

Special Select Standing Committee on Members' Services

Friday, November 14, 1980

Chairman: Mr. Amerongen

8:15 a.m.

MR PURDY: There is a mistake in there, on the funding of the NDP budget. I was the one who made that motion.

MR CHAIRMAN: Whom did we credit it to?

MR PURDY: I don't know who you credited it to; I haven't got the minutes with me. That was the transportation allowance he was asking, and I moved it be moved to \$2,300. Frank also had a motion that it be \$6,000. That was defeated, and I don't see that in the minutes either. That should be included.

MR CHAIRMAN: All right. We have Mrs. Osterman down with the NDP.

MR PURDY: I was the one who moved that. A motion was moved before that, that was defeated by the committee. That should have been shown too.

MR APPLEBY: That's absolutely right.

MR PURDY: So I would ask for those corrections.

MR CHAIRMAN: Subject to correcting minute 80-120, a motion concerning the NDP budget, substituting William Purdy for Mrs. Osterman, and the inclusion of a defeated motion changing the travel budget for the NDP to \$6,000, the minutes are approved as read. All agreed?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: Now, where did we leave off?

MR APPLEBY: On the committees.

MR CHAIRMAN: As it says in the explanatory note, the custom has been to just put an arbitrary figure in there, because you can never tell. Committee activity varies so much from year to year. There were some years when I think we used to have \$50,000 in there, and we didn't spend that.

MR PURDY: What do you do if you overspend? A special warrant?

MR CHAIRMAN: Yes, if we can't cover it by transfer.

MR APPLEBY: Then what is the object in doing a breakdown in this matter?

MR CHAIRMAN: It just shows how the lump sum is arrived at, that's all. I suppose it makes the people who print the budget happier to see that.

MR PURDY: I would move that.

MR CHAIRMAN: All agreed?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: The interns. You can see the change there, which was agreed to, I think, by this committee last year.

MR PURDY: It was also agreed to in our caucus; I don't know about Fred's.

MR MANDEVILLE: Right. I'll move that we approve that.

MR CHAIRMAN: Are you all agreed?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: Then we come to Hansard.

MR APPLEBY: There's not a great increase there.

MR CHAIRMAN: We're concerned about the Hansard budget and have been for the last three or four years. We've tried to devise various ways to cut down the cost, and just don't seem to be able to find ways of doing it and maintaining the present quality.

MR APPLEBY: There won't be any way of doing it.

MR CHAIRMAN: Well, we were thinking, for example, of cutting loose from the data centre and having our own mini-computer, but so far it doesn't indicate any savings. So there is no use in trying it. We do have trouble once in a while -- and we have had in the fall sittings.

MR APPLEBY: In what way?

MR CHAIRMAN: With the data centre being down. It delays the *Hansard* coming out a bit. It also causes a little consternation among the staff upstairs, as well as some scrambling.

MR APPLEBY: I'll move the budget.

MR CHAIRMAN: Then we go to the library.

MR APPLEBY: They were going to set up a research.

MR CHAIRMAN: That's in their B budget.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: There has been quite a cutback in wages, freight, postage.

MR CHAIRMAN: We've got a top-notch manager in that library -- Blake McDougall. He may not be an orator, but he's an ace administrator.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: 1,500 per cent minus on the hospitality. Boy oh boy.

MR CHAIRMAN: I think he required all his staff to take the pledge.

MR STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, he hosted the national conference of parliamentary librarians last year and required a high budget for that. That obviously is not a matter that recurs every year, so it drops right down this year.

MR PURDY: I thought maybe you were doing it now, Mr. Clerk. I would move this one.

MR CHAIRMAN: Are you all agreed?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: Now, here's the B budget. I guess the biggest one is the library.

MR APPLEBY: The NDP one was a lot bigger.

MR CHAIRMAN: That's right.

MR PURDY: The library has two B budgets?

MR STEFANIUK: We've considered the NDP budget.

MR APPLEBY: I know, but I'm talking about large budgets.

MR PURDY: What does the one and two mean, Mr. Chairman.

MR CHAIRMAN: As I understand it, there are two proposals.

MR STEFANIUK: The first one deals with microfilming of Alberta weekly newspapers, and that's defined on the front page. The second one deals with the research.

MR PURDY: What is the justification for having microfilming? Don't they have that now?

MR STEFANIUK: It's in the text, Mr. Chairman, page 21a.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: We gave some of this last year, didn't we?

MR CHAIRMAN: Yes, but the thing is inadequate.

MR APPLEBY: This is to speed up the process, as I understand it.

MR CHAIRMAN: Right. The microfilming should keep ahead of the destruction of the papers. As you probably know, that kind of stuff self-destructs. The acid in the paper finally makes it so brittle that you can't use it. We had to stop researchers from using the weekly newspapers some years ago, because we just had one hell of a time. We didn't have this committee to step into it and so . . .

MR APPLEBY: Is this work being done right here in this building?

MR CHAIRMAN: It's done under contract, but I don't know where they do it.

MR PURDY: There's no way they could go in with the archives and do it there?

MR CHAIRMAN: Then they'd have to have an increase in their budget.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: I would think that if there were any way of doing it better, Blake would have it done.

MR CHAIRMAN: Oh yes. This is not at all an off the top of his head notion. This has been ongoing. We tried in 1975, I think, or 1974, to get funding for this. I've forgotten; it could have been before then. But we were constantly turned down.

MR APPLEBY: I remember the report regarding the -- well, did somebody move the microfilm one?

MR WOLSTENHOLME: I'll so move.

MR CHAIRMAN: Is there any discussion of the motion?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: The research one: this is something the librarian and I discussed when he first took this job as librarian. As you may remember, he came to us from the centennial library here in the city. At first, we didn't see eye to eye on it. He wasn't convinced of the need for this kind of thing. The library of Parliament for the House of Commons -- and, I suppose, the Senators -- has a very substantial research arm. I don't know what the personnel is now, but about four years ago they had 27 MAs and PhDs working there, under the direction of Philip Laundry, doing research for the members. In fact we've got things from them ourselves here once in a while.

MR APPLEBY: Do you have any idea what these people would do the year round? A lot of the time the members wouldn't be making demands on them, I would suspect. It seems like a fairly substantial staff to do this sort of thing.

MR STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, they serve not only the members. The members' research support staff, for example, might require specialized research on behalf of a member during the year. Departmental support staff might require research on behalf of a minister during the year. The Leader of the Opposition of course is here on a full-time basis, and may require specialized research assistance. So they would be working year round. Some of the projects they undertake might not be completed, as a matter of fact, within the time frame within which the House is sitting, or the time frame within which a member is here. As you can see under the manpower definition, we're talking about people who are specialized.

MR APPLEBY: Will they be using resources outside our own library then?

MR CHAIRMAN: They have inter-library connections. We get quite a few things from the University libraries, for example; I guess less frequently from downtown, from the centennial library.

MR STEFANIUK: We do use the University extensively because we don't have a law section, for example.

MR APPLEBY: We'd use the Rutherford, then.

MR CHAIRMAN: We'd use the law library for law, and the Rutherford, the Cameron. We got rid of the law library when Blake started. It wasn't a complete law library anyway, and we felt why should the members have something here that maybe only the lawyer members would ever use.

MR APPLEBY: What about legislative committees? We have a problem with legislative committees now, trying to find somebody on short notice who, you know, can do the necessary research and so on.

MR CHAIRMAN: That could be supplied by the library if we had -- you see, what we have now in the library is a reference service. If you want something researched in the library, they'll give you references to various works where you can find it, and sometimes they'll strengthen that with photocopying.

MR STEFANIUK: I could perhaps add to that, Mr. Chairman. We are presently in a situation with committees where we would require the services of a research assistant, especially with regard to the surface rights committee, which is accelerating its work. We have entered into discussions with Blake, within whatever time is available to us these days, to determine whether we can accelerate this proposal by engaging one research assistant now, in order to assist the committees, with a view to that person eventually becoming a full-time research officer with the library, under the proposal which is defined here in the B budget. We have that difficulty right at the moment. Obviously it's unfair for us to go to any caucus and ask for research assistance, since then we are depleting the resources of the given caucus. We have done that up till now, on an *ad hoc* basis. I'm not sure whether that really should be done, because after all the research assistants within a given caucus do develop caucus loyalties, I assume. In the case of a committee of the House, we are trying to provide entirely impartial backup.

MR APPLEBY: Would the thinking be, then, that this person, if they could be recruited, would be available in the future for this same type of work?

MR STEFANIUK: The one I've just described?

MR APPLEBY: Yes, the research person.

MR STEFANIUK: Hopefully, Blake can hire -- if we can hire on a temporary basis, then if that person proves to be the right one, Blake can consider one of the positions that's provided for here with that person, on a full-time basis.

MR APPLEBY: I realize that, but what I'm asking is that once that person becomes a full-time research person attached to the library, will they still be available to work with a committee?

MR STEFANIUK: I don't think we can forecast that right at the moment. It depends on what kind of demands there are on that person's time within the library. It may still be that sometime in the future, we'll have to come back to the committee and ask the committee to look at research assistance on a committee staff.

MR PURDY: Who does the research down there now, Mr. Chairman? I went down there a number of times and asked for materials, and a couple of hours later it was on my desk.

MR STEFANIUK: That's reference, though; it's not research.

MR CHAIRMAN: Research would involve getting that material and then writing a narrative based on it, maybe with footnotes. Then you'd have a ready text on

it instead of having to search through the stuff yourself and find out what you wanted that was relevant to your subject.

MR PURDY: So what we're asking for in manpower is three people?

MR STEFANIUK: Three research officers, plus the support staff.

MR PURDY: You've got one senior officer, two research officers, and one clerk. So that's four positions. Is it common practice for relocation expenses?

MR STEFANIUK: That's part of the arrangements in the public service generally.

MR PURDY: And where are you going to house these people, if you're successful?

MR STEFANIUK: We have a remote facility right now housing part of the library, in the IBM building.

MR APPLEBY: What portion of it?

MR STEFANIUK: I'm sorry, I would prefer not to answer that, because I don't have it accurately. But we did have to move one portion out, because the facilities here are inadequate. We do have a request from Blake in the event that the existing Agriculture Building becomes an annex to this building, for two full floors in that building for library services.

MR PURDY: Plus the library itself?

MR STEFANIUK: I would imagine that would include the library itself. Obviously Blake would prefer to have all the library facilities in one location, rather than having branches spread elsewhere. There appears to be absolutely no hope to be able to accomplish that in this building.

MR PURDY: While we're on that subject of the Agriculture Building, what's the rumors of Transportation moving out and maybe that becoming part of an annex?

MR STEFANIUK: I have no idea.

MR PURDY: Well, I heard that last night.

MR APPLEBY: That wouldn't be as convenient, because you wouldn't have the underground connection.

MR PURDY: They're talking about a tunnel over there too.

MR CHAIRMAN: The proper place for the library is in this building; there's no doubt about it -- as it is in the House of Commons and, I think, at Westminster. But there doesn't seem to be any likelihood that that's going to get approval.

MR MANDEVILLE: At present, I would think the caucus research staff and the interns are doing a lot of this type of work, are they not?

MR STEFANIUK: No. We're talking about specialists in given fields. These are different from the general research assistants which the caucuses have at the moment and the type of assistance interns provide. These are people who, it is assumed, over a period of time will develop very real expertise in given areas. You may develop very real expertise on energy, for example. You may

develop some other very real expertise on social services. So they would be identified with areas.

MR APPLEBY: This expertise, though, would be available as a resource backup to the research people on the caucus staffs?

MR STEFANIUK: That's right.

MR CHAIRMAN: No question.

MR APPLEBY: It would save a lot of time, I would presume, for caucus research people.

MR CHAIRMAN: Also likely would be more expertly done. Probably you could expect this kind of staff to put in longer periods of service before moving on.

MR APPLEBY: It would also be a good training example to the research people we have. These people would be able to pass on some of this expertise to them in their communications back and forth.

MR CHAIRMAN: What do you say, George?

MR WOLSTENHOLME: Okay by me. Sounds like a good idea.

MR CHAIRMAN: As you would expect from Blake, he's got the support material pretty well organized. I don't know if you've had a chance to look at the contents.

MR PURDY: It's okay by me.

MR CHAIRMAN: Do you want to bell the cat and move the motion?

MR APPLEBY: Why not? I'll do it.

MR CHAIRMAN: Okay. Mr. Appleby's motion that the library B budget No. 2 be approved.

MR APPLEBY: I would expect that there would be some developmental phase that this would have to go through, getting the space and whatnot.

MR CHAIRMAN: That's right. Any further discussion on the motion? All those in favor? Carried. Do we need to do anything further?

MR STEFANIUK: Yes, we do. I think we need to consider the communication which was addressed to me yesterday.

MR CHAIRMAN: Oh yes, by Mr. Sindlinger.

MR STEFANIUK: Copies of which, I gather, were sent to members of the committee.

MR CHAIRMAN: Perhaps you might give some indication of the answer you'd like me to give here. I think this is not a case for me to express my own opinion.

MR PURDY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure what he's getting at under item 1 -- it's less than half that of other non-government members?

MR CHAIRMAN: He means NDP and Socred per-member budgeting.

MR PURDY: I think it is incumbent either upon you, Mr. Chairman, or the Clerk, to write him a letter, outlining what the discussion was in this committee.

MR APPLEBY: One of his concerns here: does not provide for the 1980-81 fiscal year. But it does.

MR STEFANIUK: That's simple enough to answer. What we're dealing with here is the '81-82 budget. I think it had been generally agreed that for '80-81, we would have to seek a special warrant for those funds, and it would be prorated on the basis of five-twelfths of the 1981-82 proposal. If I have that correctly, that's the answer that would be provided in that respect. Of course the other is one of principle, which the committee must address itself to.

MR APPLEBY: That last paragraph is certainly way out in left field -- for members to serve equally, they must have equal resources -- he would have much more extensive services than government members.

MR PURDY: He'd get five times more than I have.

MR CHAIRMAN: It depends on whom he wants to be equal to.

MR APPLEBY: If he were a member of a recognized party, it would have to be . . .

MR CHAIRMAN: The memo is addressed to the Clerk. Maybe the answer should come from the Clerk.

MR APPLEBY: Well, he has to have some guidance.

MR PURDY: That's why he brought it back here.

MR STEFANIUK: Mention was made a moment ago, Mr. Chairman, about providing Mr. Sindlinger with a summary of the discussion. If members so wish, I can provide him with a copy of the transcript of that portion of the meeting which deals with this estimate.

MR APPLEBY: That might . . .

MR CHAIRMAN: This tape.

MR PURDY: I have no problem with that.

MR APPLEBY: I haven't.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: I have no problem of his knowing what I did or didn't say. The only thing is: is it usual that if someone has a beef they get the transcript? Are we starting a precedent?

MR CHAIRMAN: George, we've had no beefs in this committee before.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: Oh, come on.



MR CHAIRMAN: No, but there's nothing secret about the transcript. The Hansard staff transcribes the thing, and the transcript would be available, I should think, to anyone who wanted to see it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He could have been here and listened to it.

MR CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: Well, if that's the case, I have no objections.

MR CHAIRMAN: Okay. So you agree the Clerk should reply, and that the reply could include an invitation to refer to the transcript. I don't know to what extent he wants to go into it. With the House sitting now, to have somebody in the Clerk's office summarize the transcript -- I think it would be just as well to have him look at it.

MR PURDY: Let him do it himself.

MR APPLEBY: Then the reply to that No. 1 would be something along the lines that you're providing this transcript so he can see how the decision was arrived at, or something.

MR CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR APPLEBY: Is it clear on the transcript that on No. 2 -- does not provide for 1980-81.

MR STEFANIUK: I would answer that separately, I believe, in light of what was just said, Mr. Chairman. The other -- obviously we don't have the transcript yet.

MR CHAIRMAN: Do you remember at the beginning of the discussion, I went to the first column. Then it was decided we would deal with the '81-82 estimates, and after that was done we would establish a co-relation between the two. Would you agree that it may well be that some of the items in the '81-82 budget may not lend themselves to direct prorating on a month or a calendar basis?

MR WOLSTENHOLME: What items would that be?

MR CHAIRMAN: Off hand, I would say there are some things you can't say so much for the year and then so much for the fraction of the year -- equipment, for example.

MR STEFANIUK: There is no provision for equipment in the budget that is now approved, Mr. Chairman.

MR CHAIRMAN: Well, whatever the item might be.

MR APPLEBY: Was there a request in the first place? Rental of property, equipment, and goods.

MR CHAIRMAN: So what I'm suggesting is that perhaps in developing the calculation for a special warrant, the Clerk should not be bound to follow exactly the fractions. Part of the year has passed, for example, since he left the caucus.

MR APPLEBY: As Chairman, I think you will have to resolve that. If it comes up that something has to be done in the way of equipment, I guess it would have to be provided when you're writing the special warrant.

MR CHAIRMAN: What about if we produce a calculation and send copies to members of the committee, before we send the recommendation in to Executive Council?

MR WOLSTENHOLME: Wasn't that on what we got yesterday? Wasn't the recommendation of the five-twelfths on the . . .

MR APPLEBY: Yes, but not the prorated for the balance of this year.

MR STEFANIUK: It was. For example, there are some adjustments to be made. With regard to the secretarial help, which has been in place almost since he left the government caucus -- that has been an ongoing expense that we would have to provide to him through a special warrant. The balance of it -- and you see attached to the memorandum which you got a copy of from Tom Sindlinger, we have no capital expenditure. I think we pointed out the day before yesterday that all capital expenditure comes out of the general administration budget in any event. That being the case, it doesn't affect this particular budget, unless he had in mind something in the way of capital expenditure that we're not aware of.

MR APPLEBY: Well, I think we can stay by that decision.

MR STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, then, with regard to item 1 in the memorandum, Mr. Sindlinger will be provided with a transcript of the meeting which led to the decision. With regard to item 2, he will be provided with an explanatory note, indicating that the budget for the current year will have to be raised by special warrant and will be prorated to reflect the period of time which is left in the year. Then he has a third request, which is contained in the final paragraph of his memorandum; that is, for reconsideration. I would ask for some guidance as to what I'm to tell him in that regard.

MR CHAIRMAN: On the prorating, I think we should work it out and then submit it to the committee.

MR APPLEBY: I don't think we need to come back here with it, do we?

MR CHAIRMAN: No. I'll just send it around and you can send your comments, not hold a meeting over it.

MR APPLEBY: And if anybody has any concerns, they make them known within two days, or something.

MR CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR STEFANIUK: I raised the third question, Mr. Chairman.

MR CHAIRMAN: We can report that reconsideration has been given and the above answer is the result of that reconsideration.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: I move that we stand by our original decision.

MR CHAIRMAN: Any discussion of that motion?

MR MANDEVILLE: Just to be clear in my mind, Mr. Chairman, the salary of \$17,000 -- I understood that was for a research assistant.

MR STEFANIUK: No, that's secretarial.

MR APPLEBY: And the research one is the same.

MR STEFANIUK: Under payments to contract employees.

MR CHAIRMAN: On George's motion?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: Now, have we anything else?

MR STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, we should come back to the first tab, which we postponed until the details were gone through; that's the one that says Legislative Assembly and is a summary of the entire Legislative Assembly estimate.

MR CHAIRMAN: That's just a collection of the individual motions.

MR STEFANIUK: That's right.

MR APPLEBY: But that will have to be approved as we have amended it.

MR STEFANIUK: That has to be adjusted as per the amendments that have already been moved. This also reflects the original proposal by Mr. Sindlinger, which was for a budget of \$86,000. You will recall that in the interim we had received a second proposal which totalled \$92,000. There have been other less significant alterations made to the budget as we went through it. Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, it would be in order to record a motion that this budgetary estimated be recommended to the House, with the proviso that the various alterations that have been discussed during the past two meetings be reflected therein.

MR CHAIRMAN: There are two ways of doing it. One is to submit it this way and then submit the alterations; and the other is to put the alterations in and then submit that as a recommendation.

MR APPLEBY: We're going to do each individual one as we have decided on it right now, so they should be reflected in this.

MR CHAIRMAN: Right. So wouldn't the appropriate motion be to approve this as amended?

MR APPLEBY: Whatever you want to call it. The changes should go into it.

MR STEFANIUK: That's what I was trying to say.

MR PURDY: Does the summary include the B item budgets?

MR STEFANIUK: No, the summary does not include B budgets. This is all A budgets.

MR CHAIRMAN: So is there a motion that we recommend to the Assembly the overall estimates amended as indicated by the motions with regard to individual budgets?

MR WOLSTENHOLME: I'll move.

MR CHAIRMAN: All those in favor? Okay. Now, do we need a wrap-up motion for the B budget?

MR STEFANIUK: I don't think so, Mr. Chairman.

MR APPLEBY: Just a motion to adjourn.

MR CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR MANDEVILLE: I was just wondering, the Clerk mentioned the fact that we have a better rate if we direct dial out of our offices. If we direct dial can we submit to the Clerk's office as we do our credit cards? In my constituency office now, can I direct dial and then submit the bill to your office?

MR STEFANIUK: The bill for your telephone for your constituency office should be billed to my office directly anyway. You shouldn't even be getting that bill, because we pay for the telephones. So we'll get the long-distance charges.

MR MANDEVILLE: Just so I am clear on that. Out of our caucus offices, can you also direct dial? You can't send those bills directly to the Clerk, can we?

MR PURDY: We can't direct dial yet anyway.

MR STEFANIUK: Government members can't because of your physical set-up. But the Official Opposition can. I suggest that you use direct dial, because that in fact brings about a considerable saving. We get a record from AGT that is just as accurate for direct dial as it is for using the credit card. It shows the originating phone number.

MR MANDEVILLE: So if we do the direct dialing out of our office, it's not going to cause a problem.

MR STEFANIUK: No, I don't see that it does. When the telephone accounts are audited, we still have the originating number and the destination number, and they can do the spot check on it just as easily on that basis.

MR CHAIRMAN: Motion for adjournment -- everybody agrees?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the estimates books, there are obviously amendments to be reflected. Members may want to take those books away with them now, but we would be looking for them in a fairly short period of time to amend them and return them to the members.

MR CHAIRMAN: Incidentally, what about the printing of these books? Should we do that under the Legislative Assembly, in a separate book?

MR PURDY: It's just another book to get lost.

MR CHAIRMAN: Well, we get a separate section anyway.

MR PURDY: We always do.

MR CHAIRMAN: Yes, last year.

MR PURDY: Okay. If we get a separate section, that's all that's necessary. It's kind of cumbersome to have another book laying around.

*The meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m.*