

Special Select Standing Committee on Members' Services

Wednesday, May 21, 1980

Chairman: Mr. Amerongen

12:15 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think everyone has received a copy of the maps. The minutes are approved. Then, we've got "other visitors" and there ain't none. "Business arising out of the minutes." The first thing is . . .

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Chairman, before we go into that, aren't most of these same items on the agenda again?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, there's an overlap.

MR. APPLEBY: So which way are we going to handle it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It doesn't matter. They are in the same order, as far as I know. The first one is the memo to Graham Harle. I have now sent him two memos, one on April 23 and one on May 13, and I have not yet an answer. What's the committee's wish with regard to that?

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: That was to do with security, wasn't it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right. We passed a resolution, which I apprized him of on April 23, saying that: as indicated in the attached copy of the minutes of the Members' Services Committee meeting of April 9, the committee asked that notice of meetings of the cabinet security committee be given to the Members' Services Committee, with a view to having a member of the Members' Services Committee as a representative at the security meetings or receiving copies of the minutes of those meetings.

MR. APPLEBY: I would presume, Mr. Chairman, that he's been very busy with that legislative review committee. He chairs that all the time, doesn't he? Perhaps he'll have time to attend to this within the next week or so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Suppose we let it go for another week; then should I send him another reminder?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. GOGO: Perhaps you could send him a copy of the minutes as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think I did the first time.

MR. APPLEBY: You could mention to him, perhaps, that it was raised again at this meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next is the Chamber renovations. We ran out of time on that the last time. I think we should follow up on that and do something about it. As far as I know, the thing to do is to get those architects busy and get a proper study made of it. I was thinking again yesterday as I watched the TV cameras that it would be just terrific if they could come up with some ideas

that would enable us to get away from the appearance in there of being a TV studio. I'm not sure it can be done, and of course I haven't got all the architectural ideas either.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: As you know, last time I was kind of between a rock and a hard spot; I didn't know which way to jump. I've done considerable thinking about it since, trying to get a handle on what this committee is all about, and so on. I came to the conclusion that maybe what we should do is ask Government Services to submit some plans for our approval. Then we're going to get out of this sort of impasse that we're having with Government Services, and ask them to come up with some plans for us. Also that would salve my conscience about this ten thousand bucks. But ask them to come up with some plans for us. If we're happy with them, okay; if we're not happy with any of them, tell them they'd better get back to the drawing board again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Suppose I get what they've got and bring it to the next meeting.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: As long as they have a memo to understand that we want more than one plan, that we want suggestions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You mean get one person to do a number of plans?

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: I don't care where they do it, but then Government Services will be providing us with some ideas. Then they will foot the bill for the plans and so on. Hopefully then, there would be a little more correlation between Government Services and ourselves.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are some diagrams available. I was talking to Scotty McIntosh last week. Supposing, as a start . . .

MR. APPLEBY: That includes material, the type of finish, and so on?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He said that, you know, he had something we could look at.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: That's the suggestion I'm throwing out here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I just want to get rid of the thing, you know. We've been hassling over this for three or four meetings. Frankly I think it's absolutely unsound and parliamentarily wrong that a committee of this kind, which is not government but which is really, in a sense, parliament, that it should be compelled to go through Government Services. The Government Services Act omits the Legislative Assembly; it deals only with departments of government. I don't see why we should restrict ourselves more that we are restricted by law. To me, I have nothing against Government Services; I have nothing against their architect. But I do have very much against any interference or purported interference with parliament. Let's be quite candid about it. In the situation we have here, with a five person opposition, it is rather difficult at times for me as Speaker to maintain the image of a parliament. It seems to me that the smaller the opposition is, the harder I have to work to maintain the image of a parliament. And I don't mean a hick parliament either. I mean a top notch parliament that can hold its head up anywhere in the world or anywhere in Canada.

You know, we've been through this hassle -- it's been on and off for years -- concerning space and concerning security. The Minister of Government Services gave every indication he was ready to take over in the Chamber. We're not getting too far with the matter of security. In a proper parliament, those things would be exclusively under the control of the

Speaker, with advice from a committee such as this. It seems to me that if we're going to go back to Government Services when we don't have to, on a matter which is really not directly their responsibility -- because, as I say, they're not included in The Government Services Act. If they were, you can be sure we would have heard about it by now, and they would have been leaning on us with their legislation, because they checked it. I went through this with Horst Schmid, when he was Minister of Government Services. He was going to tell me what to put in the Chamber. I said, no, there is no way you're going to do that. And of course we had checked the legislation.

I just think that this kind of thing is a retrograde step. I recognize in it the heavy hand of government. Quite frankly, I am completely discontented about it.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: If I might explain. In some conversations I've had, it was conceded that you were equivalent to a minister or thereabouts.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: And the average minister, if he wants something done in his department, he goes to Government Services to get it. That's why I thought that maybe this would be the way to go. I may be wrong, but it was just the idea I had. So I throw it out for . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, George, The Government Services Act lays out the scope of the responsibility of the Department of Government Services. It does not include the Legislative Assembly. It includes only government departments. We are not a government department. I do have ministerial status, particularly financially, but I am not a government minister, not a minister of the Crown.

MR. GOGO: Frankly, I am dismayed with this Chamber renovation business, because I understood it wasn't structural change, it was more interior decorating. For me to see plans really doesn't mean very much. If I were to see some color photographs and suggestions, it would be far more meaningful for me.

MR. APPLEBY: Well, if we approve some type of renovation there, who exactly carries out this work?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would be up to the choice of the committee. I would assume we would go to Government Services, but not under any kind of compulsion. And if we didn't want to go to Government Services, we could get outside private enterprise in there, just in the good old . . .

MR. APPLEBY: But in the normal course of events we would expect them to do it, ask them to do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure. You know, there's a history to this that's been going -- I can give you examples. I don't want to prolong the meeting. We've been through this a dozen different ways. And I know the Minister of Government Services is determined -- and I think he's using members of this committee for that purpose, if I may be completely blunt, and possibly unfair -- that he's going to get his say in here. I really think the time for his involvement has not come. I think the decision is up to this committee and this committee should decide if and when it wants an involvement and to what extent.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Just in answer to that, while we're being frankly blunt. Stu and I don't see eye to eye on very much. I've argued with him a good deal about this. The last communication I had from him, I don't think he is too gung ho on the Chamber. As far as the rest of the building is concerned, I think that is his interpretation. But as far as the Chamber is concerned, my opinion is that he is not gung ho on that. He would like some input or some . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has made not less than three attempts to become involved in this interior decoration.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Well, that's been my experience.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let me hasten to say that there's nothing personal in this.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Oh, heavens no.

MR. APPLEBY: Couldn't we look at what they've got to offer?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure.

MR. MANDEVILLE: As far as getting the plans that the architects (inaudible) I can't see anything wrong with us doing that. The only thing is, how much longer are we going to sit here and discuss this without coming to a conclusion at our meeting. Is it going to cost The Department of Government Services something to give us that plan?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They're not going to work for free, for them or for us. As far as the public purse is concerned, I'm sure it makes not a whit of difference whether the funds come through Government Services, or through this committee or the Department of the Legislature, so-called.

MR. MANDEVILLE: If it's a method of saving some money, if the \$10,000 is too much, I would say let's take every step there is to save some money, but make sure that when we put that Chamber in there . . . I think just like the Chairman does. I think we're responsible for that, because if you go to Government Services to do it, that is the government. That Chamber belongs to the Members of the Legislative Assembly. They should have control of it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'll bring what Scotty has to the next meeting, and you can see what you think of it.

Now, the issue of large blocks of passes. That was another thing we weren't able to reach the last time we were here. We had one instance when it happened, and another one when it happened and was reversed. In both instances, it happened to be the same member, but it could be another member; I don't want to single out any member. As you know, there are times when members have a special interest in what is before the House, whether it be the occasion of their introducing debate on a bill they're sponsoring or a resolution they're moving or something they have in mind to do in the question period. Members, no doubt, on such occasions would find it desirable to have people in the galleries who are especially interested in what they are about to do on the floor. We had this one occasion when a fairly large block of seats was taken -- I've forgotten whether it was the members gallery or the public gallery -- and, if I'm not mistaken, it coincided with a demonstration that was being held out in front of the building. We don't have the security staff at the disposal of the Chamber that we should have. But the government security staff try to exercise some discretion or control as to how many

demonstrators are allowed into the building. I guess a lot who are allowed in are then allowed into the Chamber. Right now there is nothing in the offing that I know of that is going to cause us any particular concern, but I think the committee might wish to consider whether we should adopt a practice or rule in this regard for future occasions. Do we want members to be able to say, well, I'm going to get there first and give out all the passes to both galleries or either gallery.

MRS. OSTERMAN: I'm wondering, Gerry, if we could find out what the policy is, if there is a stated policy right now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There isn't. I don't know what the government policy is, but insofar as that goes they have no jurisdiction as to who comes into the Chamber. They've taken jurisdiction over who comes into the building, but as far as who comes into the Chamber is concerned, it's really my responsibility and I'm asking for your advice.

MR. APPLEBY: They issue passes for the public gallery, do they?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think to a limited extent. I think some seats are always left free. Even for the opening day they leave 10 or a dozen, as a sort of token, you know.

MR. APPLEBY: These passes issued were for the members gallery, were they?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They were for both, I think.

MR. STEFANIUK: They were for both the members and public galleries. As you know, the press gallery and the Speaker's gallery are closely controlled, and no access for the public is allowed to those. It would appear that the members gallery has taken on the same status as the public gallery. The public gallery is precisely what the name says it is; it is intended for members of the public. It is usually made available on a first come, first served basis, outside of reservations which are made in advance, usually for groups of school children. That same principle applies to the members gallery. But it would appear that the large blocks of passes are issued to the members gallery, members at the moment feeling that that is their gallery and they are entitled to use it, providing it isn't booked. On that basis individual members have issued passes to cover in fact the entire gallery, all 83 seats. That places us, I think, in something of an awkward position in the event that a member might find at a last moment, or even while the House is sitting, that he or she has constituents they would like to place in that gallery and would have to be told, sorry, the gallery is filled with a group of demonstrators, to whom one member has extended all the seats. That's the question that arises. In effect should one member be able to issue a full block of seats for an entire gallery, thus depriving perhaps other members of being able to bring their guest in.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not only that. It's the temptation there may be, where you have a group like this coming in who are organized, to either cheer or heckle our proceedings. That is not what you want in an ordinary parliament. And we simply don't have enough security staff that we could cope with that kind of thing.

On the second occasion when this question arose, I had two reports. The first one was that a member had arranged for 30 passes to be effective at 2:30, and 70 more at 3 o'clock. The next report I got was that the request really had been for 24 passes at 2:30, and all of the remainder of both

galleries starting at 3 o'clock, when presumably some of the school children would have left. These requests were subsequently withdrawn, so the thing didn't come to pass. But it underlined a concern that arose the previous time it happened. It's timely this committee should deal with it.

MR. APPLEBY: Well, you've outlined the problem or the difficulty. But in my mind I don't have any way it could be dealt with.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Unless each member were allowed, say, 10 seats, or something like that. Maybe that would be a method of controlling it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We don't have that many seats.

MR. GOGG: We have approximately one seat per member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, you have another thing, and maybe this is what Frank has in mind. You don't want to have a rigid quota method in such a way you're going to keep the place empty.

MR. APPLEBY: That's right. People say, you can't get any more passes; then you come in and the place is half empty.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It happens to me in the Speaker's gallery because people haven't shown up who had passes and I had turned others down.

MRS. OSTERMAN: I'm wondering, can we get any kind of brief history on -- could they tell us how many people ask for passes and are turned down, so we know what the nature of the problem is, if it's ever actually putting the public in a position where they can't participate? Do they keep any records like that? I was thinking we would get an idea of how many seats we should required be left empty, especially if a member is asking to have a large group of people. Then we would place a limit on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Supposing this. Suppose you said that without question, every member who wanted could have up to a limited number of seats -- say, six, eight, 10. If it goes beyond that, it has to be given special consideration according to the circumstances. That's wide open and flexible, and we could make it our business to try to find out a little about why all the extra seats were wanted and . . .

MRS. OSTERMAN: Where does the request for seats go? When I have somebody, I ask my secretary to get a couple of tickets for me. Where does she get them from? SECRETARY: Debbie in our office has a lot of members gallery tickets. The commissionnaire every morning brings up a list of how many school children will be in the members gallery.

MRS. OSTERMAN: So you know how many?

SECRETARY: We know that. We know how many seats we have left, and we keep a record of what we give out. But each minister's office and the opposition members also have a block of tickets. I've tried to tell them to phone us and let us know if they give any out, but it doesn't always work. So it's conceivable we could give out more tickets than we have seats for. There's no one really central . . .

MRS. OSTERMAN: And they can't be that rigid. Sometimes you are going to have a bit of a -- you know, it's got to be played a little looser. I think that

with the exception obviously of a couple of times when there could have been some question, I would hate to sort of impose something very stringent. I wonder if we couldn't leave it the way it has been with the exception of the fact that Gerry's got an idea in terms of a maximum number. If any one member -- and maybe we could think about what that maximum number might be, with the suggestion that he contact the Speaker.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Or the Clerk's office.

MRS. OSTERMAN: I'm not sure, but that might be proper.

MR. APPLEBY: And put a maximum of 10 on a member. If you have 10 members come in and want their 10, we haven't got room for them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're not really having too much trouble that way.

MR. APPLEBY: No, I know we're not. But should they decide to get together and get this big group in, whatever it is. They can only get 10, but nine others can get 10.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Of course that's just an arbitrary number. The reason I'm suggesting it is that if you have 10 people of a group of demonstrators in, chances are you'll be able to handle it. If they want more in, let's give us a chance to look at the circumstances. I think we're probably all agreed that demonstrations are not a thing of the past; they're probably more a thing of the future than they have been in the past, and they number is likely to increase. So the instances when this kind of thing can happen, I think, are more likely to occur.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: I was just wondering, security would have an idea -- I think the time this is going to occur is when there is a demonstration out there. Security would have an idea of looking at the crowd, whether they were going to be belligerent and maybe get out of hand. Security should maybe say, well, this crowd there can't be any more than 25. Or is that placing too great a strain or onus on security?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, on occasion -- I'm not sure about recently, but when the security people have had a concern about demonstrators possibly coming into the building and so on and have laid on extra staff and all that, they have checked with us and have put us in the picture. I think if we were to get . . . You see, we wouldn't want to apply this rule of 10 to, say, a group from a senior citizens' home or a group of boy scouts or high school children or university or whatever. The thing would be where a member just comes in, outside of that sort of custom and context, and wants to bring an especially large number in. Most members who have a few constituents in town can easily be accommodated within a limit of 10. But if it went beyond that, it would be a signal to us to just enquire a little into the circumstances without, you know, being a Gestapo or anything like that.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if we could table this item till the next meeting. I say that because we're at the end of a session; this will not be a problem till the next session. Hopefully we'll have more meetings in the inter-session period and will have more time to devote to it. Perhaps we can give it some thought before.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure.

MRS. OSTERMAN: I'm sort of thinking out loud here. Another suggestion in terms of . . . It's still most important that we make sure there are a few empty seats. That seems to be the most important thing, for people who come in at the last minute. So whatever block of tickets are issued have to be issued with that in mind. Alternately, I guess I'm really concerned about any one member saying we didn't allow their group in and they were a group - how could we presuppose and judge that they weren't going to act in a proper manner? They could really nail us for that too. I'd hate to be in that position.

MR. APPIEDY: Mr. Chairman, I move that we table it till the next meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was going to suggest this, though, in the meantime . . . Well, maybe we could leave that too. I think the thing has got to be coordinated through the Clerk's office. There has to be one place for this to be done. Otherwise we're just not going to ever have it under . . .

Okay. The next is the photograph of members. John?

MR. GOGO: If it's not too early, tomorrow morning at 8 is fine with me.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Who is going to get you up?

MR. GOGO: We always seem to put the important things last.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I put this on the agenda at your request.

MR. GOGO: Really, I looked to Bohdan for the initiative. I thought very early after the election when we arrived here, he would give instructions, as he did me in many matters, to be on the steps for a photograph. But that didn't happen.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll tell you what happened the last two times. The government caucus decided that they did not want to try to collect us all on the front steps. They were afraid they might miss people; there were two that unavoidably had to be missed, because they were deceased. So we went on the basis of a montage. So if this committee wants to try it, I think what we should do is perhaps the fall sittings, if it hopefully isn't too cold then.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, without intending to throw a monkey wrench into this proposal . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: But doing it anyway.

MR. STEFANIUK: I'm afraid I have to because of the limitation in space in front of the building right now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, yes.

MR. STEFANIUK: We would have to determine whether a photographer could move back far enough or resort to photographing the members through the fence.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Oh, that would be marvellous, because you'd see this kind of bars in front.

MR. STEFANIUK: If they want to do it somewhere else. But, you see, we don't have enough backup room.

MR. APPLEBY: What about one of the ends?

MR. STEFANIUK: The ends are a problem as well, because you have a narrow staircase. I'm thinking in terms of the old traditional photograph, which we have seen on the main steps of the building, which are hanging on the 4th floor. I respectfully suggest, Mr. Chairman, that that would be difficult, if not impossible, to do with the conditions prevailing out front.

MRS. OSTERMAN: It might be possible in the fall.

MR. STEFANIUK: It may be. But I wonder if we could be left some flexibility on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about this. If you're going to put it off till the fall, then I think we don't need to discuss it any further now. An alternative would be to ask the Clerk to check with a photographer -- they're coming in here all the time -- to see what the feasibility is. If he says it isn't feasible, then start collecting mug shots for a montage.

MR. GOGO: Just speaking to the photograph, I agree with you, Bohdan, that half the photograph is not the members' faces; the equally important half of the photograph is the entrance to this building. I think it should be out there. If it can be done by fall -- and presumably it can't.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if members would consider as an alternative a group in the Chamber itself, perhaps similar but not exactly like the British Columbia photograph. I believe they have a little more backup room, but by having some members sit and others stand we would be able to photograph them in the environment in which they meet every day during the session.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Suppose we make enquiries of a photographer to see if that's feasible.

MR. APPLEBY: (Inaudible) the front steps even, because with a wide-angle lens . . .

MR. STEFANIUK: Perhaps they can do it; I don't know. The problem occurred to me. But if you'll give us that much licence, perhaps we could arrange something for the opening day in the fall.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a fairly crowded day. Possibly following that. We're likely going to be meeting before then anyway.

MR. APPLEBY: Why is it going to be so crowded? It's just an ordinary start-up and go.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But aren't there caucus things and stuff going on that day?

MR. STEFANIUK: It's an early adjournment that day, isn't it, if we have the parliamentary dinner that night? There's the state of the province address; then we normally adjourn early.

MR. APPLEBY: It's getting dark; I think we should be prepared to go just before the session starts. Anyway, that detail can be worked out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So where are we at with this? We want the Clerk to enquire about the feasibility of photographing on the steps of the building and in the Chamber. Then we'll give some consideration at our next meeting on the basis of those reports about the timing.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, then: including in members' daily expenses the charges for meals. What has arisen there is a fairly minor thing, but we don't want to be caught out on even minor improprieties. Members who are submitting daily expense accounts and are getting a so-called meal upstairs and still claiming for it -- the thing is, when meals are supplied in connection with a meeting of a committee, the members should be careful not to include the costs of those meals in their per diem claim for expenses. That's all it is.

MRS. OSTERMAN: That's like eating twice.

MR. STEFANIUK: I don't think it's restricted to . . . Perhaps you were referring to your suite facility, Mr. Chairman, where we have encountered the difficulty, as chairman of various committees, ordering meals, or a dinner meeting. We raise the question simply as a precaution. If members feel they want to go on, that's the members' wish. But we have two areas with which we're concerned. One is the Auditor General, who sooner or later is going to point this out. That in itself could be embarrassing. The other could be the Department of National Revenue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MRS. OSTERMAN: You're saying that, for instance, when everybody is in session, there is an allowance, right? We have a sessional allowance. So to actually then claim another meal by way of -- even if it's indirectly by the Chairman or the committee doing it -- that indirectly that's is exactly what is happening.

MR. STEFANIUK: When an audit of our financial records takes place, we will see where Mr. Topolnisky, for example, for the fisheries committee had a dinner meeting. Out of the committee budget we paid for the total cost of the dinner, for 10, 12, however many members. At the same time, all those members who participated in that function are claiming the maximum daily allowance of \$50. So in fact they have been given a free meal and they are also charging for that meal.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Have you written a memo to chairmen of committees, or is that something you . . .

MR. STEFANIUK: This has just come up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want us to do that?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Well, yes. I'd either like a memo to me elaborating so that as government whip I can bring this to people's attention, and maybe Fred should, in case anybody is in that position.

MR. STEFANIUK: We have attempted to discuss the matter with certain chairmen and have been met with unfavorable reaction. The feeling is that the Clerk is trying to outdo them of something they are entitled to, and that's not the case. The Clerk is trying to protect them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right. What we could do is the Clerk could send a memo, setting out the thing very simply to all the members. Then we're not dependent on committee chairmen or structure or anything like that.

MRS. OSTERMAN: I'd appreciate that.

MR. APPLEBY: Pointing out the difficulty.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you rather have it go now or just before the fall sitting.

MR. APPLEBY: Now.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Now, because there could be committees -- in fact, there is going to be a standing committee.

MR. STEFANIUK: There could be committee meetings during the summer.

MR. APPLEBY: That's all right, they're not getting a per diem.

MR. STEFANIUK: No, they're not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But you see, Frank, it's not just the per diem you get for attending a committee meeting, it's the per diem you get for living in Edmonton away from your . . .

MR. APPLEBY: But that's it. They're not getting that in the summer.

MRS. OSTERMAN: But they would if they were on the select committee.

MR. STEFANIUK: They would get actual expenses.

MR. APPLEBY: Oh, yes. Well, you see, that's no problem. The Chairman pays for the dinner, they don't charge for that meal.

MRS. OSTERMAN: What if they did? Isn't that what you're saying happens sometimes?

MR. STEFANIUK: That really won't happen in the summer. That shouldn't be a problem.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Okay. I'm sorry. I misunderstood.

MR. STEFANIUK: It really occurs while the House is in session and members are receiving a daily living allowance, claiming that to the maximum, yet being the beneficiary of . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: It could happen in the summer. A member comes in here and gets his per diem and his expenses.

MR. APPLEBY: He doesn't get a per diem for expenses though. He gets a per diem allowance, and then he puts in expenses for meals.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Of \$75.

MR. APPLEBY: Right. But in addition, he puts in for meals and mileage.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right. But he puts in for meals that the committee has provided.

MR. APPLEBY: Yes, but then he doesn't put in for that meal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, hopefully.

MR. GOGO: That's the whole issue really.

MR. APPLEBY: No, it isn't the issue. The issue is charging your per diem and you've got meals paid for by your committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's it, exactly that.

MR. GOGO: Frankly, I think it's the opposite. If I had a hotel room for \$65, I don't care how many meals I eat, I wouldn't feel upset about claiming \$50 to offset the hotel room. To hell with the meals. I could eat three meals here if they would supply them. I don't see that conflict. I see the other conflict.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, there is no other.

MR. GOGO: There is, and that is when you're claiming an expense for an expense that is not incurred. To me that is the issue. If I'm allowed three meals and I have two of them here, I should only claim one meal. What I'm hearing is, whether it's chairmen of committees or whoever . . .

MR. APPLEBY: Yes, but it depends on how you put in your claim. A lot of members put in their claim for the \$50 a day. That is what the issue is. You're claiming \$50 a day to cover everything, yet you're getting these meals paid for at the same time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Do you agree that a suitable memo should go out to all the members from the Clerk, cautioning about this possible type of oversight?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Could I ask one other question? When I was on the Human Rights Commission, this was the only time I ever filled out expense things before. We submitted a hotel bill, and if you didn't keep receipts for meals, which I never did. Sometimes I ate way more, you know, supper would have cost me a lot more, but then I didn't eat any breakfast sort of thing. So they said, in lieu of receipts you put in just a blanket amount. So aren't we still in that position of possibly members on a committee, in the summer, submitting a blanket amount, no receipts, and still having had a meal supplied to them?

MR. APPLEBY: Not really. If you put in for your meals on your expense account, you don't have to produce receipts. I don't know how you do it, but whenever I do I say, well, did I have breakfast, lunch, dinner that day. If I did, I put down whatever it was for the three. But if I had only breakfast and lunch and got my dinner paid for, I don't put that down.

MR. STEFANIUK: You see, what we have followed is to say we will accept your expense account, you retain your receipts because if DNR comes after you, you better have something to prove to them that what you claimed was a valid expense. So you keep them for your protection and your benefit. I agree with what Mr. Gogo has said. If you're paying more than \$50 a day for accommodation, it doesn't really matter if you're claiming the maximum, your meals are coming out of your own pocket in any event. So if you're picking up

a freebie here and there, that's perfectly legitimate. I think this is by way of really advising members what the situation is. If they're renting accommodation for \$20 a day and claiming \$50 as a daily living allowance, and DNR comes after them and says, did you really spend \$30 a day for meals and can you prove that, then it's the member who faces the difficulty.

MR. GOGO: I think in view of the comment of the Auditor General and us being fair to the Clerk, because when the smoke clears it's going to be his fault.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But it will be the member who will get the flak.

MR. GOGO: You know, it's going to come back to the Clerk. So in fairness to him, we should agree with him to send out a cautionary . . .

MR. APPLEBY: I thought we agreed to that 10 minutes ago.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Do you have any problem with, like, tomorrow night the ACA is giving a dinner for members who want to go. That's a freebie.

MR. GOGO: Nobody knows about it.

MRS. OSTERMAN: That's not a government dinner, is that what you're saying?

MR. STEFANIUK: I haven't disbursed the funds for it, so I know nothing about it.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: It's something, though, that the Department of National Revenue . . .

MRS. OSTERMAN: Gerry, what about the lunches we have that you supply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They shouldn't be claimed for because they come out of our funds here.

MR. APPLEBY: You've lost your appetite.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just briefly, this brings up one additional concern that we have mentioned from time to time over the years, with not too much success. It's this idea of saying the per diem allowance is \$50, and billing up to the \$50 with no particulars. Really, you know, we've mentioned it before and I'll say it again. Doing that kind of thing is an open invitation to the Department of National Revenue to come along and tax.

MR. APPLEBY: We still have a court case pending.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I know. But this is not quite the same thing. That court case is on the principle of whether you're working away from home or not.

MR. APPLEBY: I think we should have the memo sent out anyway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But we do have this question of members billing from out of town, and they should be itemizing that billing. If they'd itemize it, it isn't going to be coming out exactly to fifty bucks every day, and that's happening quite a bit. You can only mention it.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Will you make recommendations what should be deducted off our \$50?

MR. STEFANIUK: Well, we'll work something out. In respect of the \$50, we have some difficulties with accommodation charges, many of which are made on a seven-day-a-week basis, members stating that they have rented their accommodation over a long period of time; consequently they are having to pay for weekend use of that accommodation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We worked that out.

MR. STEFANIUK: The Act very clearly states that the daily living allowance is applicable on those days when the Legislative Assembly is in session. The Auditor General has been rapping our knuckles for that one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He asked for a ruling, and I gave him one.

MR. STEFANIUK: He said, clean up your act.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We simply divided the total monthly rate by the number of sitting days, because you're not here the other days anyway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next item is very short. It's the Hansard report. Is there sufficient interest and concern that we want it to go to all members? If you do, we'll just have to produce a few more. It's whatever you wish.

MR. GOGO: I have no comments or complaints.

MRS. OSTERMAN: I could make a suggestion that when a memo goes out, we've got a number of things members need enlightening on and we just say the Hansard report is available. People who want it can . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The report is prepared anyway once a year, and it's tabled once a year. The question is whether you want us to circulate it to all members.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: It's a fairly thick volume.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. It's maybe 20 pages.

MR. STEFANIUK: It's the report that's required by *Standing Orders* as opposed to statute. A statutory requirement of course require the report be circulated to all members. As this one is required by *Standing Orders*, it's somewhat unclear.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Here's a copy. *Standing Orders* don't give us direction. Did I say 20 pages? I was exaggerating; it's 14.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: I was mixed up with the . . .

MRS. OSTERMAN: Frankly, I don't think they'll get read.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Continue as at present?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next thing is constituency office signs. Do you want to report on that, Bohdan?

MR. STEFANIUK: Sample number one. These are sliding bars, which one can change.

AN HON. MEMBER: As you lose the elections.

MRS. OSTERMAN: That's a very subtle sort of . . .

MR. STEFANIUK: The sample is silver and black. It's also available in gold and brown. This is the exact size. The initial cost is \$160 to \$200, depending on how many sliding bars there are. The replacement of bars is \$3; delivery is three weeks, and it's an Edmonton supplier.

Sample number two: this is the exact size.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't tell Rollie.

MR. STEFANIUK: This is \$42 for the initial sign. Changes are \$25 a line. Delivery is two weeks; a Calgary supplier.

MR. APPLEBY: I like it.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Yes, I like that second one. It's reasonable and you . . .

MR. APPLEBY: This is more of an interior thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What's more, you're tied to a supplier over the years with this one.

MRS. OSTERMAN: That is very, very nice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Besides that, I think you should be entitled to take that home as a souvenir; I mean, afterwards.

MR. APPLEBY: Whether you're entitled or not.

MR. GOGO: I would agree with . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: How about the cost?

MR. STEFANIUK: \$42 per unit.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: I move that that be the one.

MR. GOGO: Can we discuss it maybe? As I recall the discussion, we were going to have three sizes, one for potential exterior use -- and I would think that's exterior use -- and one for interior use.

MRS. OSTERMAN: That's interior.

MR. GOGO: Bohdan, are you saying that if I had . . . I don't know what that's made of inside. Is that not just cardboard?

MR. STEFANIUK: Yes, this is interior. This is forty-two bucks.

MR. APPLEBY: We have to have an exterior sign.

MR. STEFANIUK: We haven't been able to get samples for exterior signs as yet. We have made numerous enquiries and have received no response, no interest indicated. (Inaudible) some fat cats in the sign business.

MR. APPLEBY: Can't they weatherproof that?

MR. STEFANIUK: I don't know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's got a paper layer.

MR. STEFANIUK: But I know there is an aluminium extruding sign, which is being used around the grounds here to some extent. We can probably get that for an exterior sign.

MRS. OSTERMAN: It occurs to me that some members don't need an exterior, I mean, in places where you have a window, that's just beautiful. It shows right there, it's in the corner of a window. But for those who need a sign to direct them a little further, I guess we still should be looking . . .

MR. GOGO: I would think if you're down a hallway -- this is what I thought originally -- if you're down a hallway, Frank, in a building, and if they come in cardboard in three sizes, you could maybe get two or three of the cardboard signs and put an arrow on it and stick it on the wall, with permission. Directions, you know. That would be five bucks or three bucks. I'm talking now about the inserts really. I'd hate to see us end up supplying somebody with four or five of those, at a cost of \$42 . . .

MRS. OSTERMAN: One per member.

MR. APPLEBY: The concern I have is to get an exterior sign; that's critical.

MR. GOGO: But I'm impressed with that.

MR. STEFANIUK: We'll keep on working on that, Mr. Chairman, if we can be allowed time to have another meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that all right?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could I make one other query or suggestion? You know, some of the uninitiated don't know what MLA stands for, or at least it doesn't hit them as readily. I wonder if we should say, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Agreed.

MRS. OSTERMAN: It takes a lot of room. Mind you, you could move the name up and if you could fit it underneath . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, this could go up, then there would be room down below.

MR. STEFANIUK: I'm sure we have some flexibility with design.

MRS. OSTERMAN: What I'm wondering, to really make sure that it's useful, I would dearly love to have that to show to our caucus, and maybe Fred would like to for his, and say, would you all use it if we had something of this nature made up? Then find out how many in fact would. If we accept George's motion, to supply it to those who . . .

MR. APPLEBY: I wasn't aware then that this wasn't an exterior sign.

MR. CHAIRMAN: When does your caucus meet again?

MRS. OSTERMAN: (Inaudible).

MR. CHAIRMAN: When does your caucus meet again?

MR. MANDEVILLE: Our caucus? We meet every (inaudible).

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have a notion the opposition can get through with it faster than the government.

MR. GOGO: I question that. We get four seconds on it.

MR. STEFANIUK: I wonder if Mr. Mandeville would like to take it, then turn it over to Mrs. Osterman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How about taking them both, Fred, then turn them over to Connie?

MR. APPLEBY: Do you think we need to take them . . .

MRS. OSTERMAN: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

MR. APPLEBY: Are we also free to say we're working on an exterior sign?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, yes. The Clerk's going to look into a possible aluminum extrusion or casting. So it is agreed that the sample sign the Clerk has produced is going to be going -- that Mr. Mandeville will show it to his caucus and then refer it to Mrs. Osterman for her caucus.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Maybe I better withdraw my motion, then, until we get acceptance from the caucuses.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, if that is agreeable to you, George.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Cook had raised with me that fact that his constituency office has a neon sign and he would like to put a plastic insert in front of it, like the Paproski one up the street. I said the committee was working on constituency signs that weren't that way, but if he had a proposal he could submit it in writing and we would deal with it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He could give it to the Clerk.

MR. APPLEBY: Would this be a flashing neon sign like the Brick Warehouse?

MR. CHAIRMAN: In three colors.

MR. GOGO: Well, you know who I'm talking about, so . . .

MRS. OSTERMAN: I sure wouldn't put that up.

MR. GOGO: A neon sign against the wall, and you put plastic inserts in in the front.

MR. STEFANIUK: Sort of like a movie thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The establishment of a regular meeting day: is there any hope of that? Can we agree on a date for the next meeting? It's a scramble

each time to find out when everybody is free, but maybe with our being short of time today we can't really hassle too much about when everybody is going to be free again.

MRS. OSTERMAN: I would like to make the suggestion that we look to a couple of weeks from now.

MRS. OSTERMAN: It doesn't matter. We'll be out of the House.

MR. APPLEBY: Well, I'm thinking that you go to cabinet on Tuesday. Either Monday or Wednesday; Wednesday will probably be better.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A couple of weeks from now -- what day is that?

MR. GOGO: Mondays and Fridays are out for me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mondays are out for Fred.

MRS. OSTERMAN: What about Wednesday?

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: As long as it isn't the 4th, it'll be all right for me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll be out of the province on the 4th; I think George will be too.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: No, I have a meeting in Calgary.

MRS. OSTERMAN: The 11th?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, the 11th is better. Wednesday, the 11th?

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Would that be in the afternoon or the morning?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What do you say?

MR. APPLEBY: Taking into consideration people like John, George too, who have to fly up.

MR. GOGO: 1:30 meetings are better; they avoid the overnighing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: When's your conflict, George.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: I'm meeting with water management in Calgary at 1:30 on the 11th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about the 18th, then? Who isn't free on the 18th?

MR. GOGO: I'm not; I'll tell you why as soon as I think of it.

MR. APPLEBY: I'm not either.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Then let's go back to the 11th. Is there any way of accommodating in the morning. Is that difficult for John -- and you've got a long way to come too, Fred. Is there any of being here?

MR. MANDEVILLE: Yes, it's possible.

MRS. OSTERMAN: If you came in the night before even.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: I'd have to get away from here about 11:30 by the time I fly to Calgary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 9 o'clock, on Wednesday morning, the 11th? Okay? All right.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Unless you fellows would like to come down to Calgary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, there's no reason why we shouldn't. Or maybe go to Athabasca.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Yes, I'd like to stand on that new site.

MR. APPLEBY: Frank Hutton is in on that again today. He was up to look at it. He wonders why I didn't do other things. Anyway, that's fine. We'll notify Bill Purdy.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: 9 a.m. on the 11th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The next is the members' lounge. There was a question, some people were thinking that we should put back the pictures we had there, even though we can't keep them up to date, that we've destroyed the atmosphere a little by taking away and putting this other art there.

MR. APPLEBY: Great, if you have them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A suggestion has been made, you know, the originals we've got in safekeeping. Copies have been made for hanging on the 4th floor. We could have another set of copies made for the members' lounge, but of course we can't keep them up to day.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I defer to your judgment on this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next meeting, or do you want to -- all right.

MR. APPLEBY: I move we proceed with putting those pictures back.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: I second it.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Clerk is sore distressed.

MR. APPLEBY: Oh, is there a problem?

MR. STEFANIUK: Firstly, we couldn't hang them all in there; that's one of the reasons . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. We wouldn't keep them up to day. We would only put them in as far as they were.

MR. STEFANIUK: Well, we couldn't even bring them right up to date in the space that was available to us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what I'm saying.

MR. APPLEBY: Well, let's postpone it till next meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Over to the next meeting?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, medical facilities. We've had a complaint from one of the medical members that there isn't even a minimum amount of equipment for looking after emergencies in the building. He had to attend one of the members here and was distressed that even some basic things were lacking. If you agree, we'll just go ahead and provide those.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Alberta health care was another one; we'll leave that till the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.