON: But isn't this fall's included in last year's budget?

DR. CARTER: Yes, but we're trying to make sure for next year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Where do we have our meeting expenses if we have a meeting like we had last week with visitors from British Columbia?

MR. BUBBA: That would come under this 510.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hosting?

MR. BUBBA: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about if we have a meeting like that when the visitors from British Columbia aren't there? It's just a regular meeting with lunch. What does that come under?

MR. BUBBA: The same, code 510. That's called a working session.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I am wondering if there's an allowance there for paying tribute to the retiring Auditor General. I'm assuming we would put on a reception of some sort.

MRS. EMPSON: It was included in last year's budget because it will most likely will happen before he retires.

MR. MILLER: I see.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you say that the reception idea would include other things, some token, like the plaque that David brought forth before?

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I think we should have a reception for retiring members of this committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have one planned. The only thing we're suffering for now is want of a date. We understand that all the members of this committee are going to stay for another 10 years, and we didn't think it fair to put it into this budget.

DR. CARTER: Okay.

MR. MILLER: They're not speaking for you or me, are they?

MR. THOMPSON: No, they never do, Bud.

DR. CARTER: We never have to.

Mr. Chairman, through to Bill Purdy, on Members' Services. You want to have this information for next week.

MR. PURDY: Well, as I say, I don't anticipate that our budget will be completely passed. We're meeting at nine in the morning, and we have set aside three hours.

DR. CARTER: Can we go down this, then? Is there a necessity for us to go down here and plump up the figures, taking into account what we've done here?

MR. PURDY: I think it should be a reflection of what this committee believes.

DR. CARTER: So code 140 will be a function of a later code number. With code 150, can we make that into, say, \$1,000 to give us . . .

MR. BUBBA: For code 150 I think you figured a total of \$1,400.

DR. CARTER: Thank you. That would become \$1,400. Any way of guessing the next one?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Code 200? I have it down as

\$20,000.

DR. CARTER: \$20,000?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. I reached a long way for that one. It says \$15,250, but as I understood the discussion, we have to put that up at least \$700 or \$800.

DR. CARTER: Give ourselves some room.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The figure we now have is \$17,000.

DR. CARTER: With increased air fares in the course of a year -- I mean, we're talking about the next 18 months. Do we hear \$18,000?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Code 200?

DR. CARTER: Yes.

MR. BUBBA: Code 200 is now \$18,000.

DR. CARTER: Code 430. Let's try for \$12,000.

MR. PURDY: It was low last year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It went quite a bit below this last year.

DR. CARTER: If you're happy with \$11,000. Hosting: \$2,500.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have \$2,000.

MR. PURDY: What have you got in the budget for this year?

MR. BUBBA: \$2,060.

MR. PURDY: I think we should keep that amount.

DR. CARTER: \$2,060?

MR. PURDY: Well, \$2,000.

DR. CARTER: \$2,200.

MR. BUBBA: \$2,200?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Carter has something special planned that we'll talk about afterwards.

Materials and Supplies: we don't need any?

MR. BUBBA: It's already covered off in general committee administration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about Code 900, with \$17,325 as the total? We talked about that for covering the meetings, but we don't have . . .

MR. BUBBA: And conferences.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. But our regular attendance is only about 50 percent, and this is built on full attendance. Are we comfortable with \$17,325, gentlemen?

MR. PURDY: We've raised it \$7,000-and-something from last year.

DR. CARTER: Do you want to even it to \$18,000?

MRS. EMPSON: But did you want to separate, as you mentioned before, the payments and expenses to MLAs? It would mean shifting part of it to Travel Expenses.

MR. PURDY: But all other budget items show up in Members' Services as Code 900, Payments to MLAs, and it doesn't break it down to A or B. I don't know if they have the ability to show that.

MRS. EMPSON: You could if you shifted it back to Travel Expenses.

MR. BUBBA: If you'd like, I could show that.

MR. PURDY: Can you? Okay. I think it's a good idea.

DR. CARTER: I'd like to see that.

MR. BUBBA: If the committee would like two lines, I'll show two lines.

DR. CARTER: Please. And then whatever can be shifted into Travel, as you say. We'll leave that to a breakdown, but we're going to work this on the basis of -- what? \$18,000?

MRS. EMPSON: To be broken down in two?

MR. BUBBA: I'll do that breakdown. I think

most of that would tend to go into Allowances because of the extra delegate, but some of it will go into Expenses as well.

DR. CARTER: I believe that works out to \$50,600, which is still a significant decrease from the \$86,700 before.

MRS. EMPSON: The \$86,000 included \$50,000.

DR. CARTER: I realize that. What we're trying to do is sell it to Members' Services as a decrease this year.

MR. MILLER: Is there any indication that the per diem fee might go up?

MR. PURDY: I don't think they will until such time as another committee is struck to look at members' salaries and indemnities. Salaries and indemnities are always one package of recommendations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How do you feel about that, Bob? Do you have the discussion you wanted on that?

MR. BUBBA: I can get these revisions done within a day or so and have the revised sheets back to you for distribution. Would you like to look at them first and then have Louise distribute them? That would probably be the best thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we've had our input now. If your revised sheet reflects the discussion you've just heard at this table this morning, I'd say that's what we will submit. Is that acceptable to the committee?

MR. BUBBA: The only figure that hasn't been finalized is Code 140. That is merely a percentage, and I'll figure that out and raise it. What it will reflect is the addition of one more delegate under Council on Government Ethics Laws.

DR. CARTER: That's missing from these figures. It will be about \$51,000 and something.

MR. BUBBA: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we consider that topic completed, gentlemen? Thank you very much.

DR. CARTER: Can we move that the budget as discussed be forwarded to the Members' Services Committee for appropriate action?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excellent. You've heard the motion. Are there any questions on the motion? Those in favour of the motion? That motion is carried.

That completes the items on the agenda that we have before us. Are there any other items that need to be attended to? Should we be talking about a follow-up meeting date? The reason for a follow-up meeting is to deal with the Ombudsman's budget.

MRS. EMPSON: We'll have to wait for his letter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll let the letter come. Would it be acceptable if we wait for the letter to come and then have . . .

DR. CARTER: There's a time line on those budgets, though. We have now approved the Auditor General and the CEO.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is the last one.

DR. CARTER: What about next Thursday?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you mean the day after tomorrow?

MR. PURDY: A week tomorrow.

DR. CARTER: Thank you.

MR. MILLER: The 24th.

MRS. EMPSON: Morning or afternoon?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What are the options besides the 24th? Is the 31st acceptable?

DR. CARTER: I'm concerned that . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're running out of time?

DR. CARTER: We should get it done, because we don't know what else can happen. Perhaps nothing, but we'd better have it done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I can make the afternoon of the 24th at 1 o'clock or shortly after. Is that all

right?

MR. PURDY: I would suggest 1:30, because of my time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1:30 is fine. This will basically be the only item on the agenda for this time, I understand.

MRS. EMPSON: Unless you hear from the Provincial Treasurer regarding recognition for the Auditor General.

DR. CARTER: Yes. And any chance of having those irrigation district things done by then?

MR. THOMPSON: I think we can have the irrigation things done then.

MR. PURDY: I'm leaving for Ottawa on Sunday and coming back Wednesday morning.

DR. CARTER: Can you do it over lunch or right now, before you go for lunch?

MR. PURDY: We could do it over lunch, I guess.

MR. THOMPSON: The only thing is that I would like to talk to Bill Rogers for just 10 minutes.

MR. PURDY: Why don't you talk to Bill? I'm going to be in and out of my office all afternoon. What's your schedule like, John?

MR. THOMPSON: I'm leaving for home on the 5:30 plane, so I'll be around this afternoon.

MR. PURDY: Why don't you talk to Bill and give me a call around three or something like that?

MR. THOMPSON: Okay. It isn't a big item, but we should come up with something. I'll talk to Bill on it.

DR. CARTER: I move we adjourn, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. We have a motion. Any question on the motion? Those in favour? This meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 12:04 p.m.]

