

[Chairman: Mr. Amerongen]

[8:06 a.m.]

Works.

[Not recorded]

MRS. EMBURY: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. I see in this copy of the minutes of September 18 that the text has been changed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry?

MRS. EMBURY: I received a package with the agenda for today and the minutes of October 23 and September 18, and I see that that has been changed. Has it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It shouldn't be changed until the meeting approves it.

MRS. EMBURY: It's already there. I want to see the original one, because I'd like to ask . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The original text is right here on the first page of this thing that was given you. That's the original text. There are three motions there dealing with the same topic. It's the third one of those motions that this committee asked at the last meeting to have amended by adding some clarification.

MRS. EMBURY: Could I ask Dr. Reid a question then, please? I think the first part of the original motion has now been clarified with what we see on page 2. I thought part of the problem with the original motion was that furniture and equipment should be provided from members' constituency office allowance or other special allowance which would cover it. I thought we wanted to get away from the perception, if somebody read this, that it would appear that the furniture in our constituency offices comes out of the members' constituency allowance, whereas it comes from Public Works.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This doesn't take anything out of the members' constituency allowances. All it does, as I understand it, is to ensure that the same sorts of supplies, consumable items, that are provided to your offices under the Dome and in the Annex will also be provided in the constituency offices without being charged to your constituency allowances. It doesn't deal with furniture or fixtures or anything like that. Those have always come from Public

MRS. EMBURY: I appreciate that, and I think we all agree, but I don't think that's clear for members who try to read the minutes and figure it out.

DR. REID: Exactly. I think the problem is the way I worded it, Mr. Chairman. If you read it as one continuous sentence, which we should the way you have it . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're talking about the text on page 2?

DR. REID: I'm talking about the text as I originally put it, which was:

... whereas furniture and equipment should be provided from Members' constituency office allowance or other special allowance.

That was supposed to include Public Works, Supply and Services, but didn't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see.

DR. REID: We talked about furniture and furnishings, and people wanted to have paintings on their walls and all the rest of it. Public Works, Supply and Services provides furniture.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But I thought that by taking out part of the text of that and substituting what was substituted on the second page, you simply take the furniture right out of it. We're back as we were, so there's no problem.

DR. REID: That's probably all right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We never did have a problem. If there was a possible problem created by the original text of that motion, my suggestion is that that problem is cured by taking away the reference to furniture and fixtures. If it ain't a problem, why should we talk about it in a motion?

MRS. EMBURY: I agree, Mr. Chairman, except that it seems to me that the discussion centred around some additions to a constituency office. I'm trying to recall what they were, whether they were partitions or . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wasn't at that meeting. Frank chaired that.

MRS. EMBURY: There were specific items that we felt should come out of the lease arrangements -- improvements to the actual building, like adding partitions or something -- and we were trying to identify that in that case it should not come out of Legislative Assembly supplies or Public Works or wherever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In that case, suppose we deal with the two things separately. If this looks after the supplies, okay; that's done. If there is a problem with regard to equipment or leasehold improvements, let's have a separate motion about it.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, this looks after the supply thing. Perhaps the best thing is that the Clerk or his staff has a look through the discussion held on September 18 and see if they require a motion about the other items. The discussion was fairly far-ranging, if I remember correctly, about things some people had not done with the original lease but had tried to do afterwards and some of the things people wished to put in their offices that we felt were strange.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Like subsequent leasehold improvements?

DR. REID: Yes. Perhaps the Clerk could do that. It may not be necessary to have a motion to that effect; there may be enough in the record.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bohdan was present during that discussion, and he has a suggestion.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, we are presently revising the member's manual, the document which outlines to each member his rights, entitlements, privileges, and so on. May I suggest that we incorporate in that manual, under the section that deals with constituency offices, the wishes expressed by this committee in respect of supplies pertaining to those offices. That document would be submitted to this committee, when it is completed, for the committee's perusal and approval, thus giving some force to the directives which might be contained therein. I wonder if that matter

could be looked after in that way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that satisfactory?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we'll go back to the verbatim report of the September 18 meeting and take it from there.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, there's one last issue I would like to have recorded. When we talked about stationery and office supplies, did we include the cost of mailing, like stamps, which up to the present time have not been provided in the constituency offices?

MR. CHAIRMAN: My interpretation of supplies wouldn't include stamps, but we have a communications allowance.

MRS. EMBURY: I just wanted to clarify that that was our thinking.

MR. HYLAND: One of my pet peeves has been that if you split up the work, i.e. Christmas cards -- if you have your constituency office do it, it costs money out of your communications allowance. If you have them package them and send them in or, as some do, send them out of here, it doesn't cost any money out of your communications allowance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I should know this but I don't. The Clerk can tell us, and probably other people know. Does the postage that is used in caucus offices come out of general administration or caucus budgets?

MR. STEFANIUK: It comes out of general administration, Mr. Chairman. The postage used by the Legislative Assembly overall which leaves this building is calculated by Public Works postal service in the building, and we are billed for it in bulk on a monthly basis. There is not a breakdown provided as to which office uses how much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's something we should perhaps give some thought to.

MR. STEFANIUK: It's difficult to break down in the mail room, because in many cases envelopes used by members and by the

administration, as I'm sure you're aware, bear the return address "Legislative Assembly, Legislature Building." So it is not possible to identify. Whether or not the use of publicly funded mail coming from the general administration budget should be employed in the case of Christmas cards is perhaps a decision for this committee to make.

MR. HYLAND: I just picked Christmas cards because it's . . .

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, this is an ongoing difficulty, and I don't think it would be at all cost-effective to have the mail office in this building try to allocate — the keeping of the record of it alone would make it not cost-effective. To try to keep a record of the origin of every piece of mail that goes out of this building would be nonsensical.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It wouldn't be done that way, but perhaps if the mail were to be processed somehow on a caucus basis, there would be some control. It seems to me that you have a saw-off between the cost of monitoring the thing on the one hand and the possibility of abuse on the other.

DR. REID: I think it's a classic example where you have to rely on the individuals in the building not to abuse it. To try to catch any abuse that may exist, which is probably very small, is not going to be cost-effective in any way. We still have to pay 34 cents per piece of mail out of some budget or another.

MR. HYLAND: All I'm saying is that the case I used is just one, because it's near Christmastime. You're discouraged from taking work out of this building, from mailing a couple of hundred or 500 Christmas cards, whatever the number is — if you're near the top of your constituency office budget, you're discouraged from taking work out of this building. If you're a couple of hundred dollars within your highest amount in your communications allowance, you're better off bringing all your work back here, because it doesn't affect your budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Exactly, and that's why I say there's a saw-off between the cost of monitoring or control and the possibility for abuse. We have a specific communications

allowance, and it is really meaningless if you can get an unlimited supply of postage out of general administration.

You raised a point about code 290, Sheila, and that's another one of the points arising from the minutes.

What is your wish? Is there going to be a motion, or shall we just assume that for the time being we've had a useful discussion?

MR. PURDY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think it has to be clarified, and we should make a decision if we're going to allow postage from the office to be taken out of the communications allowance or under the general administration budget. I think Alan makes a good point when he says it's very easy to bundle everything up, bring it in here, and post it from this office. I see our budget for this year is \$89,000 for postage and freight. Maybe a bit of an increase in that would eliminate any concerns or questions members have regarding mailouts from their constituency offices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: By increasing the postage allotment under general administration.

MR. PURDY: Under 290, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You say that would solve the problem?

MR. PURDY: It would solve part of it. They'd then have dollars in place for mailouts from the constituency office. You could very easily put a postage meter machine in each constituency office. You could rent them from the Post Office and do it like that. Then the Post Office would bill the Legislative Assembly general administration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's going to add a lot of complication, Bill, because you have to take them a certified cheque every time they load up one of those meters. It means keeping track of 60-odd meters in the constituency offices.

MR. HYLAND: Right now I know that if you want postage, you have to send a memo to Chuck asking for X number of dollars for postage. We get the cheque and take it to the Post Office, and then you have them until you use them. For example, I asked for \$200 or whatever in stamps; then you have \$200 in

stamps laying around the constituency office in a bulk amount.

That's the only way you can do it; there's no way around it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I agree with Dr. Reid that the honour system has to be taken for granted. On the other hand, we've had examples in the past where members have sent out solicitations for memberships in a particular party; in fact, a couple of parties have done that. They've used public funds for the postage. It seems to me that if the public funds spent on postage are spent in offices under the Dome here, there are more people around, there is more observation, and the temptation toward abuse would be less than it might be in constituency offices, where in the privacy of the office you could ram a few things through.

MR. HYLAND: But if you follow that through, now your chances of doing that in a constituency office are better, because you're doing it just with stamps, not a machine. You're doing it with stamps that you're buying — \$100, \$200, or \$250 at one time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, but if they're bought out of your communications allowance or your constituency funding, there is at least a ceiling on the sort of thing it's being used for. If you're going to be able to charge general administration for mailings that go out of constituency offices, my suggestion is that that is a little more private operation than what goes on here. Consequently, the greater privacy may provide a greater incentive to cut some corners.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, there's something missing from the equation we're discussing. The constituency offices are an extension of the Legislative Assembly. That's what we've always felt. Not every member has a constituency office. Those who do not have a constituency office have, in actual fact, a much larger fund available for discretionary use than those who do. I think it's sort of ridiculous to be regarding mailing from the constituency office in a different light from mailing from within the building, because there are members who do not have a constituency office and who presumably mail everything from within the building or the annex. It may well be that the point Mr. Hyland

is making shouldn't have to be made, on the basis that that constituency office is an extension of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. PURDY: Dr. Reid is exactly right, because I fall into that particular category. My constituency allowance sits at \$14,400, and 60 percent of the year is gone. Any of the work that evolves out of the constituency office which is not funded — I go in every Saturday morning — comes back here. The secretary processes it and out it goes.

MR. HYLAND: Because it's at this time of year when people are sending out Christmas cards, I'm sure that those who don't have a constituency office go through here. I send mine through my constituency office. It costs me money, my communications allowance.

I've raised this ever since I've been on this committee. To me, right now, it isn't a problem of the dollars, because I'm not right at the top of my allowance, at least yet. To me it's a matter of principle: it's unfair and it's probably a problem to those who are near the top. To me it's unfair that it's different in the two cases. I can accept the rationale and the points that you argued, but it's also back to the thing Dr. Reid said. The principle of the constituency office is as an extension of the Legislature. I know why we put them in, and I know how we got the other funds we have to deal with; nevertheless, it's an extension of the Legislature. We've just passed a motion saying that different office supplies would be . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: We haven't yet.

MR. HYLAND: I thought it was passed in September.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see.

MR. HYLAND: Anyway, to try to maintain that thing. I can well accept the argument that it's communication, but is it communication when the average — just because it's Christmastime, I used the example of Christmas cards. Is the average writing that goes out of there, the average letter — is that communication or is it just general, so-called Legislative Assembly office correspondence? I grant that there are bulk or bunch mailings out of everywhere, but is that communication or is that just stuff that

goes out from an office as a matter of . . .

MRS. EMBURY: I think there is a lot of consideration to what we're discussing. I would like to propose that we consider this item at another meeting and that to deal with the topic, we either set up a little subcommittee of two or three MLAs with someone from the Clerk's office studying it first of all, and then bring a recommendation to this committee. That's what I'd like to see — some in-depth to consider all this.

I would further like to propose that for this Christmas mailing, we clarify with the mail office downstairs that Christmas cards would be accepted in the mail, because I can tell you that they have not been accepted in the past. It seems to be that some do it and some don't. So I think we should clarify, at least for this Christmas, one way or the other. I'm open to either way, but I would like that directive to go to the mail room.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So there would be two motions there. The first one would be that a committee be struck. Maybe we could round that one out by putting names in it.

MRS. EMBURY: Volunteers?

DR. REID: One urban, one rural.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How about Alan, for one?

MRS. EMBURY: Guess who's urban?

DR. REID: Oh, are you the only urban one on the committee?

MRS. CRIPPS: Bill is moving to town.

MRS. EMBURY: We can count Bill urban.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How about Jim?

MRS. EMBURY: Yes, Jim. That would be a government member and . . .

MRS. CRIPPS: Jim and Alan.

MR. HYLAND: Jim's rural.

DR. REID: That's the far southeast and far northwest. That's fair enough.

MRS. EMBURY: I'll volunteer for the urban.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The committee consists of Mrs. Embury, Mr. Hyland, and Mr. Gurnett. Is that your intention?

MRS. EMBURY: Plus somebody from the Clerk's office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Of course. Whatever help they need, we'll try to provide. Maybe somebody who isn't named would like to adopt that motion.

DR. REID: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I mean to move it.

DR. REID: I'll move it.

MRS. EMBURY: You're so anxious.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Reid has moved that the question of the funding of the postage be referred to a subcommittee of this committee consisting of Mrs. Embury, Mr. Hyland, and Mr. Gurnett. It is agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we had a second thing.

MRS. EMBURY: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. Could I also suggest that for our own benefit, since we're here together, Mr. Hyland call the first meeting of the subcommittee?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why don't we make him the chairman? If he's going to have the work, he might as well have the name.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. PENGELLY: Then if it doesn't work out the way you want it, Alan, you know who you can blame.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You had a second point?

MRS. EMBURY: It was that there be a directive. If this is an appropriate procedure — I wouldn't like to question the procedure. I just think we have to clarify with the mail room, because I know there was a problem last year with Christmas cards. I think it's only fair that we clarify, for this year, that they be allowed to be sent out if they have been by some members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a little thing on the side: there are some people who don't like to have Christmas cards go out metered.

MR. HYLAND: Then they'll have to go the regular way, with stamps.

MR. PENGELLY: They'll have to lick the stamps.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know. It's more trouble.

MRS. EMBURY: That's their concern, I guess.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Metered mail looks like business mail, and that sort of doesn't fit in with the spirit of Christmas.

MRS. EMBURY: Well, I'll move that whatever the process is, the mail room be directed . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The substance of the motion really is that the postage on Christmas cards be paid for out of general administration. Isn't that the substance of it?

MRS. EMBURY: For this year only.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

MR. ELIUK: Is it not bartered in that to encompass everything that is sent out?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, because Sheila said that there's no trouble otherwise. This is the only area where there's trouble, and that's all she's dealing with.

MR. HYLAND: This trouble is now.

DR. REID: That's right. It's a time factor. Everything else is going to be addressed by Alan's committee, but we can't wait for Alan's committee for something that's going to be

handled in the next six weeks.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman, I want a clarification from Sheila. You mean only personally addressed Christmas cards, not bulk?

MRS. EMBURY: Right. Individually addressed. There's a difference from "To the Householder."

MR. CHAIRMAN: We don't send Christmas card mailings to householders, do we?

MRS. EMBURY: Yes, some members do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do they?

MR. PURDY: I do.

MR. PENGELLY: Is that right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the householder?

MR. PURDY: I send 14,500 every Christmas.

MRS. EMBURY: This is the individually addressed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What concerns me is the people in the mail room. What type of sorting are they going to do down there?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: None.

MR. HYLAND: The stuff Sheila is talking about is just like letters. They're in different shaped envelopes. They're all either typed or handwritten on the front, and they go out personally addressed, just like any letter. What Bill is talking about is his 14,500 "To the Householder."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why don't we just say "Christmas cards" and it's finished?

MR. PURDY: Mine comes out of the communications allowance, and that's where it should come from because it's a bulk mailing to my constituents. But you may have 200 businessmen in the constituency that you want to keep in touch with. That's what Sheila is taking about: having those metered and put through the general administration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So the motion is?

MRS. EMBURY: That there be instruction to the mail room that Christmas cards individually addressed will be accepted under the Legislative Assembly's postal allowance for 1985 Christmas mail only.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we say "this coming Christmas"? The Ukrainian Christmas is in 1986. We don't want to have trouble out of this after.

MRS. EMBURY: Christmas is always coming; that's the problem.

DR. REID: And Chinese New Year is in October.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we just say "for the immediate . . ."

MRS. EMBURY: The 1985 Christmas season.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Is it agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HYLAND: On the September 18 minute, office supplies, which Sheila referred to when we started off this discussion, I don't think that minute agrees with the way you printed the motion in your letter.

DR. REID: I think this is the confusion Sheila was talking about.

MR. HYLAND: The confusion Sheila was having is that the minutes from that meeting don't read the same as the motion in your memo.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You mean it wasn't copied right?

MR. HYLAND: Or the motion in the memo was changed somehow.

DR. REID: The minute that was distributed is your suggested correction.

MR. HYLAND: 85.77

MR. CHAIRMAN: Was this change made in the minutes? That's what I said awhile ago: it's not

effective until it's authorized by the committee.

MISS CONROY: It's just a draft that went to them.

MR. HYLAND: So the final minute should show the original motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was intended to be a draft. The minutes should show the motion as originally passed, which, as far as I know, is reproduced on the first page of this memo.

MR. HYLAND: That's my point. The minutes have to be the final minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In other words, the minutes of September 18 are to be amended back to their original form.

MRS. EMBURY: Agreed.

MR. HYLAND: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Is there anything further? Do you want to dispose of that item now? Does somebody want to accept the paternity of this motion on the second page?

MR. HYLAND: I thought we disposed of it in accepting the first motion and the Clerk dealing with it through a change in the members' handbook and our accepting the handbook.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was with regard to equipment; this deals with supplies.

DR. REID: The thing is that the amendment suggested by the chairman is a good one if it's taken in conjunction with what the Clerk will do when he brings back the members' handbook to this committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does that imply that you want this held, or do you want to move it and get it out of the way?

MRS. CRIPPS: I'll move it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mrs. Cripps. Is it agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Carried. Can we go back to the minutes? We had an item in regard to code 290. I think the ball is in your court, Sheila.

MRS. EMBURY: Pardon?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Remember that item in regard to 290? If you look at the minutes of the October 23 meeting . . .

MRS. EMBURY: Code 290 — it says "AGREED."

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you look at minute 85.95, which is on the third page of those minutes, under (i) it says "MOVED by Mrs. Embury . . ." I guess the question was whether that change ought to be made.

MRS. EMBURY: I'm sorry. Could you please give us a summary of that item, Mr. Chairman? I don't think everybody is clear what the discussion was.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, the minute reads:

MOVED by Mrs. Embury that the transfer from Code 290 under MLAs' communication allowances for advertising be adverted to during the next meeting's discussion of budget estimates.

I recall a discussion that reflected some concern by some members of the committee relative to the separation of certain amounts from each of the allowances and their placement under a variety of expenditure codes. In other words, in the case of the communications allowance, the total amount of the communications allowance based on the approval previously given by this committee is \$708,304. From that allowance we appropriated \$246,304 to code 290, freight and postage, which reflects the approximate amount used for freight and postage out of members' communications allowance.

As you can see on page 15 of the budget, where code 290 is detailed, of the \$708,000 certain amounts are transferred to other expenditure codes. This action was taken because we are required to conform with the Treasurer's accounting system. When charging certain items, we are required to submit them for payment under these separate expenditure codes. It does not in any way diminish the

global amount of the communications allowance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It doesn't change it.

MR. STEFANIUK: It doesn't change it at all. But there is no expenditure code for an item called "communications allowance," and a variety of things are charged to the communications allowance. It may be printing. It may be manpower, for that matter. Some members hire personnel to distribute fliers or newsletters in their constituencies. It may be postage.

So we have looked at our experience with administering the communications allowance and issuing payments from that allowance, and have determined that items charged to the communications allowance have been chargeable to three or four different areas. So we have appropriated our best estimate of the amounts which are appropriate to each expenditure code.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Clerk, the codes that the Legislature appropriates money under don't necessarily match the expenditure code, but it still leaves us flexibility to move that money because it's all under the original . . .

MR. STEFANIUK: Absolutely. It's all out of the same vote.

Mr. Chairman, may I refer members of the committee to the sheet that is identified as page 4 of this budgetary submission. I think that illustrates the global amount of each of the allowances and shows where certain amounts from within each allowance have been transferred and how they appear in this budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would I be right in saying that if Treasury were to set up codes corresponding to the way we do our budgeting, we wouldn't have to do this?

MR. STEFANIUK: That's right. If Treasury could accept a code called "communications allowance" and a code called "constituency allowance" and a code called "promotional allowance," we wouldn't have to break these out. But there are no such codes in existence at the present time, and we are part of that much larger accounting system which is administered by Treasury. For example, if we were to submit

an invoice for the printing of a piece of communications material under code 290, the freight and postage code, because that's where we had budgeted for the communications allowance, Treasury would find that unacceptable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They'd bounce it on us.

MR. STEFANIUK: They would return it to us and say: "You have improperly coded this particular invoice for payment. It is for printing, not for postage. We cannot accept it in this fashion." All that finally causes is delay in paying the supplier.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, for the sake of simplicity, for the understanding of the rest of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, I wonder -- we have to have this internal allocation of the funds, which is Treasury's way of handling their accounts, but when it comes to the actual preparation of the budget for the Legislative Assembly, which we are considering, why do we have to do all ... If you try to follow this money around, it gets moved from one code to another code, and some of it gets sent to other codes. When you look at code 430, what gets sent to 430 gets split up and sent to other places. It may well be that that's what happened last year, because I think this is based on what has happened in the past. But that doesn't necessarily mean it will happen in the future. Some leases may include power and some may not. The terms of the leases may change. In other words, it's an academic exercise to try to do it in the preparation of the budget when we have a fixed amount that has been decided as block funding of constituency allowances in the various forms. Can it not be done internally during the year rather than trying to do it in advance in the budget and then find that the figures aren't correct at the end anyway?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're just trying to conform to Treasury practice, as do the government departments.

DR. REID: But what I'm wondering is do we need to go through ... This is causing confusion here. It will cause greater confusion to the other Members of the Legislative Assembly when they think -- because they'll go

through the same thought processes -- that their constituency allowances have been reduced. If they try to get to the details -- and I'm thinking of the confusion that already exists with the printouts that members get, month by month, of what is happening to their allowance. I can assure you that all hell will break loose with 79 Members of the Legislative Assembly who will not be able to follow what is happening to their budget allowances.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, the printouts that members receive on a monthly basis will not reflect these amounts which have been assigned to various expenditure codes in the budget. The member will continue to receive a statement which shows the amount chargeable that has been charged to each of his allowances. That detailed breakdown will not be sent to the member at all. The member will receive only a statement which will show what he has spent in the communications, constituency, and promotional areas.

These are for administrative purposes. They're presented to the committee in this fashion because there has been some difficulty in the past with relating this document, which we present to the committee for consideration, with the document that finally appears in the House, in the blue book.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And this way you're getting the same thing here as you'll get in the book that goes into the House. That's the reason for it.

MRS. EMBURY: Oh, I see.

MR. STEFANIUK: The member will not be subjected to a breakdown of his communications allowance in these areas. The member will receive a statement which will show the total amount of the communications allowance available to him at the beginning of the year as a credit with the appropriate debits under that item. He will not be troubled with this detail which we are subjected to.

DR. REID: I have had members come to me and say that they can't follow debits as it is. They disagree with them and don't think they're accurate. I tell them to see Chuck.

MR. STEFANIUK: That's where they should go.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't want to take up the time of the meeting, but I'd like to discuss that with you to see if there's some way we can improve those.

MR. ELIUK: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to add one thing. When the budget was prepared, it was prepared in the same format that would go to Treasury. The next step after this approval will be that we complete all of the Treasury forms and submit them to Treasury. It in no way reflects what a member will see on his printout. For constituency office allowance he'll have \$14,700 as a starting balance, and from that it will climb.

We could perhaps have created two documents, one which would show just a communications allowance in one lump sum, for the approval of the committee. In turn, we would then have to break it into the appropriate expenditure codes for submission to Treasury.

MR. STEFANIUK: We've shown the committee the total amounts for each allowance on page 4.

MRS. CRIPPS: I don't see any problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you see the total amount of each allowance on page 4, Sheila?

MRS. EMBURY: I think that's right. I'd like to question the wording in the minutes. We're talking about code 260, page 26.85. My wording of that motion, "the transfer from Code 290 under MLAs' communication allowances for advertising be adverted to . . ." I can't imagine in my wildest dreams that that was my terminology that was used there. So I'd like to know exactly what we meant. I have looked at 260, where I assume I questioned what was advertising for communications allowances. All right? That's my assumption at this time. I'm sorry I haven't my recordings to check exactly what happened.

We've had an explanation that under code 260, called advertising, you have taken out of our communications allowances some items that the Clerk's office has assumed should now come under advertising. If you look at 290, under freight and postage — to go through these, we're going back and forth like a child's game — why, as Dr. Reid asked, do you take out freight and postage, those items?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, very simply, the communications allowance consists of a variety of things to a variety of members. Our experience in administering the funds last year, during this current year, shows that of the allowance available, approximately \$90,000 had to be charged to advertising because the allowance was used for advertising purposes to that extent. Approximately \$246,000 was charged to freight and postage. The communications allowance was used for freight and postage to that extent.

So this breakdown of the communications allowance is provided as a result of the experience we have had with administering the allowance in the past year.

MRS. EMBURY: I've just gone from page 15, where the \$272,000 has now been transferred to code 430. Now you go to 430 . . .

MR. PURDY: And it shows at the bottom of the page, last item, \$272,000.

MR. STEFANIUK: MLAs' printing, brochures and pamphlets, \$272,000.

MRS. EMBURY: So that doesn't refer to the item at the top. I see. I'm sorry; I was mixing that up with where you transferred those three other items.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All it is is an attempt to conform to Treasury's requirements. We're unique as a Legislative Assembly; we have allowances that no other department has. Consequently, in order to fit into the generality of things and not have our invoices bounced and the payments to suppliers delayed, we're trying to conform to Treasury's coding. At the same time, we're trying to put these estimates before you in the same form as they appear before you in the House.

MR. ELIUK: I just want to add to that, as we had the problem last year with purchases of computer equipment. One of the major reasons for the delay is the fact that we did not have moneys budgeted under the fixed assets control group, and that necessitated that we transfer funds from the other allowance, where they were budgeted for, into fixed assets before we could even attempt to pay the invoice. The transfer and approval process is quite a lengthy

one; for what reasons, I don't know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sheila, do you remember that delay in the payment of that invoice on the computers? The thing was that because of the coding and because our coding wasn't the same as Treasury, we needed a transfer. As Chuck has just said, it sometimes takes us a month to get a transfer through so we can get an invoice paid.

MRS. EMBURY: You don't want me to comment on that one, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We can request the transfers, but we can't give the final approval that Treasury requires. What we have here is simply the administration going the extra mile to try to conform to Treasury's requirements, to see that things are paid and to see that the estimates you approve are the same as what you get to see in the House. That's all it amounts to. I think the administration has really scratched their heads and gone a long way to try to avoid trouble.

MRS. EMBURY: I'm not questioning that at all, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I just didn't want . . .

MRS. EMBURY: For anybody reading some of the codes — it's very hard to interpret in a time of constant restraint when you see huge minuses and huge pluses under items.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MRS. EMBURY: You have to be very sure you know the reasons for that, because people can't understand. They see over a hundred percent increase. You know what's going to happen. We're going to be publicly criticized for a budget item that isn't true; it's only been a transfer of funds. That's all I'm saying.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe we should delegate a subcommittee of this committee to go "pretty please" to Treasury and say, "Please change your damn machinery around, so we can . . ."

DR. REID: That would be the simplest answer.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, Treasury's

accounting systems are in the process of undergoing some revisions. We are slated to come onto a new system in the summer of 1986. As we understand the new system, it allows for some flexibility within a department to establish codes and subcodes. It may well be that with the implementation of the new system for the Legislative Assembly we may be able to avoid these breakdowns for the future. I'm not certain that we will be able to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Reid's department is the pioneer on this.

DR. REID: That's right. I was just saying that to Mr. Purdy. I'm the lead department. It's working well in Lethbridge, where we have decentralized budgeting.

MR. STEFANIUK: So if we're able to do that, we can break these down. But I think, Mr. Chairman, that members of the committee might wish to know that the individual figures which appear under each of these codes and which show very significant pluses and minuses are not documents for public consumption. What in fact appears in submissions is the bottom line under each expenditure code. With respect, Mr. Chairman, I would point out that the bottom line that is most closely scrutinized is the percentage change on the Legislative Assembly's overall budget. Under General Administration, we are showing a bottom line change of 2.7 percent. We hope that that can be accepted, because it reflects certain realities in the practice of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we assume, then, that we've had a sufficient go at code 290 and that the grade 12 language used in this motion . . . Seriously speaking, is that enough for that?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, if you'll take another quick look at those minutes, you'll see that certain codes have been approved. These approvals, of course, are all subject to the overall approval that comes at the end. You may also recall that the administration was asked to rework the appropriate budget figures to eliminate the allowances for the four extra MLAs and go back to 79. That was done, and of

course the books were circulated to you some time ago.

What should we be calling next, Bohdan?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, unless the committee wishes to go back to square one because the amounts have now been altered — if the committee is willing to accept that we have adjusted each of the expenditure codes which were previously considered, we can carry on from where we left off.

MR. CHAIRMAN: These items that were approved were approved subject to being reworked to reflect 79 MLAs. That has been done. So you could say that approval has been given in anticipation of the recalculation, and we can go on, if you like, to the next code. The last one that's recorded in the minutes is 350.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to raise another item, which is a reflection of what we're talking about right now in this budgetary process. The other day I noticed in the Edmonton Journal that there was an advertisement for extra staff to help out Mr. Eliuk in his administrative role. While I know that the responsibility to hire these people is with administration, it's our responsibility to put the budget in place. I don't have any background information on this particular advertisement. I'd like to know who it's for, what the anticipated budget is, and if it is reflected in these '86-87 estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's not going to affect it.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, the advertisement was simply for a replacement for a secretary in the administrative branch who announced her resignation last week and is moving to AADAC.

MR. PURDY: That clarifies it then. When an advertisement comes out, it appears that it's ...

MR. STEFANIUK: There is no additional staff. It was an advertisement for replacement of an existing staff member who is leaving the Legislative Assembly.

MR. PURDY: Oh.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, before I make a formal proposal, I would like to raise a point that I'm a little worried might have something to do with 350; I'm not sure about that. As you know, last year we went through an extremely successful process of putting computer equipment into the caucus offices. If I haven't done it publicly before, I really commend the staff for the smooth operation of that.

We want to consider a further stage, which I will call stage 2, for lack of a better term, to that process. The first point I would like to ask consideration of is that we have what I believe is known as electronic mailing within the Legislative Assembly. For further clarification, basically that means that we can talk to each other's offices, as I understand it. People in the Leg. Annex would be able to communicate with ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: With the administration, the Library, and so on.

MRS. EMBURY: Things like that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you including constituency offices in that?

MRS. EMBURY: That's the second point that's coming up. I'd like to have that considered for next year. I don't know what the total budget allotment would be for that.

The second proposal I would like to make is that we try a pilot project of what I again believe is known as electronic mailing between the constituency offices and the MLAs' offices in the Legislature. We would define that proposal further to naturally include all the caucuses in the Assembly and look at representation from around the province.

Because there has been, I believe, a person on the Legislative Assembly staff who works in two places, in Hansard and I believe we also pay part-time for ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sheila Unger?

MR. STEFANIUK: She's with us full-time.

MR. ELIUK: She has left Hansard.

MRS. EMBURY: Oh. I guess it would be valuable to have that report. I didn't realize that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that was right at the beginning. That happened last year, as soon as the new hardware went in.

MRS. EMBURY: Excuse me. That's great. I would like to ask if that's an ongoing budgetary item. That was an extremely helpful process.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's no change there.

MRS. EMBURY: As I understand it, it's obviously very easy to buy computer equipment, but buying the service is a little bit different. That is something else I wanted to clarify.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have two stages in mind. The first stage would be intercommunication between members' offices under the Dome or in the Annex with administration and the Library and possibly Treasury; I don't know — in any case, that sort of intercommunication. The second stage you have in mind is extending that to the members' constituency offices.

MRS. EMBURY: A pilot project of 12.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Of the members' constituency offices or of 12 members here and in the Annex?

MRS. EMBURY: A pilot project for 12 MLAs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MRS. EMBURY: The electronic mailing would occur between their constituency office computer and their computer in the Legislature.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, it would be impossible to estimate very quickly what the cost would be of instituting electronic mail within the Legislature complex and also to estimate the cost of a pilot project. Certainly those projects can be undertaken if this committee so directs. May I suggest that the practical means of funding both projects might be through a special warrant at such time as the costs can be identified or, if they can be identified before the budget is printed, that a final amendment be made to the budget at that time.

I am at a loss to know what the cost would be without talking to suppliers of hardware,

relevant software, and communications equipment. As I'm sure the committee can appreciate, that might involve some rather lengthy discussions. It would certainly involve the preparation of a project description, and it would require issuing to the industry what we call an RFP, request for proposals, so we might be able to obtain the best possible cost. I think we could be subjected to some severe criticism if we arbitrarily selected a single supplier without determining, as a matter of fact, whether that supplier has the capability to perform the task which is envisioned by the hon. member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me for being a little obtuse. I realize you have two stages in mind. Is it the proposal that we now go into that kind of intercommunication with members' constituency offices, or are we going to start first with 12 members in the building and in the Annex?

MRS. EMBURY: I'm sorry; I don't understand what you're trying to clarify.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right now you have word processing equipment serving the three caucuses. My question is: is the first stage going to be intercommunication between that equipment and the Library, the administration, et cetera, or is the first stage going to be from members' offices in the constituency?

MRS. EMBURY: Both.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, may I point out . . .

MRS. EMBURY: I've been in communication with Chuck, and I'm sure he could probably have some information. I've tried to contact him for the past while and, unfortunately, haven't been able to reach him. I don't know if you have anything you could contribute to this, Chuck, just to give us a rough estimate.

MR. STEFANIUK: First of all, Mr. Chairman, on the question of electronic mail within the Legislature complex, that is already possible within certain limitations. The main processing units, of which there are three, which are all hooked to each other, enable us to communicate from a terminal in the Annex to a terminal

under the Dome. All the secretary who is preparing the communication has to do is address the communication, when she is printing, to a printer. Let's assume that a member is on the eighth floor of the Annex and wants to communicate with a member on the fifth floor of the Legislature Building. The secretary merely has to address a printer that's on the fifth floor of the Legislature Building.

It requires a very simple thing like a telephone call to the secretary on the fifth floor to say: "I am going to send something to member so-and-so. Would you please put the appropriate stationery into your printer? I'm now going to order my terminal to print it out on your printer." That is possible now. I can take a memo from my office and communicate with secretaries of those members to whom I want the memo to go and direct that it be printed on a variety of printers within the complex. It's all hooked up. There may be more sophisticated ways of doing the electronic mail function, and we would like to investigate those.

Insofar as referring an inquiry directly to Chuck, I think we have to realize that this is a complex and rather sophisticated field. It might also entail some very extensive study. With all due respect to Chuck, I don't think he has been able to dedicate staff to an inquiry of this type. I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if it would be appropriate for the committee to give such a directive, whereupon we would determine what staff is available and the time frame within which it is available to undertake this kind of study.

MR. PURDY: Just to support what the Clerk is saying, in the company I'm with, I use it every day. It's called DECmail. It's a very helpful aid between people. However, I can see that in this office it would be a very, very expensive process to set up. You'd have to go to 79 terminals, first of all, because I think members want to be independent and not go to their secretary all the time. So you'd want to be able to plug into the system right away and see if there were any messages to you or if you wanted to send any messages to a certain member or whatever it is. Bo is right; it would take an extensive study. Our company is still increasing, and technology changes every day. There's always something new coming out on the market, and computers are getting more

sophisticated all the time.

Sure, we want to look at it, but we want to go very carefully on this one and bring some people in to tell us exactly how many dollars it's going to cost. If you hook into the main computer, as you're talking about, computer time is very, very expensive too. It's very expensive to tie into these things.

I wonder how many members would really make use of electronic mail or DECmail or whatever it's called. I don't have that much correspondence between Alan Hyland and myself. My main correspondence is in a memo to ministers. The secretary is capable of doing that and getting it down there.

The only good thing about electronic mail is that it saves everything for you. If you want to bring it up on the screen and see what memo you've sent to the Clerk or some other member, you can do it immediately and see what you've said. They also have the capability of printing that out and storing it in their own machine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shirley, and then there's some background information Bohdan has that you might be interested in.

MRS. CRIPPS: The procedure that Bohdan just described — has that information been made available to all the secretaries in all the offices so they know they can print in our office and send it to Sheila's office or wherever?

MR. STEFANIUK: The people who have been responsible in each of the caucus offices are certainly aware that the system is totally interconnected. They are aware that the three main processors, or three miniature mainframes, if you like, within the installation that we have now are all interconnected and that consequently there is a total link among all the NBI terminals which are on location in this complex.

I don't know to what degree members might find that practical. But as Mr. Purdy has just pointed out, if the member does not wish to deal through his or her secretary, then we would have to look at the whole question of installing terminals on every member's desk if the member wished to receive mail directly. We anticipate that the day is going to come when that will be desirable. As each day goes by, we are exposed to more and more automation.

Two of us, Chuck and I, have now had at

least a brief look at the system which is in place in Ottawa. It is not in place in any provincial Legislature. Ottawa has a very elaborate automation system, which includes many more things than electronic mail, and it's called OASIS. I had a brief look at it in June. We provided an opportunity for Chuck to have a look at it within the last couple of weeks. We have Bob Bubba attending a seminar in Ottawa next week, and we have made arrangements for Bob to have a much closer look at the Ottawa system. We're learning something new about the systems and their installations, which is being facilitated every day, and trying to keep up with developments in the field.

That's why I said that it's not just a simple matter of calling a local supplier and having it done. We've learned a whole lot, for example, about cabling that is radically different from the systems we've employed. As you know, in providing the installations to your offices here, we went through some rather extensive work in building ducts to accommodate cabling. I went to Ottawa and, with the kind assistance of the administrator of the House of Commons, was shown extensive use of flat cable which fitted under the carpet, could be folded at 90-degree angles, and could be run in a great variety of directions. I wish we had had that knowledge when we were doing the installation for the members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a year ago.

MR. STEFANIUK: A year ago. We didn't.

MR. HYLAND: Where are your experts? Some of Ottawa's stuff has been in two or three years.

MR. STEFANIUK: Some has and some of it is ongoing. Alan, we lack the expertise in some areas in this part of the country. As you well know, in most instances we bring equipment in from the golden triangle in Ontario. Even equipment which we bring in from the United States — and that is the case with NBI equipment, which we brought up from Denver, Colorado — goes to Toronto first, and we must bring it from Toronto. That's where there is greater expertise. Unless we have an opportunity, as we have had in recent months, for exposure to other similar places, we don't have it because it's unprecedented in these

parts.

We're looking at a sound and video installation in the province of Saskatchewan, which very fortunately has pioneered in that area: a very sophisticated sound and video system for their House. Fortunately, they're next door and we're able to get there quite easily. But there are restrictions on travel; there are certainly restrictions placed on our time relative to our responsibilities here in serving the members of the Assembly. So we are doing virtually the best we can, given the circumstances.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To avoid obsolescence, Alan, you not only have to be an expert, you have to be a prophet.

MR. HYLAND: Sure, you have to have a background. I guess my reaction, Bo, is that you hire these people. You shouldn't always have to tell them what to do. They should at least have some answers for you on up-to-date stuff, because that's what they're getting paid for.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But you have to have some understanding yourself to know what they're up to.

MR. STEFANIUK: Give me sufficient money to go out and pirate from people in the Toronto area who have so-called experts, and I'll bring that expertise in.

MR. ELIUK: I'd like to say something. In my recent visit, because this is kind of . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could I just interrupt? The reason you couldn't get hold of Chuck was because we asked him to go to Ottawa — we're anticipating developments — to go to the OASIS and see what kinds of camels are around it.

MR. ELIUK: Mr. Chairman, as I visited both Ottawa and Toronto, you soon realize that their operations are much — they're different to an extent, but they have staff. They have departments set up with expertise permanently employed to that particular function. They have three, four, or five people looking at systems on a continuous basis and developing. We simply are not that large and don't have the time to be doing that. Clearly, there are things

that we can be providing the members for services. I've seen some tremendous services being offered. But how do you break yourself away from processing invoices and doing everything else just to keep the operation running, to look at other systems?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are really in a critical state as far as staff shortages are concerned, but we'll bring that up at another time.

MRS. CRIPPS: I tend to agree with Alan. It seems to me that if we hired someone to put in an NBI system last year, part of their responsibility in selling us the system should have been to give us the most up-to-date information and system available. If they don't and you've found out that they haven't, then we should write to them and say, "We're not interested in your services again, for this reason." Next time you'll have them giving us the kind of background information Bohdan and Chuck need in looking at the services. Surely the people who are selling the services know the bloodlines.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The thing is that we did exactly what you say. We got the very, very latest. We had Sheila and Ken Kowalski piloting the thing. We had Bob Bubba, who is Clerk Assistant but who has expertise far, far beyond the average and keeps up to date, reads the publications. But the fact of the matter is — and this is going to be a fact of life for all of us for the next 10 years anyway — that today you buy the latest computer available and yesterday it was obsolete.

MRS. CRIPPS: I agree there.

MR. ELIUK: Planned obsolescence.

MR. STEFANIUK: And so are the related pieces of equipment, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The suppliers are selling you equipment knowing that they already have something that's going to make it obsolete.

MR. STEFANIUK: Another one that's in the testing stages.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But if they kept on waiting to sell you the latest, they'd go broke, because

there never is a latest.

MR. STEFANIUK: With things like ducting, when Ottawa started out, they were ducting. They were breaking down walls. They were putting ducts into walls and running wires through them. The under-carpet, flat wiring is an innovation. It came about fairly recently. When I was there in June, they were still pulling up carpet and replacing it with carpet tile. That's the kind of thing that is happening. We get in a printer, hooked up to a computer, which we think is absolutely great. Damn it; three months later one comes out that runs at three times the speed and gives you twice the quality. What do you do?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sheila, did you know what was in this can when you opened the lid?

MRS. EMBURY: Yes, I did. As you have noticed, I've been sitting here smiling, because I rather enjoyed it. Number one, I think it is important to hear the reports of what the staff have been doing and what they've learned. What I've listened to, in summary, is the fact that the Clerk has told us that part of the electronic mailing system is right there, and it wouldn't cost anything to utilize it. It's interesting to hear that.

I did mean in my original — it wasn't clarified. I was certainly only referring to the computers that we now have with our secretaries; not for each member to have a computer. Again, I think we have to develop, as much as our knowledge allows each and every one of us — and I'm certainly anything but an expert and so extremely new to this whole process. But I think it's ludicrous for us not to have an ongoing plan, which will be modified from a budget point of view. As you said, we're always racing to catch up; we're so far behind. I still think you can draft a five-year plan without the detail or terminology that is beyond everybody. It will be modified. It will have to be changed, expanded upon, but I think it would be helpful for all of us as members to know even what is available in the way of services, so that we can always meet our ultimate goal, which is to serve our constituents. That's all I'm asking for.

I think that part of it has been resolved. Do we want to continue with the approach we had last year, where there was a subcommittee that

looked at ongoing? Off the top of my head, I tend not to like the idea of special warrants, because I think we should be able to budget to some extent. We did it before; I think we could surely do it again.

I would still like to consider the pilot project of connecting our system in the Legislature with the constituency offices. That, again, may have to be something that is looked at by a small committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before recognizing Jim, what we could do, if you thought it appropriate — we used to do this with committees for many years because we have no idea of knowing beforehand what travel or hearings, or whatever, committees are going to engage in. We don't even know what committees the House will appoint. Year after year we put \$100,000 in our figures for financing committee activity.

Given what the Clerk has said and what we've all heard or said around the table with regard to the state of the matter, you might consider putting in a rounded-out figure of some kind and saying, "This is available and will be used under the direction of the committee to go into the possibility of a pilot project." Then if we guess reasonably, hopefully there won't be any special warrant needed, or if one is needed, it will be relatively small or we'll simply decide to live within that amount for the current year and undertake something else the next year.

MR. GURNETT: Following along some of those same lines, Mr. Chairman, I was going to suggest that one thing that should be relatively easy to budget for and that makes good sense to me in view of the discussion we've had is to look at acquiring staff who have the expertise to start working in that area. That is a more definite figure than equipment and software would be. That's something we could definitely do.

In view of what we've heard about the complexity and continual change in this whole area, it seems to me that an initial step, a more reasonable first stage, is to make sure we have people here who have expertise in these areas; for example, to recommend whether the first stage should be to look at the pilot project between constituencies and the Legislature or something internal, in addition to recommending on different kinds of systems and so on. That would seem to me to be a sensible

first step that could be included in the budget and would get the process started in a fairly definite way that no longer depended on subcommittees or existing personnel finding time to act. We'd have new people on staff whose task was to continue to move this forward in a careful way.

MR. HYLAND: As I remember, when I went to Ontario and reported back, I also brought that big, thick book on the proposal they put out. I'm not sure how they arrived at the decision to go with a smaller group to try it. I think they tried different equipment, all sorts of things, with so many from each caucus. Then they put proposals out for what they thought they wanted and awaited proposals from the industry of what the industry could offer in comparison with these outside guidelines. That was the way they went, wasn't it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Following on that, Sheila, isn't the bottom line on this discussion that we want to keep abreast of developments that are available which will enhance the means of MLAs to serve their constituents? If that isn't too general a statement, could we do this for the time being: could we ask the administration to come up with a proposal for a means of achieving that purpose — in other words, keeping us abreast — and come back to the next meeting and say, "This is what we propose you might do"? It might include the formation of another subcommittee, with you and Ken and maybe a member of the opposition. It might include, as someone mentioned — I think it was Jim — the acquisition of a staff person who might have that kind of expertise. Or it might mean a staff person who would replace somebody we already have who can do that kind of thing or assist. The idea is that we want to keep up to date with regard to electronic means of enhancing the members' ability to serve their constituents.

If you would like to get a proposal like that from the staff — the specifics may not be too great, but there'll be some specifics there — we can bring it to the next meeting, and maybe that would help to focus this discussion. I think it's been useful, but we have really covered a pretty large area.

Is that an acceptable suggestion to the committee?

MRS. EMBURY: I would like to ask one slight modification; that is, if it's acceptable to the committee — I don't mind expanding it, but the fact that Ken Kowalski and I did the original — that something come to us. I'm not sure about our next meeting, just using that term, because I'm worried about budget and other items. I'm wondering if we could have a look at the original proposal and maybe work with the staff on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why don't we send it to the whole committee? You and Ken or anybody who wants to can come back with suggestions, and we'll keep the thing moving without waiting for another meeting. Or if you and Ken want to continue with it, which is fine, and you don't want us to send it to the rest of the committee, I would suggest that we consider adding Jim to the subcommittee, if he will agree to act.

MRS. EMBURY: I'm just trying to expedite it. As I said, we did the first one; I thought it went very well. I'm very proud of it. I'd like to continue in that light; that's all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It won't look after the budget thing. It's going to be a process that will probably extend beyond the time when we have to get our budget in for printing. What would you think about putting in the budget an amount of, say, \$200,000 or \$250,000 for the purpose of updating information processing equipment for the members, subject to all expenditures being approved by the committee?

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not prepared to do that at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's no way we could undertake a pilot project or anything else on the present budget.

MRS. EMBURY: I guess that's what we have to decide. You're making that statement speaking for all the estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm suggesting that I don't think we'll find in the estimates a significant amount of money which would enable us to do a significant amount in the direction of a pilot project.

MRS. EMBURY: Okay. Then I move that we

table the discussion at the present time and go back to our budget estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want the staff to do anything in the meantime with regard to reporting back to the committee as to possibilities of enhancing, as I said, through electronic communication and information processing the members' means of serving their constituents? Or do you just want to drop the whole matter and someday somebody may think of bringing it up again before the committee? What's your wish? I really think we should get into the estimates.

MR. HYLAND: We can't discuss a tabling motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A tabling motion can be debated, contrary to what has been said before. I'll show it to you in Bourinot if you want to see it.

MR. HYLAND: What about two or three people getting together to see if they could set in their own minds a direction — maybe not a specific but a direction with some parameters on it, and then bring it back and have staff involved. With what Sheila is after, I don't know if staff involved right at the start would make much difference. We're after a concept.

MR. ELIUK: Mr. Chairman, one of the observations was that people like the Ontario Legislature and the House of Commons engaged the services of a firm — the House of Commons uses Price Waterhouse — who have expertise to look at that. That would mean that you would not have to rely on one of us to undertake the study. They can do a pretty good in-depth and independent evaluation, based on certain parameters we give them as to what and how to implement a system. I only throw that out as a possibility.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would suggest that as soon as you get that report it's obsolete and that what you need is continuing in-house expertise and vigilance in regard to developments.

MRS. EMBURY: In responding, if I may, Mr. Chairman, to Alan's question, I thought I had made the suggestion, based on what you said — I don't want to paraphrase your words — that the

staff would work at preparing something. Because Mr. Kowalski and I did the last one, I volunteered our services, subject to Mr. Kowalski's approval; I can't speak for him today. That was my suggestion. You went on to add and suggest other things, and that's when I said we'll just table it, because if that wasn't agreeable to the committee, that was my suggestion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't know whether you consider yourself and Mr. Kowalski as a subcommittee to be functus. The existence of that subcommittee hasn't been terminated, and if it wants to undertake certain initiatives, I'm sure nobody is going to scream about it.

MRS. EMBURY: It was never sure that we were even legitimate.

MR. STEFANIUK: The subcommittee was formed by resolution.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You looked legitimate, and you acted that way.

MRS. EMBURY: We did it anyway, and that's all I'm saying.

MR. STEFANIUK: The subcommittee was formed by resolution of this committee. It included Mrs. Embury, Mr. Kowalski, and myself.

MRS. EMBURY: All right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It seems to me that there should be some kind of motion on the table right now.

MR. HYLAND: You have one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the motion?

MRS. CRIPPS: Tabling.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion for tabling. All right. All those in favour of tabling the subject? Opposed? I don't know if I got any vote. I'll put it again. All those in favour of tabling? Opposed? It looks as if it's carried four to one.

Can we get back to the estimates?

MR. HYLAND: Can I throw in another question? I guess I should have asked it on the phone at the start of the administrative support section. It relates to the report that was done by Mr. Fleming, relating to the Legislative Assembly Office, the administration, et cetera. Is anything shown in the budget relating to that report? Have we just ignored it, or does it have budget implications?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It has not been ignored, and there's nothing in the budget for it. What has happened thus far is that I have met with each of the senior staff persons individually in regard to the Fleming report. That series of five meetings was completed yesterday, and tomorrow those people and I are meeting collectively, together, and we're going to go through the recommendations. Then we're going to come back to this committee with suggestions for consideration of steps to be taken in regard to at least some of the proposals.

MR. HYLAND: Like a good politician, Mr. Chairman, you missed the last part of my question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm not experienced in giving question period answers.

MR. HYLAND: That of budget implications.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I did that in the first place. There are no budget implications included in the budget. Do you mean forthcoming?

MR. HYLAND: I guess I should have said: could there be budget implications?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There could be, but I really don't see any sudden effect. We have a meeting scheduled for tomorrow — Bohdan and Chuck and Blake in the Library and Gary in Hansard — and we're going to bring together our various discussions. We will then come back to this committee with some proposals. If the committee decides to do something about them, there could well be some budget implications.

MR. PENGELLY: Alan, were you wondering about the cost of the report too?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, that's been covered.

MR. HYLAND: I didn't know what it was. I was just more concerned because we're dealing with budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're wondering about steps to be taken on the basis of the recommendations.

MR. HYLAND: And if it's going to affect this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's something like the electronic word processing and so on; if the committee decides on things to be done, then of course there would be budget implications.

MR. HYLAND: If all the problems, whatever they may be, could be solved without it, that's good. But I also wondered, with the amount of money spent on it — if there are things we should be dealing with that affect this, we should have them before us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're certainly going to come back with a report on the recommendations; no question about it. We've gone over it quite carefully.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, could I please ask a question? Did we establish that the meeting was to be over at 10 o'clock?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We didn't firmly establish that, and I don't think we can except by resolution of the committee. It was discussed, and it's now 10 minutes to 10. Did you want to make a motion?

MRS. EMBURY: Well, I guess I wasn't sure. I would always like to establish at the beginning of our meetings what our plan is. I think it would be most helpful to everybody on the committee if we knew how long we are sitting. I assumed that today was 8 to 10 o'clock.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You see, there was a resolution by the committee that we would sit as long as it took, but we subsequently, as you know from discussions on the telephone, said that we hoped to finish by 10 o'clock, because the cabinet meeting time was changed without our prior knowledge, after we had resolved that we would stay as long as it takes. So it's in the hands of the committee. We can't change the decision on that previous motion except by

another motion of the committee.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Chairman, due to the circumstances I would move that we adjourn at 10 o'clock, because from the subsequent conversations I've had, I've set other meetings after 10 o'clock this morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure. There's a motion. Are you ready for the question? Is it agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone contrary? Okay.

In that event, if we're going to conclude at 10, then I would suggest that before we go back to the estimates, we discuss the date of the next meeting.

MRS. EMBURY: I would like to apologize to the committee for the change.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's not your fault.

MRS. EMBURY: No, but I thought it was very helpful to us when we had our established time. We'd hoped to be able to go, so hopefully we'll get back to that now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have to adjust.

Is there a motion or a suggestion regarding the date of the next meeting? I guess we should shift from Wednesdays, should we? To Tuesdays, perhaps?

MR. PENGELLY: It depends on which Tuesday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nigel, do you want to make a motion, having consulted your pocket bible?

MR. PENGELLY: We're not meeting Wednesdays; that would be most convenient for me. So I'll let someone else make a suggestion.

MRS. CRIPPS: What about December 3?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a Tuesday.

MRS. EMBURY: November 26.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's next Tuesday.

MRS. EMBURY: Oh, that's next week. I might be away. How's December 3?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the one after. That's what Shirley was saying. Can we go around the table? Bill, how does that strike you?

MR. PURDY: Well, if it starts at 1 o'clock or thereabouts, it's a lot better for me because of my commuting problems now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you like us to meet in Calgary?

MR. HYLAND: That sounds like a helluva good idea.

MR. PURDY: It's a good idea. Nigel is close, and Sheila and myself. It's an expense to bring the staff all down, but . . .

MRS. EMBURY: Jim has a long way to come from the north.

MR. PURDY: He may want to see the good part of the country too.

MR. HYLAND: He just sits on the airplane. He never changes.

MRS. EMBURY: He was just down there; he might want to go back now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Some of us are beginning to think Edmonton is the end of the world.

MR. PENGELLY: Could we meet on the afternoon of Wednesday, December 11?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your meetings go right through, don't they?

MRS. EMBURY: Right. Wednesdays, all day, are actually out. I'm sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would be the same for Ian.

MRS. CRIPPS: I'm unavailable after the 6th till after the new year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You couldn't make it for Tuesday, the 3rd, Bill, if we start in the morning?

MR. PURDY: I can do it, sure.

MRS. CRIPPS: I was rethinking that, Mr. Chairman. We have to be here on the 5th anyway. I'm not sure that the 4th wouldn't be better.

MR. PENGELLY: What's the 5th for?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The 4th is a Wednesday.

MRS. CRIPPS: But in the morning.

MR. PURDY: Can't we meet on the 4th at 5 o'clock and have a supper meeting or something and work right through, a working meeting, since we have to come up here anyway for the next day?

MRS. EMBURY: No, there's a commitment there. I think it's only fair — isn't it better for daytime meetings? Do we have to go to evening meetings? Is it that much of a priority?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We should get this done.

MRS. EMBURY: I think it has to be December 2 or 3.

MR. HYLAND: I don't think I'll be here.

MRS. CRIPPS: What's the 2nd? Monday?

MR. PURDY: Monday.

MR. GURNETT: I can't be here at all that week; I'm sorry.

MRS. CRIPPS: You can't be here at all that week.

MR. GURNETT: No, I've got commitments already every single night.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And Shirley can't be here the following week.

MR. PURDY: We're not going to satisfy everybody.

MR. GURNETT: No, that's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I think we should try to

satisfy a minimum of seven out of nine.

MR. PENGELLY: This is for December 3?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Whatever date we choose.

MR. HYLAND: The 3rd is pretty iffy for me, because I've already promised my wife I'd take her somewhere, and that's been put off about four times now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Each time it's put off, the priority increases.

MRS. CRIPPS: I was just thinking of the members who have to come up — if they come up on the 3rd and then back on the 5th. Otherwise, they have to stay over three days.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about Friday, the 6th?

MR. PURDY: Friday, the 6th, that's okay for me.

MR. HYLAND: That's out for me.

MRS. CRIPPS: Not for me.

MR. PENGELLY: The 3rd? I can't be here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm sure glad we're not doing this on the phone.

MRS. EMBURY: I was going to say: I'm not sure which is easier or worse. It sounds like what we should be doing is submitting dates to you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Let's put them on the table right now. What are the available dates? Who wants to start? The member who is farthest away, Alan Hyland.

MR. HYLAND: Is the second week too far into December? I left my book at my office, so I can't . .

MRS. CRIPPS: What's the matter with next Tuesday, the 26th?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's a little — well, we can get the minutes out by then, I guess.

MR. HYLAND: Like I said, I've promised to go

somewhere.

MRS. CRIPPS: I think we'd be better off if we ignored the minutes and went to the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about the 26th?

MRS. EMBURY: I'm probably the only one who might be away, but that's okay; it can go ahead.

MR. HYLAND: No.

MRS. CRIPPS: I thought you said you could be here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it bad for you, Alan?

MR. HYLAND: Yes, I have to go.

MRS. EMBURY: That's still only two of us.

MR. PURDY: I'm available.

MR. GURNETT: I'm sorry.

MRS. EMBURY: Jim is not available next week or . . . What days are you available next week, Jim?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're the second farthest away, Jim.

MR. GURNETT: I guess the only time next week that would be possible for me is the 28th; that's a Thursday. We haven't talked about any other days of the week besides Tuesday and Wednesday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a new one. Let's take a look at Thursday, the 28th. How does that sit with anybody?

MR. PURDY: It's okay by me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sheila?

MRS. EMBURY: I might be away, sir. But if that's a good date for everybody else . . .

MR. STEFANIUK: Sheila's conference goes till Thursday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, right. Shirley, what about you?

MRS. CRIPPS: I don't know. I've got something on the 28th, but I don't know what it is. I haven't got my book with me.

MR. PENGELLY: Yes, I can be here. Can we start early on Thursday morning?

MR. GURNETT: Yes, 8 o'clock.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Eight o'clock?

MR. PENGELLY: I'll come up the day before.

MR. PURDY: I will too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have Nigel and Jim and Bill, the ones who are farthest away, agreeing on 8 o'clock on Thursday, the 28th. What about you, Alan?

MR. HYLAND: I think so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a probable.

MR. HYLAND: I think I gave you a bum steer. You said next Tuesday, and I'm a week ahead. But Thursday if it suits better.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about you, Shirley?

MRS. CRIPPS: I don't know. I have to check.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You and Alan have to check your books. What are we going to do? Call it for the 28th?

MRS. CRIPPS: I know that the other dates you suggested are out, except for Tuesday, so go ahead.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why don't we call it for Thursday, the 28th of this month, at 8 o'clock in the morning, subject to our finding out by telephone that we can't get a quorum. Supposing we can't get a quorum and that we have the temerity to keep the printing of the budget waiting until the beginning of January. Can we get a meeting going early in January at which we can get reasonable attendance?

MR. PURDY: The second date I was going to suggest is December 12, early in the morning.

MRS. CRIPPS: I'm out.

MR. PURDY: Sheila may be available and Jim may be available, because he said his second week was open. I'm open that day. That's a Thursday. Nigel?

MR. PENGELLY: I could.

MR. PURDY: We could start at 8 o'clock in the morning. I've got a meeting in Edmonton the night before.

MR. PENGELLY: I'll be up on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday; I might as well stay another day.

MR. GURNETT: The 12th is ideal for me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is this agreed? Our first date and time: Thursday, the 28th, at 8 a.m. In the event that it appears we may not get a quorum for that date, we shift to Thursday, the 12th, at 8 a.m.

MR. PURDY: I suggest that we hold both days open, because I don't think we're going to get through this document in two meetings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we schedule two meetings. The first one will be on Thursday, the 28th, at 8 a.m., and the second one will be on Thursday, the 12th, at 8 a.m. The thing is this: whatever we agree to as we go along is subject to our final resolution at the end anyway. Is that a deal?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In that event, can there be a motion for adjournment? Alan Hyland. Is it agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 9:58 a.m.]
