

[Chairman: Dr. Elliott]

[2:03 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's go to work. I'm looking at the list of follow-up items prepared by Louise. Item 1 is the October 1, 1985, carryover: to consult with the Provincial Treasurer regarding financial recognition for the Auditor General. I refer you to the handout we have lying in front of us. There are four sheets of paper. Starting from the bottom up is my memo to Lou Hyndman and Greg Stevens asking for their guidance and comments. Greg Stevens' is the next one. It says:

The payroll increase was based on a norm of 3% for fully satisfactory performance and 4 or 5% for outstanding performance which was limited to no more than 25% of the total number of managers. This was the first increase for these employees since June of 1983.

I think Greg has misinterpreted my memo. He says:

Since you are proposing to implement the 2% increase 5 months earlier than the aforementioned increase, a smaller increase appears reasonable.

I underline that because that's Greg Stevens' reaction to my comment.

In the top one, the way mine are pinned together, Lou Hyndman took a slightly different approach. I'll be quiet for a minute and let you all read it.

Can I carry on with a comment about the Lou Hyndman one? I draw your attention to the fact that he suggests 2.2 percent to bring the Auditor General's salary to the maximum for officials in that bracket. He says:

Your Committee might also wish to consider an effective date of 1-Jun-85.

In my memo I pointed out that the salary period for the Auditor General was the calendar year January 1, 1985.

We have some discussion to take place here, I would say. Does anybody wish to start?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, to clarify your last remark, are you saying that the fact that the calendar year has changed should change the suggestion of Lou Hyndman, if we choose to accept it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. ANDERSON: In other words, you're implying that we might want to move retroactively to January 1, 1985.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's one of the issues I think we have to face today. To me it is important that we understand that the Auditor General's pay period is running with the calendar year, not with the June 1 period for senior officials that the Treasurer refers to in his memo.

If we support the suggestion that we go to a June 1, 1985, increase period, we are getting back to a staggered arrangement with our officers. I'm thinking back to a considerable amount of discussion we had in attempting to get the three officers on some sort of simultaneous pay period. We had them all over the calendar for a while. Maybe in this particular instance having an increase in pay retroactive to a date suggested by the Treasurer is quite acceptable. I want to point that out to the members of the committee.

MR. ANDERSON: That's what I wanted to get clear. Would making this increase retroactive to that date change the process of the anniversary times, or is this an exceptional circumstance?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would probably not necessarily change it. I'm going to ask our vice-chairman if he would comment on this. In view of when some of these officers come and go in our program, are we establishing new pay periods? David, do you have a comment on that? We've seen it happen with the Ombudsman and the Chief Electoral Officer. Are their pay periods up for review at the first of the calendar year, do you recall? Did we have something firm there, or has it kind of gone down the way?

DR. CARTER: It's probably gone down the way, because the pay period for the Ombudsman — I've forgotten how we put that in. We hired him in — what? — September or October of the year, so that one would be out of sync. We hired the Chief Electoral Officer for August 1. The Auditor General is hired for January 1, even though he doesn't take office until April 1.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about the impact on

pay?

DR. CARTER: His pay will be from January 1, so we'll have him on track if no one else.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, David.

MR. ANDERSON: To explore that further, Mr. Chairman, through you to David. Does that mean we're paying him from October to October, or whatever the case might be, rather than starting the payment in October but assessing it along with the rest in January? Couldn't we still do that regardless of when we hired them?

DR. CARTER: I think we could. The one question hanging out there, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that we have one, the Ombudsman, on a contract basis. I don't know how that reflects back. Again, the basic concern of the committee, which has been there for years, is that we can set the pay periods ourselves; we can say that it is indeed on a calendar year. Today it seems to be making more sense in terms of a fiscal year.

We've got the other complication with this proposal. With him leaving, we could get away with it, I suppose. The other thing is that if we follow the Provincial Treasurer's recommendation, making it June, we're giving him less than a year; we're only giving him 10 months of the fiscal year.

Louise, he must get benefits beyond this 95 thou. Right?

MRS. EMPSON: Yes, he does. He has the car.

DR. CARTER: It includes the car and all the rest of it, so when we factor it, it's over 100,000 already.

MRS. EMPSON: Definitely.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Incidentally, David, you noticed Lou's memo scratched on the bottom of that, just in passing.

DR. CARTER: That's been dealt with.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I went to Lou Hyndman and Greg Stevens for guidance. Both of them have suggested that -- I'm sorry; I'm repeating here. Lou pointed out that we might consider June 1,

1985, instead of going all the way back to January 1, 1985, with our increase, especially since Lou is suggesting 2.2 versus the suggested 2 of last year. Greg Stevens is implying that if we go back to January 1, we should consider something considerably less than 2 percent.

We asked for guidance and comments; we now have them. If we want to make a specific recommendation in the framework of these suggestions, it's up to us.

Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: I yield to my friend on the right; he had his hand up first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How far right, Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: As far as possible.

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Chairman, to refresh my memory, did we not at one time discuss the idea that we wanted all the anniversary dates at one time? Did we ever come to grips with that issue?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We were getting quite close to it, Al. We were just about right there when we started to have turnover in our three officers. On top of that, we have the suggestion here which doesn't recognize the January 1 pay period we established for the Auditor General.

MR. HIEBERT: With respect to the turnover factor, is it going to be a subsequent objective of this committee to try to establish that again once we get on-line?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Some of us are quite convinced that that's what we're going to be doing. We're quite committed to that.

MR. HIEBERT: The third point is that Lou's memo suggests going back to June 1, 1985. Is that dealing with the salary of Bill Rogers so there's some retroactivity accruing to Bill Rogers and we're not dealing with the Auditor General designate? Is that the intent?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're just talking about Bill Rogers, not the designate.

Anybody else?

MR. THOMPSON: The last point Al made is the one I wanted to get firmly in my mind. You're talking about the present Auditor General. He's going to be gone at the first of the year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: April 1. Is that what you meant?

MR. THOMPSON: Yes. The fiscal year, I should have said. However, what implication would it raise that we're giving Bill carryover. There might be some implications from the new Auditor General's perspective. As long as we can make it very, very clear that this is a going-away present for the present Auditor General, or something to that effect, that it has no implications in salary negotiations with the next Auditor General, I don't see much problem in going along with Lou's suggestion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I can express my opinion about this topic; that is, in no way is the discussion with respect to the present Auditor General being entangled with the Auditor General designate.

MR. THOMPSON: I'm glad it's on the record, though.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other comments on this topic?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I'd be prepared to move the suggestion of Lou Hyndman, that we increase the current Auditor General's salary by 2.2 percent retroactive to June 1, 1985. Given that this is a one-time circumstance, I don't think this should at all affect our move to trying to make anniversary dates concurrent, which I fully support.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. We have a motion. Is there any further discussion on the motion?

DR. CARTER: Yes. I would ask members to have a look at Greg Stevens' letter as well, where he's sort of telling us two things in two different paragraphs:

payroll increase . . . based on a norm of 3% for fully satisfactory performance and 4 or 5% for outstanding performance which was limited to no more than 25% of the total number of managers.

That seems to tell us there's a guideline there. We could go as far as 5 percent. When you compare it to our motion, as Dennis has rightly pointed out from Lou Hyndman's memo, we're back to 2.2 percent.

MR. MILLER: Is that retroactive to January or not, David?

DR. CARTER: The motion we have says June 1, which is the Lou Hyndman one. Rest assured the Auditor General knows that there is a maximum of 4 or 5 percent out there. His intelligence in the system, especially of things fiscal, is better than ours.

MR. THOMPSON: He's paid to know those things.

DR. CARTER: Aside from that, we need to sort of weigh in the balance the question of: are we being fair with 2.2? Maybe we in the collective wisdom of the committee believe we are, or there might be the other overtones that Bud mentioned, being some kind of a farewell thing. You recall that his last increase was '83, but we also gave him less than what he had every reason to expect he would get in '83. Then it was frozen for '84.

I guess I'm just not comfortable with the fact. I don't think we're giving him a sufficient amount of money.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, to David. I would hate to have the implication that we were getting tangled back up with the civil service pay scale and schedule. I've got no problem with giving him 5 percent, if the committee feels that that's what they would like to do. I would hate to use the reason of Greg Stevens' memo for doing it. I think it should be an independent decision, because I don't think this committee should be tied into the civil service pay schedule. I look on Greg Stevens' memo as information more than a recommendation.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman, on Dr. Carter's point. According to my arithmetic, if we go to 5 percent, then we would be putting the Auditor General over the maximum that is allowed to senior officials in range 7. If we go to \$97,000-something, and the maximum is \$95,000 . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're referring again . . .

MR. PURDY: . . . to Dr. Carter's 5 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you quoting from the Lou Hyndman memo, Bill?

MR. PURDY: Yes. So I would support Mr. Anderson's motion.

MR. HIEBERT: I have some concern with it as well. If we look at the position Bill Rogers has held and then I look at recent events in the city of Edmonton, when a chief commissioner is being paid \$120,000 plus all the amenities that go with it, I sometimes have difficulty reconciling the merits of the two positions and what we're doing. I don't think we should distort and get out of whack relative to where we've been, but I really wonder whether the \$95,000 is adequately compensating the position.

MR. PURDY: However, on that point, that has to be a reflection on the whole government scale at that particular plateau of range 7. We can't make that direction. That has to come from Executive Council priorities committee.

MR. ANDERSON: My point is the one being alluded to by Bill. I agree that the current Auditor General has served extremely well and that we should give him every consideration possible. But I would be very reluctant for us to set the precedent of moving past the scale that all other provincial government people have to adhere to. I'd also be reluctant to take any precedents established by our municipalities as a guideline. I think we have to work within our own at this point, and I'd be concerned with a move above the \$95,000.

If we did that — and we certainly have the right to do it — we'd be going against the recommendations of both the ministers involved. Though Mr. Stevens talked about the 5 percent, he also recommended much less than a 2 percent increase retroactively, and of course Mr. Hyndman recommended that that \$95,000 would be the maximum established for officials.

So while we're not tied by the government's other guidelines, I'd be reluctant to set the precedent of government-paid officials at a higher level than has been established.

MR. MILLER: Would there be any merit, Mr. Chairman, in suggesting that the 2.2 percent increase be retroactive to January 1, '85?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comment on that suggestion?

MR. PURDY: Is that an amendment?

MR. MILLER: Yes, because Dennis is for June 1.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I hear an amendment that the retroactive date be moved from June 1 to January 1, '85. Otherwise, the rest of the motion is the same. Any discussion on that amendment?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour of the amendment? That amendment is carried. Is there any further discussion on the motion? Those in favour of the motion as amended? The motion is carried. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Item 2, from our October 16, 1985, meeting, Messrs. Purdy and Thompson: to report on the study to increase fees charged to irrigation districts.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I move we table item 2. I know I have the information on my desk, but it's in a pile of papers about that high, and I just didn't get a chance to bring it over here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For the sake of the record would you please report that about high . . .

MR. THOMPSON: Eighteen inches.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Eighteen inches? Thank you. Any problem with tabling item 2? Thank you very much.

We're going now to number 3, please, from our October 24 meeting, with respect to the Auditor General: to speak to the committee re fees charged to irrigation districts. What is that supposed to be?

MRS. EMPSON: If I may, Mr. Chairman, at the October 24 meeting Mr. Thompson indicated that the Auditor General seemed to wish to

address the committee once more regarding irrigation fees because of their tie-in with the heritage trust fund and extra work that had to be done. If I recall, Mr. Rogers was going to come and address the committee on this subject.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if he wanted to address the committee. He just wanted to give us some information on it. That's what I alluded to in item 2.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For the sake of the record we'll take item 3, group it in with item 2, and bring it forth again as one report.

Item 4 from our October 1, 1985, committee meeting: we have some discussion/approval of the Approval List OAG 1-14.

MRS. EMPSON: That ties in with item 2.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That ties in with item 2. Do you think we can slough off 5, 6, 7, and 8 along with it?

MRS. EMPSON: No, I don't think that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let Mr. Thompson worry about them all?

MR. THOMPSON: Yes, I think it's nice to blur the issue on occasion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item 5, from our October 16 meeting: Mr. Purdy to inquire into the retroactive payment into the MLA pension plan. Do you have anything further to comment on that?

MR. PURDY: Not more than I commented on last time. I think I shared with the committee the knowledge of what was taking place. Members' Services has now — and I think I shared that with the committee — put in place a motion that directs the Provincial Treasurer to start incorporating the average of the last best three years for committee work. There will be subsequent information coming out to all members on what you could pay to bring it right back up.

MR. THOMPSON: On that item, Mr. Chairman, I understood from an unnamed member of the Members' Services Committee that basically it

was a matter of interpretation of the Act and that really it wasn't a matter of an OC or Lou's assent or anything. The way it's being interpreted, it wouldn't need . . .

MR. PURDY: No, but we had sent the direction as a motion from Members' Services to direct the Provincial Treasurer to go in that direction to make that available. There was an interpretation problem. That was from Michael Clegg.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we consider that agenda item reviewed adequately then, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: I think so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. We will delete it from the next meeting. Item 6: we have four items of minutes to approve.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Miller has a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, to Bill. Is it my understanding you're going to look into this further, or is it a . . .

MR. PURDY: My understanding is that Chuck Eliuk is supposed to be getting back to all members of the Assembly with what it would cost them, over the last three years and the number of committee meetings they've attended, to bring that item to a pensionable item.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, would you be so kind as to follow up and see that this is being done?

MR. CHAIRMAN: With respect to this committee it would be my pleasure. I'd be happy to, yes.

MR. MILLER: Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: I second Bud's concern, because for many of us there's an item for this year's income tax.

MR. MILLER: Exactly.

MR. THOMPSON: Obviously, I want to have the

decision made and the numbers figured out so that I can include them in this year's income tax. Really, we've got to get working on it.

MR. PURDY: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then as I understand it, the chairman will make contact with the admin office, and we will have him hurry the information along and supply it to us as individual MLAs. Is that the understanding?

MR. MILLER: One more point, Mr. Chairman. In the event that Charles' information and ours isn't the same, what is our follow-up position? In other words if he says no, what do we do? I think this committee felt quite strongly that it should be and . . .

MR. PURDY: So did Members' Services, Bud.

MR. MILLER: Okay. What I'm asking is whether there is any concern if this fellow says no.

MR. PURDY: He can't say no, because he's got the directive to go ahead and do it.

MR. MILLER: Okay.

MR. PURDY: He's a servant of the Legislature.

MR. THOMPSON: It's a matter of when.

MR. PURDY: That's right. We'll find out when.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In response to your inquiry, Mr. Miller, if there's any conflict of any kind, I would call on anybody sitting around the table who is a former RCMP member, somebody who knows something about judo or . . .

MR. THOMPSON: Dennis is the biggest.

MR. MILLER: Come on, Dennis; sit on him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have a note of that. I will look into that on behalf of this committee.

The next four items are approving minutes. We'll start with the minutes of the September 26 meeting. Do I have a motion approving those minutes?

MR. PURDY: I so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bill Purdy. Thank you. Any question on the motion? Those in favour? That motion is carried.

How about the minutes of October 1, 1985? Mr. Thompson. Thank you. Any question on the motion? Those in favour of the motion? The motion is carried.

The minutes of October 8, 1985. Mr. Miller. Any question on the motion? Those in favour of the motion? That motion is carried.

October 13. Mr. Hiebert. Thank you very much. Any question on the motion? Those in favour of the motion? The motion is carried.

Item 10: report of the subcommittee to meet with the Auditor General concerning the list of prospective auditors to audit the Auditor General. I always get a kick out of that for some reason. Do we start with Mr. Miller or Dr. Carter?

DR. CARTER: Just one question. Do we also have minutes for October 16?

MRS. EMPSON: The 13th should have been the 16th.

MR. PURDY: We didn't work Sunday, did we?

MRS. EMPSON: Sorry about that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The records will show that we approved the minutes of October 16 and not the 13th. David, can I turn it over to you now for item 10 on the agenda?

DR. CARTER: On October 29, Mr. Miller and I presented ourselves at the office of the Auditor General and, together with Mr. Rogers and Mr. Salmon, discussed this matter of having new auditors of the Auditor General appointed. They both concurred and thought it was an appropriate time to do it. They presented us with a list of about four to five names, and discussion ensued. We'll do some follow-up on the sounding out of the four or five names and then report back to the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very good. Any question on that?

MR. MILLER: Just an add-on, Mr. Chairman. They did point out the fact that the auditor of the Auditor General should, in the usual course of events, hold that job for five or six years

because of the continuity aspect. So when we do appoint one, it's generally assumed that if everything is satisfactory, they would continue to do that for a few years.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to ask a question of the subcommittee. Was there any discussion about picking an auditor whose firm is not currently involved in a contract or assignment under the Auditor General's office?

DR. CARTER: Yes. Of the four or five names that were presented, all but one had not done business, and the last name is one that's coming off the list as of this year. They would be familiar with the system, so it would make some sense to appoint them, but as I said, we still have to do some more basic homework about the names suggested. But the meeting was very, very useful. We were there over an hour and talked about a number of areas. They were quite in agreement and thought that this is an appropriate time to make a change of auditor.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very good.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on the subject of continuity, is the committee going to handle this as a matter of tradition, or is it going to be a set period that is moved and seconded in the committee and written in stone? Just how do we want to handle this kind of thing? There are advantages both ways. If it's a matter of tradition, you would give yourself some more flexibility; if you set it in stone and are not completely happy with the way it's being handled, I think you would have trouble. I just bring that up as a matter of discussion.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I think that what Mr. Miller stated about the tradition, that whoever is appointed would be in place five to six years, still doesn't negate the fact that if they don't perform very well, they can be terminated at any time in that period. It would be on a year-to-year appointment basis with a general understanding that in all likelihood they would continue.

MR. THOMPSON: Fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other question on this report?

MR. MILLER: In our discussions, Mr. Chairman, I think you could say that Dr. Carter and I both felt very comfortable about the transition and the way it's going to take place. It's going to be very smooth. Mr. Salmon is going to carry on the same style of operation as Mr. Rogers, and it seems to me that it was a happy shop. In other words, there was no great disruption by appointing Don Salmon, and I think this is a great benefit, because they have to do a kind of specialized job. In my opinion, they've done an excellent job of auditing without causing any unnecessary concerns among the various departments. I am sure that the same format will continue. When we left there, we had a feeling of confidence in the selection we made as a committee and are quite sure it will carry on in the same tradition as it has in the past.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. That's an encouraging observation.

MR. THOMPSON: Just on that subject, Mr. Chairman. How far down the pipeline have we gone in officially appointing the new Auditor General? Our search committee has reported to your committee. Have you reported to cabinet? Has cabinet made anything on that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It has been in the press.

DR. CARTER: The appointment was approved by cabinet on October 15. Part of the meeting Mr. Miller and I were at, that we've been discussing, also involved the matter of discussing the appropriate order in council for effecting the transition, to comply with the legislation. It wasn't quite as simple as it was with the Ombudsman and the Chief Electoral Officer, partially because of the overlap of three months. So that's in process, and documentation has been prepared in consultation with the Auditor General and the Auditor General designate. The order in council was prepared and forwarded to the Provincial Treasurer as well as to Greg Stevens, so they in turn could get it through cabinet prior to Christmas so that Don Salmon will indeed be entitled to the additional pay and benefit package effective January 1.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I point out that the Chair led

the discussion and moved a little bit off item 10 onto another related topic. I did that with my eyes wide open, so don't think you got away with it.

MR. THOMPSON: We'll take advantage of whatever opportunities we have, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further comment on either of the two topics we discussed under 10? First of all, the one that's indicated is the auditor for the Auditor General's department. Dr. Carter, do you have any further comment there? I understand that there will be a follow-up. Can we put it on the agenda for the next meeting? We'll have a progress report. Thank you.

I, too, would like to expand on the general topic of the Auditor General.

DR. CARTER: Sorry, sir; it's out of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have an item down here called 10(a). If that's not on your agenda, that's your problem. According to my agenda, topic 10(a), we're still talking about the Auditor General.

Our Auditor General and the way he does his business has a certain amount of international acclaim. It has come up again recently, and he has been invited to go to Bermuda to assist in identifying some of their major concerns with the troubles they are having with their operation. For information purposes, he will be making a trip to Bermuda, as part of his shop here, to see what he can offer for direction and guidance. Aside from that, after he is through with us, there is a possibility that he could be down there for more than just a guidance period. But I want to point out that this topic has come up with him, he has shared the topic with me, and I'm sharing it with you. I don't have a lot of details, but if you hear about our Auditor General assisting the people in Bermuda with the problems they are encountering in their operation -- there will be some further discussion about it, I'm sure.

MR. PURDY: I was nervous that the chairman wanted a motion so he could go with the Auditor General.

DR. CARTER: Bud and I raised the matter when we over there about the whole committee

meeting there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's another one of those situations, though, where I find the stature of our legislative officers rewarding.

Are you prepared to leave my topic of 10(a) and go on to number 11?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item 11 says that we're planning a luncheon. In the opinion of the chairman, the opportunity has not presented itself yet. So that assignment, with respect to a hospitality luncheon and the various officers of the Legislature, is still with us. It's not impossible that that might have to wait until we have a sitting, when we have people around. I look at my calendar between now and Christmas, and I don't see a place where it's going to fit in all that well. If anybody has any comments or suggestions or guidance or instructions for the Chair, I'd be happy to receive them.

MR. HIEBERT: Just some questions. Is the intention to have them at different times individually? Or has some thought been given to doing it collectively?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Al, were you at the one we had last year? We had one of these just before Christmas last year. We had all three officers present for a luncheon in 512, and all members of the Legislature and the legislative clerks and staff were invited. I think the new person at that time was the new Ombudsman. We had the new Ombudsman, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Auditor General present, and we all stood around and had our lunch and people met these officers.

MR. HIEBERT: Was it at the Speaker's lounge?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it was in 512, and all 79 members of the Legislature were invited.

MR. HIEBERT: I just make this point. Has any consideration been given to expanding it slightly beyond the officers? In any organization you may have the chairman or the chief officer, but there might be one or two people that are significant on the team. If you're looking at the office being a team, would it be worth while for

the members to meet not only the Chief Electoral Officer but maybe his assistant, or something along that line, so that we go beyond the singular individual? I just raise it as a point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: An interesting observation. Does anybody have any comment on that? Before I take any comments from the table, I just remind you that the first intent was that we do have three officers of the Legislature, and many of the sitting members of the Legislature had not met or had anything to do with any or all of the three officers for whom we as a committee are responsible. So we took it upon ourselves last year to hold this luncheon so that all sitting members of the Legislature could come and meet these people, perhaps for the first time, especially when we had a new Ombudsman.

If it seems important that we include members of their staff, I would like to have some discussion on that. Would anybody like to comment on that? Would you like to expand first, Al?

MR. HIEBERT: I'd like to expand a little. Besides the introduction of the three officers to the members, it can be rather an overwhelming situation whereby you have three officers and 45 members. Besides the introduction, there's usually some socializing and intermingling. If they had their key people — one, two, or three, depending on the nature of the office — along with them, the deputies could be introduced as well. Then when you get into the intermingling, the interfacing between the members and that office, you will have far more interchange going on.

I'm just raising that as a point. It would take the idea one step further, that it isn't one person but rather an office that we're dealing with.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very interesting. Would anybody like to comment on that?

MR. THOMPSON: I could be wrong on this, because we've met with these people several different times. I think I recall that at the last meeting like that that we had, Wark brought Ledgerwood along, and I don't know whether . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not upstairs.

MR. THOMPSON: Not in 512; it was probably at some swearing in or something.

MR. CHAIRMAN: When we have the swearing-in activities and the recognition and farewell activity, there is an invitation list prepared. The officer being sworn in or leaving is invited to use four, five, six, or more of the invitations available to him to provide for family, friends, deputies, and so on. Does that answer your question, Mr. Thompson?

MR. MILLER: Relative to this discussion, Mr. Chairman, I was going to bring up the question of whether or not this committee should make a trip to the Chief Electoral Officer's office in view of the fact that we've now completed an enumeration, we have new constituency boundaries, and there is the possibility of an election within the coming year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that right?

DR. CARTER: Or two.

MR. PURDY: A by-election anyway.

MR. MILLER: Maybe we should give consideration to the members of the Legislature visiting their offices rather than their coming here representing their offices, whether it be by themselves or with two or three support staff. Whenever I've gone to the Chief Electoral Officer's office, I've been more or less impressed by the way they're set up to handle the enumeration or the forthcoming election. I'm sure that members who have never had an opportunity to be there might appreciate that. That's different from your suggestion, Al, but I lay it out on the table.

MR. HIEBERT: We're going to accomplish the same goal. You're splitting it up three ways as opposed to one time, but the objective of meeting more than one person would be served.

MR. MILLER: Yes.

MR. PURDY: My suggestion on the hospitality for the three officers of the Legislature is that we have to look at a date that's very close to a caucus date or, secondly, when the House reconvenes. We're not going to get members coming in from Calgary or central or northern

Alberta to meet one of the three officers of the Legislature for an hour and a half meeting. You're going to have a very poor turnout.

MR. ANDERSON: I think Bud's suggestion has an awful lot of merit. I guess my one concern is getting a turnout of members to an office without some real enticement. We'd be there, but I don't know how many others would fit it into their schedules.

The other thing I was going to ask, which is related, is: are we planning a specific farewell event for Mr. Rogers? Would this fall in with that event, or do we plan a specific one?

MR. CHAIRMAN: An interesting observation. We would definitely have a farewell function in some form for Mr. Rogers, in keeping with what we've done for the other two officers who have left while we've been sitting as a committee. Bringing it together is an interesting suggestion. Dr. Carter, do you want to get into this?

DR. CARTER: If we talk about proximity to a caucus date, that puts us into the first week of December, which would be possible except that some of our own members won't be present because of the conferences that are slated for Montreal and Chicago. Other than that, I can see some advantage to trying to put together a reception for all three officers on, say, Friday, December 6, once we look at everybody's schedule. That's when we're most likely to get most of the government members to drop in for a while.

In terms of the farewell for Bill Rogers, I think that Dennis' suggestion is appropriate, that indeed we should have a farewell. In the case of the other two we've run it separately, and we should probably run it separate from having this reception for the three.

I think there's some merit in having this done before Christmas. Everything should be reasonably stable after Christmas, but on the other hand maybe it's better to get it all tidied up. We have a new Chief Electoral Officer that most people have not met. Some of them have met Don Salmon, but not all. If we have two out of three officers, maybe we should pick a date and go with it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Any other comments?

MR. PURDY: As a going-away or recognition of Bill Rogers departure, I suggest that we include him in the little Christmas dinner we usually have; do it at that time. The committee got together last year a week or two before Christmas and met over lunch. Wouldn't it be appropriate to do it at that time?

MR. THOMPSON: Personally, I would prefer having our meeting with the Legislature and the legislative officers later on, if we have a spring session. The main reason is that I think the new Auditor General and the new Chief Electoral Officer are entitled to meet with the MLAs without Mr. Rogers being there. We can give a party for Rogers at a different time, but I think this would be an introduction of the new officers to the members without having somebody standing there and taking away part of the so-called limelight. From that point of view, I would prefer our committee setting up this meeting, as we did last year, sometime in the spring.

I've got nothing at all against having a Christmas dinner with the retiring Auditor General. This committee owes him some kind of recognition along those lines, but I think it would be better if we had the meeting with the MLAs and the new officers later on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Carter, how adamant are you about feeling there's some urgency to tidying this up right away? It's not my place to say, but I find quite a bit of merit in what Mr. Thompson just said. That's where I was kind of leaning. I'm afraid we would have such a poor turnout of MLAs if we tried to run something through, even with our own caucus. Even though we're going to be in town on the 5th, if we tried to do something on the 4th or 6th, there would be quite a few reasons why some couldn't make it either one day or the other. If they're locked into the Legislature and the sitting and given several days' notice, we could pick a date and run it through. I'm inclined to favour what John Thompson is telling us.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I've always been easy and accommodating.

MR. THOMPSON: On Wednesdays.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What date was that, Dr. Carter?

DR. CARTER: It was for 30 seconds about 12 years ago. I remember it well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And I missed it.

DR. CARTER: Then we've got to stop saying "to meet the 'new' officers"; just "to meet the officers." If the purpose is to meet the "new" Chief Electoral Officer, he's now getting stale in the sense that he's been there for three months or whatever.

Fine; it could be just before the opening of session. How many MLAs showed up last time? Not that it matters in one sense; it's just whoever shows up has an interest, and that's it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think there were roughly two-thirds.

MR. THOMPSON: I was going to say about 50.

MR. ANDERSON: There was a good turnout.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Remember that the last time happened to fall a short time after Mr. Notley's accident, so it too had its impact on the meeting.

DR. CARTER: A future agenda item.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Will the secretary please record that we'll carry number 11 over for another time, and we'll talk about it.

Does anybody have a 12 on their list?

MR. PURDY: Date of next meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not yet.

DR. CARTER: There are a few others.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Carter, I think you have some information with respect to an invitation our Ombudsman has received. Are you prepared to discuss that with us and lead us through the discussion now? Thank you.

If anybody else has another item under Other Topics, which is number 12, please hang on to them. We'll get to them shortly.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, the Ombudsman attempted to get you and wasn't able to, I gather, till today or whatever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Until today. I know you have the information, so carry on.

DR. CARTER: When he was chief of police in Calgary, he was a member of the National Parole Board of Canada. At the moment they are searching for a chairman of the National Parole Board. They approached him if he would put his name in, and he declined. They also approached him if he would be able to serve as a member of the selection committee, and he said that that would have to be checked through this committee.

On the basis of the information I had as of yesterday, I agreed that I would bring it before the committee today and that I would speak in support of his being granted our approval to proceed with that, dependent upon what kind of time line was involved. It would mean that he would have to go to Ottawa for a number of days. The person who is going to be in charge of the whole search committee is unavailable until next Monday.

Personally, I feel that under the circumstances the committee might well be moved to think favourably of this if it does not involve too much time away. Of course, the expenses would be covered by the National Parole Board search committee. Our present Ombudsman has certainly not been travelling the world.

With regard to the Auditor General and his invitation to assist the government of Bermuda, I think this is along the same lines. As long as the time line is not too onerous and given the fact that the Ombudsman's office seems to be functioning very well, perhaps the committee might be moved to give the discretionary power to yourself and myself, as chairman and vice-chairman, to either approve or disapprove it after we've had further input from the Ombudsman.

AN. HON MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. HIEBERT: Did he cite any concerns that could come up?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I can add to your question. I asked him specifically, when he and I had the discussion on the telephone this morning. After we discussed the positives, I also said: let's list the negatives. Other than the one Dr. Carter mentioned -- making sure that if he's locked

into a serious commitment in his own office, he doesn't abdicate that responsibility to act on parole matters — there seem to be no negatives at all; whereas the positives seem to be very strong, I would say, in broadening his experience and increasing the stature of our own office. It just shows the value of our own office. But I did ask for the negatives, and he didn't have any.

MR. HIEBERT: So the question you're asking is basically to allow the chairman and vice-chairman to be able to deal with it when more details are known. Is that correct?

MR. PURDY: I just have one question, Mr. Chairman. Maybe Dr. Carter or you would have the answer to it. Is there any honorarium built into this by the National Parole Board? I'd have some concerns if he were collecting two wages.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The indication I have is that there was not. Dr. Carter, do you have anything different on that?

DR. CARTER: There is an honorarium, but he said that if he went with it, he would not accept it.

MR. PURDY: Okay.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, through you to Mr. Purdy. The same thing would be true of the Auditor General in Bermuda. I forgot what the answer was when we were over there.

MR. PURDY: I didn't think of that.

MR. MILLER: I think he's getting expenses.

DR. CARTER: Just expenses.

MR. MILLER: If I remember correctly.

MR. PURDY: He should get expenses.

AN HON. MEMBER: Rightly so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: When I discussed the Bermuda thing with the Auditor General, my understanding was that that's what it was: expenses only. There would be no honorarium and no cost to our office here.

DR. CARTER: In the discussions we had with the Ombudsman, I think there was also the possibility that he might fold in some of his holidays. But if that can be left for you and me to discuss with him, that would be useful.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further comment on this topic? Do I hear a general . . .

DR. CARTER: Who made the motion?

MR. THOMPSON: I'll make the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: That the chairman and vice-chairman negotiate with the Ombudsman on this subject.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Any question on the motion? Those in favour? That motion is carried.

On to the next item under Other Business. David Carter.

DR. CARTER: I wonder if someone would be good enough to move approval of the expenses for Mr. Miller and me with regard to the October 29 discussion with the Auditor General and the Auditor General designate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, Dr. Carter. We can only deal with the items that are on the agenda.

MR. PURDY: Giving notice of the next meeting, are you?

MR. ANDERSON: I'll so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Mr. Anderson has moved. Any question on the motion? Those in favour of the motion? The motion is carried. Thank you.

DR. CARTER: We owe Dennis a drink, but as for that Elliott . . .

MR. MILLER: He's off the Christmas list.

DR. CARTER: Just as an information follow-up from the last meeting, I'm not able to go to Montreal on that Comprehensive Auditing Foundation. I believe Mr. Anderson has kindly

agreed to go in my place.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. The date on that again?

MRS. EMPSON: December 1 to 3.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's good to hear, Dennis. Thank you. I'm glad we covered that.

MR. ANDERSON: I'm pleased to go, and I look forward to discussing the conference with Dr. Carter to find out what we're trying to learn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can I also introduce the topic of the Chicago conference on governmental ethics laws? We had Bill Purdy lined up for that one on December 3 to 6, 1985.

MR. HIEBERT: And me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Al Hiebert is going to cover on that one.

MRS. EMPSON: But Mr. Purdy is not going.

MR. PURDY: I'm not going now. Company business has come up.

MR. HIEBERT: So I'll be going alone?

MRS. EMPSON: Is there anybody else before I cancel the hotel and registration?

MR. PURDY: Is anybody else interested in taking my place?

MR. ANDERSON: Too bad it's at caucus time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Thompson, are you available to be in Chicago?

MR. MILLER: What date is caucus, Bill?

MR. PURDY: It's the 5th, but my cancellation was well before that date was known.

MR. HIEBERT: As caucus secretary you might as well note that I'll be away.

MR. PURDY: Okay. Nine till five, Bud.

DR. CARTER: I'm just trying to be recognized by the Chair.

MR. HIEBERT: You shouldn't have so many additional items.

DR. CARTER: If I have to phone ahead of time to put them on the agenda -- I mean, it is the first time this event has occurred.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We think it's important at this end of the table to keep changing the ground rules, just to keep your attention.

MR. MILLER: Well, it does that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Carter, we sort of unofficially assigned you the responsibility at one time in the distant past and called you, not in any disgraceful manner, our travel agency. Do you have a recommendation with respect to a replacement for Bill Purdy on that? Would you yourself be available to cover for that?

DR. CARTER: I'd have to double-check, but I don't think so. I think we'll just let it go with the one person going.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. The information is quite clear to everybody that we do have a cancellation on that meeting. You know the dates and you know the issues. If anybody feels that they're able to offer their services as a replacement for Bill Purdy, would you please let Dr. Carter or Louise know. You'll want to know that fairly soon.

MRS. EMPSON: Before November 22.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Today is the 13th -- because there will have to be cancellations. Is that adequate for that discussion? Thank you.

Dr. Carter, did you try to get my attention on some other issue?

DR. CARTER: I wonder if you'd be good enough, with the unanimous consent of the committee, perhaps to allow me two more items, one of which deals with a phone call I handled on your behalf.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have them down here already, Dr. Carter: items 14 and 15 with your name on them. Please proceed.

DR. CARTER: The first one is with respect to Mr. Campbell out of Calgary. The second is

with respect to Bud Miller's good suggestion about our visiting the Chief Electoral Officer.

First, Mr. Campbell was a self-employed carpenter. His country of origin is Scotland. He damaged his knee and in the course of time received a settlement from the Workers' Compensation Board. He was not happy with the settlement, which is often the case, as all hon. members are aware from their own constituents.

He complained to his own MLA, took it from there to the appeal board of the WCB, went from there to the minister, and took it from there to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman examined the file, turned it back, and said that the board had indeed done all within its power of legislation in terms of its duties, at which stage Mr. Campbell, of northeast Calgary, then decided that he wanted to come and make representation to this committee to change the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman.

I didn't return his phone call on the Saturday because of office pressure. He then phoned me late on Sunday night and gave me supreme whatnot. In the course of the following week I spoke with the minister responsible, the Ombudsman, and briefly with the chairman of our committee, to give the chairman some respite. I also spoke to our Parliamentary Counsel. In his opinion this committee is not structured or directed to have such representations. The information was given back to Mr. Campbell on Saturday, and for my pains I got a phone hung up in my ear.

Nevertheless, I just want to inform the committee that that's the route it has gone. It was a Mr. Samuel Campbell of Whitefield Drive in Calgary. We have gone through the process and have indeed checked. I believe that as far as the legislation affecting this committee and our responsibilities, we've done all we can do. So I bring that to the committee just for information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, David. I do appreciate what you did on behalf of the chairman and the committee. You will receive your reward someday, I'm sure. Are there any questions on that report?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, speaking of rewards, are there dates we should authorize for payment to Dr. Carter on that particular . . .

DR. CARTER: I didn't charge that one.

AN HON. MEMBER: You should have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Double time for Sunday night?

DR. CARTER: I was a rude s.o.b.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I have a couple in the Grande Prairie constituency too.

David, do you want to pursue the other topic, the suggestion of visiting the Chief Electoral Officer's shop?

DR. CARTER: Perhaps Mr. Miller could speak to the idea. It was his idea. We talked about it briefly, and I thought it was a good idea.

MR. MILLER: As I mentioned, Mr. Chairman, in view of the fact that we've had an enumeration and the fact that we have a change in boundaries and new constituencies being added, I think it behooves us to make a visit to see that everything is in place and ready for a general election if and when it's called. It seems to me that whenever we make these tours to our three officers, it's very much appreciated and is quite informative.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. MILLER: So I lay that suggestion out and wonder if there isn't some day between now and Christmas when we might be able to accomplish this trip, just to sit down with him and reassure ourselves and the Chief Electoral Officer and his staff that everything is in order and ready to go.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Could I make a suggestion for your further consideration that we do this in the morning and terminate the discussion with a committee meeting over lunch between now and Christmas, do the two things together — have the visit to that office and have our December luncheon meeting — and then not plan on meeting again till after the new year. Would you consider something like that in your plan, Mr. Miller?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, that's why you're chairman. You come up with the brilliant ideas to add to the small part that we bring forward

for you to work on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You leave it with us then, and we'll see if we can organize something.

DR. CARTER: Could we look at some dates?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, we can. Mr. Miller, would you like to carry on that excellent discussion and suggest some dates, with the help of Dr. Carter?

MR. MILLER: I have no date in mind, Mr. Chairman. The week of December 9 is entirely open for me.

MR. ANDERSON: How about the 11th?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry; it's not available at this end. If we're here for caucus, would it be an option to have that on . . .

DR. CARTER: That's a bad week because of those conferences.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, yes. All right.

DR. CARTER: How about the week before?

MR. MILLER: I'll be away all that week.

MR. PURDY: I'll be away that week too.

DR. CARTER: How are you for next Tuesday?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What are we down to now, the 17th?

DR. CARTER: November 19.

MR. ANDERSON: I'm tied up on the 19th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm away on the 19th.

DR. CARTER: The 18th, 21st, 22nd . . .

MR. PURDY: December 22?

MR. MILLER: It's too close to that magic date.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The 27th or 28th. Is that available?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. HIEBERT: What about December 18?

MR. PURDY: That's a better date.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. It's okay here.

MR. MILLER: I've got a meeting that day.

MR. HIEBERT: The 17th?

MR. MILLER: The 17th is good.

AN HON. MEMBER: I'm out that day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's fine here.

DR. CARTER: How about the 16th?

MR. HIEBERT: The 16th is okay.

MR. MILLER: The 16th? Not in the morning.

DR. CARTER: How about the 19th?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Okay.

MR. THOMPSON: I've got a blank space right through that week, so I'm agreeable.

MR. MILLER: Okay. The 19th?

DR. CARTER: Is the 16th all right? Can we do the 16th too?

MR. THOMPSON: Is it the 19th, Mr. Chairman? I'm getting more confused as time goes by.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You need not be confused, Mr. Thompson. It's December 19. We will make the necessary arrangements for a morning visit to the Chief Electoral Officer's office, and we will have a luncheon meeting to review the unfinished business of this committee.

MR. PURDY: Are you also going to invite Bill Rogers to that meeting? I thought that's what the general consensus was, when I suggested it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would like to have more guidance on that. I didn't see it that way, but I'll have more guidance on that.

MR. PURDY: That's maybe January 1 plus.

DR. CARTER: That's too early in the year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: January is too early in the year? All right, thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: What time in the morning?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They open their office at 6:30, Mr. Thompson. Can we make it then?

MR. THOMPSON: No, the plane doesn't get in until 8:30.

MR. MILLER: How about ten?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ten o'clock? We have an hour and a half, so would that be enough? Ten o'clock on the morning of the 19th.

MR. HIEBERT: Are you thinking of having a lunch as opposed to a dinner?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, a noonday respite.

DR. CARTER: How is the cafeteria over at your place?

AN HON. MEMBER: Excellent food.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ten o'clock on the morning of December 19 for a visit to the office of our Chief Electoral Officer with a noon business meeting. Our records will show that we've agreed on that topic. Is there any other topic that we'd like to bring up at this time?

MR. HIEBERT: Since we're into the budgetary process very soon, have we done any follow-up, not for this committee but with regard to the institute for the Ombudsman? I know this question has been addressed time and time again. Should we be doing some inquiries at this stage rather than after the fact?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If I may fuzzify my answer, as I recall it, the action taken in the past is none of our business. I think those are the fewest words I can use to express it. Does anybody want to review it any further?

MR. PURDY: Why couldn't a memorandum be sent to Mr. Johnston, the minister responsible, indicating that there is concern about this \$50,000 funding out of his budget to the

University of Alberta for the international Ombudsman. Let it go in front of priorities. Send a copy to the priorities committee of cabinet, and let them have a go at it. If they approve it, then it's out of our hands entirely, but they may listen to us. That's a motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it isn't. You used a good expression when you said that it's out of our hands entirely. I'm trying to tell you that it's not even in our hands. The message I got from our legal counsel is that the topic is not in our hands; it's not a topic at this table. That's my understanding of it, and I'll stand corrected by anyone.

MR. PURDY: But it could be a topic for individual members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. I can't fight with that.

MR. THOMPSON: Write a memo to Dick Johnston.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have no problem with that topic from this end of the table. If we want to adjourn the meeting and pursue it, we can really go at it. But I really have to tell you that that's the guidance I've had on that topic.

MR. PURDY: Any legal opinion is always debatable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Purdy, I made a smart-aleck remark to you with respect to your suggestion that you made a motion. I withdraw my remark. What are you going to do with your motion now?

MR. PURDY: No, I don't think I'll proceed with the motion, but I'd like to review it.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I think it's a legitimate motion irrespective of the opinion you might have received. I'm of the opinion that the amount of money paid to the Ombudsman's institute through the university and from the Minister of Advanced Education is of direct concern to this committee. I can see where having someone sitting over there, being paid in effect by this government, is maybe in a position where there can be a conflict of interest or concern between the institute and our present Ombudsman. It hasn't occurred, but

that's not saying it might not occur. What better committee to deal with it than this committee, which has been set up by the Legislative Assembly?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you finished, Bud?

MR. MILLER: Yes.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, on this issue I'm afraid I'd have to agree with the interpretations you've received and disagree with my colleagues who have made statements at this point. It's certainly the responsibility of any individual member who feels strongly about it to make representations on it. We as a government give grants, of course, to all university programs and all such things, any of which could be in conflict -- and sometimes are, especially from certain universities -- with programs we are initiating in government or specific people or others. As a committee our responsibilities don't go as far as making recommendations on those grants to postsecondary institutions, even though our knowledge of the situation is probably the most intimate. I think that's the responsibility of individual members and would support the interpretation, Mr. Chairman, that you've articulated.

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Chairman, in listening to those comments with regard to the funding of the university, that block funding goes to the university and they determine the priorities and so on. It's my understanding that the \$50,000, or whatever allocation is given for the Ombudsman institute, is part and parcel different from the usual allocation to the university. It is something over and above. It's an addendum kind of an item, and therefore stands in a singular way. It does not come under the purview that Dennis has just spoken about. Therefore, I think it has a legitimate place at this table. It's very debatable whether this committee should be doing something or not. I feel strongly on the matter.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, just for clarification. I didn't mean to imply that it was part of a global budget but that it was processed in the same way as any other legislative allocation and that we, therefore, as individual members have a right and

responsibility to deal with it on that basis.

I still say that within this committee's mandate we wouldn't have any more responsibility for recommending on that than we would that another specific grant be given or not be given within the advanced education field.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would like to make a comment on what I'm hearing. There are two issues here. Number one is our concern over the fact that from our budget we see money going to that particular project. I have no debate or argument with our concern; we all have that concern as I hear the discussion.

The second topic is: do we discuss it or deal with it or make motions or recommendations from this committee? We sought legal counsel on that topic. We've received legal counsel. All the members of the committee have a copy of the two- or three-page letter that the counsel provided to us for guidance as to whether we deal with that concern at this table. All I'm doing is referring to what I recall that counsel's guidance to be.

If we have a problem with that guidance, I would like to suggest that we bring our legal counsel to the table, and it's his responsibility to guide us. It's our responsibility to ask him for guidance and debate the topic with him as to whether or not we should proceed with our other concern, which is what to do about the \$50,000.

That's the best I can come up with while I'm thinking and sitting in this chair. We still have time to do that, but it won't be between now and Christmas. I know you're talking about the time frame of the budget process. With my limited knowledge of the budget procedure around here, I suggest that we have now missed that time frame. No, we haven't? It's still there? Then I will now ask for guidance from the committee.

If there's any merit in what I said about the issues here, would there be need for us to call a meeting in the very near future to bring in our legal counsel, debate the legality of his response to us -- we can equip ourselves with a fresh copy of his response from our files -- challenge him on that response and, having cleared that out of the way, then proceed with what we want to do?

In the meantime, I've had my instructions from legal counsel, which you requested us to

get. We've got them, we've circulated them, and we chose to drop the topic. Now it's coming up again. If I didn't sit firmly on this, I think I would be abdicating my responsibilities as chairman. I just don't consider the topic fit for this table in its present form. Bringing our legal counsel back for guidance: I accept that as information and instruction. But to discuss what goes from the budget of this province to the university, for whatever function, is not a concern of this committee when it's duly formed in this capacity.

I need your guidance, please.

MR. PURDY: I'd like to review the letter that was sent from legal counsel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If there's any question about whether you have access to the letter, we can certainly distribute new copies immediately.

MR. MILLER: I don't remember getting it, Mr. Chairman. That's not to say I didn't.

MR. PURDY: I'd like to review whatever is there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you please make copies available to the members? I would certainly stand ready to call another meeting in the very near future to proceed with it, and I'm sure that our legal counsel would make himself available to meet with us.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, in that vein I would like to suggest that after we distribute that letter again and members have had a chance to review it, if members or even any individual member feels that we should have legal counsel come to the table as you suggest, then perhaps we could leave that in your hands to arrange for the next meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll be happy to accommodate you. We can arrange that right away, Dennis. Thank you. Any further comment on this topic, gentlemen? Is there any other item under new business that we would like to bring up this afternoon?

MR. THOMPSON: It's a very minor thing. I've got to catch a plane at 5:30, so I won't take very long on this one. I read in the paper where, of course, the feds are having trouble,

like they always do. The federal Chief Electoral Officer is asking for authority to subpoena witnesses and things like that. Would there ever be any need for our Chief Electoral Officer under similar circumstances to do something like that? It's just an observation as much as anything. I certainly don't expect much discussion on it, but I wonder what power he has under the electoral Act for subpoenaing witnesses in cases of alleged wrongdoing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you like us to put that in a letter and ask for legal counsel on that?

MR. THOMPSON: Yes, that's what I would like to do, if we could get some kind of background for it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We can have an answer and mail it out, or we can have an answer for the next meeting. Thanks, John.

All right, starting a fresh topic again: does anybody else have anything they'd like to bring up? I'm going to adjourn the meeting right now, and Mr. Thompson can catch his aircraft.

[The committee adjourned at 3:28 p.m.]