

[Chairman: Mr. Amerongen] [10:05 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: May we come to order and go to the agenda? The first thing we have is approval of minutes. You may recall that at our last meeting, on March 25, there were two amendments made to the minutes of March 4. What you have under tab 2 is two sets of minutes. First of all, you have the March 25 minutes, wherein those two amendments are requested, and below that you have the March 4 minutes as amended. At the heading of those minutes it will show you where the amendments are.

MR. HYLAND: Can I add the report of the postal subcommittee, or whatever you want to call it, to the agenda under Business Arising?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure. Why don't we have that right after the . . . If you've had a moment to peruse those two documents, could we have some motions?

DR. REID: I move the adoption of the minutes of both March 4 as amended and March 25.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it agreed? Anyone contra? Carried.

We've just approved the minutes, Shirley. We're now going to the report of the postal subcommittee.

MRS. CRIPPS: That's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you going to make that, Alan?

MR. HYLAND: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. HYLAND: The committee that was suggested back when we were dealing with our budget finally met this morning. We have a recommendation. I'll read it first and then elaborate on it:

The subcommittee (of the Members' Services Committee) on postage recommends that henceforth all postage expenses incurred by Members for mailing individually addressed mail, regardless of whether such mail originates from

Members' offices in Edmonton or from Members' constituency offices, be charged to Expense Code 290 (Freight and Postage) of Element LO100 (General Administration).

We thought we should make this recommendation and that we should get at least a year of usage before we would really know what is happening -- if it's taking off or being abused or whatever. Probably at the end of the fiscal year it would be reviewed, and we could see then what is happening with it. That's our recommendation.

Sheila, did you want to say anything?

MRS. EMBURY: Thanks, Alan. I would just add that you'll notice that the way it's worded, it states "mailing individually addressed mail."

MR. CHAIRMAN: No bulk mail.

MRS. EMBURY: We had a little bit of information about the Christmas card mailing of last year, but of course it's relatively inconclusive to make a blanket statement about what the addition would be for total postage in this area. We certainly feel that if the Christmas cards were individually addressed, that would be acceptable. But if anything is a bulk mailing to constituents, be it at Christmas or any other time, that is still to come under the communication allowance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Might I hear that again, please?

MRS. EMBURY: If there is any bulk mailing by the MLA, be it Christmas cards or at any other time of the year -- like a brochure or whatever -- that is to come out of the communication allowance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How would you define a bulk mailing?

MR. HYLAND: Anything that isn't individually addressed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You mean a householders mailing?

MRS. EMBURY: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, that kind of thing, or done by mail drops.

MR. HYLAND: That's why we said "individually addressed."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. You see, in the post office a bulk mailing includes individually addressed items. Bulk en nombre. You see it on the cancellation, but it's addressed to you.

MR. HYLAND: But you pay more than the 6-cent rate, or whatever the bulk mail rate is, on them.

DR. REID: There's a difference in the rate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You say "henceforth" in the recommendation. Does that mean "as of now"? Or are we to make some adjustments? What about our estimates?

AN HON. MEMBER: How do you mean?

MR. HYLAND: How can you adjust the estimates when you don't know how much it's going to affect it? We thought that if we go to the fiscal year, we would get an idea what is happening. We could adjust it if we have to with a special warrant or something. But it's such an unknown now. Until we get awhile down the road, we don't know what's going to happen.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What we've done in the past with regard to unknowns -- such as, for example, committee expenditures -- we regularly, year after year, used to appropriate \$100,000. But we have no appropriation at all, that I'm aware of, for this item. I'm wondering if as a result of this recommendation the committee would want me to send a memo to the Provincial Treasurer, telling him that we have this recommendation -- that's assuming the committee approves it -- and that there may well be a request for a special warrant later on in the fiscal year.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I think a lot of this expense included in this suggestion is probably already being paid. What the additional increment would be is so indefinite that perhaps the best thing to do is to accept this as a motion, if that's what the subcommittee wishes

to do, and then we'll get some reading on it as the year progresses. If it looks as if we're going to have a need for a special warrant, then we can approach the Provincial Treasurer. I don't think there is any need to do it in advance because, first of all, the sum is so indefinite.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The thing to do would be to monitor it as we go along, and then if the administration sees a cause for alarm, a possibility of running out of funds, we come back to the committee.

Is there any other discussion of this recommendation? Are you moving the recommendation, Alan?

MR. HYLAND: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And is it agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone contra? Carried.

I know that when we come to the Fleming report, you will want to meet in camera again. But we have some concerns, and the staff of course are aware of them because they have to deal with this kind thing. This is not on the agenda, but I should mention the concerns that we have. It's with regard to the spending that is going on for this fiscal year. We have one MLA who is not running for re-election who has ordered printing to go out to constituents, I assume -- it could be a mass mailing -- which is going to cost \$7,038; ordered pins twice for \$913 and \$638; ice containers and crystal flower vases for \$239; and -- this is a minor one -- a computer ribbon. The total comes to \$8,867. We're now seven days into the fiscal year.

We have another MLA who is not running for re-election who has ordered 100 chrome pens for \$1,480, which I guess is \$14.80 per pen, and has engaged a firm to plant trees and provide peat moss, mulch fertilizing, and watering for 500 trees and shrubs for senior citizen residents, local churches, and public buildings, for a total of \$3,650; framing and mounting of pictures, \$918; 1,200 copies of Hansard for \$300 -- that's not so bad. The total committed there comes to \$6,348.

In both cases I should mention that this does not include continuing expenses such as constituency office help and rent, which of course we can't terminate except on three

months' notice.

AN HON. MEMBER: Both have constituency offices?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the case of the second one, whose total is \$6,348, we now have these numbered purchase orders and can tell which ones are outstanding. Two numbers have been skipped. We've made inquiry but haven't been able to find out whether they've been used. They could have been cancelled; we don't know.

Then we have another MLA who isn't running who ordered chinaware or crockery, or whatever you want to call it, appreciation items for \$7,720.

I'm simply reporting those for the interest of the committee, because you probably want to know how this is working out.

MRS. CRIPPS: How much of that is out of this year's?

DR. REID: That's the 1986-87 fiscal year.

MRS. CRIPPS: Is that all out of this year's?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, yes. There is a suggestion that one of the items be transferred back to last year. We're not sure whether that can be done, but it would change the total by under \$400.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, since I was one of those who at the last meeting was saying that we had to rely upon the common sense and integrity of individuals, I think we just accept that these expenditures are being made and see what the result is afterwards. I really don't think we can devise any system which will adequately address the behaviour of individual members, whether they're retiring or not.

On that basis, I think we should just leave it go. They authorize it. They are currently members of the Legislature. We don't know when the election will be held. We don't know what percentage of their annual budget they will spend before they go. I think we have to rely upon individual decision-making and integrity. I don't think this committee or yourself or the staff of the Legislative Assembly can possibly devise any system that

will function.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I must confess to some personal misgivings. I certainly don't intend to dwell on anything like that. The thing is that the administration simply has no choice under the existing rules but to accept these items and put them through, howsoever censorious the comments that may be made a few months down the road when people advert to this and wonder where their constituency allowances went. I have a notion that there may be some fairly vigorous observations made.

MR. KOWALSKI: That may be so, Mr. Chairman, but I think the point made by Dr. Reid is one that, as we sit here on this particular day in April — it may very well be that there will not even be a provincial election in the 1986-87 fiscal year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, no question.

MR. KOWALSKI: So it's difficult to prejudge something or make a decision without having factual knowledge on it. I think the points made by Dr. Reid are very valid.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, I want to raise one other point, because I guess one of the things this committee has dealt with in the past — and, granted, we changed the order to be fairly flexible for members. But I think the point has been made about unusual items. Someone comes up with a very innovative idea, and we've heard one; I think you mentioned tree-planting.

I only raise it for this committee to always be aware — is it not right that these things should at least be brought to us, even for information if for no other reason? Other members will say, "Christopher Columbus, if somebody can go out and do that, and I go to a dinner and have to pay for the dinner or something . . ." Members are always questioning exactly what they can and can't do, and it's very difficult to always be interpreting that to members. I think it's a good thing that you brought the information to us, and we might need some action on it at some time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that enough for that item?

Can we go to 3(a)? You may remember that at the last meeting we went over the guidelines that had been adopted prior to the 1982 election, and a number of amendments were suggested. I asked to have those blended in, shall we say, and the result is under tab 3(a). I don't know whether you've had a chance to scrutinize those or consider them workable, but if you're content with them, we can . . . For these to have any effect at all, I guess they should be formally adopted by the committee. I don't know whether you want to do that today or have a good look at them and then have a very quick meeting a few days hence to decide whether you want to adopt them. We're in your hands.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, unfortunately I was not at the last meeting. Could we have a quick statement showing what the differences are? I have two documents here, one under (a) and one under tab 4(a).

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you would look at your minutes of the March 25 meeting, I think you'll find the items that show what was amended.

MR. KOWALSKI: That's fair. I have to go and meet with a school group right now, so perhaps a suggestion . . . I'll leave it with the committee. If the committee chooses to finalize it this morning, so be it. If they want to come back in the next couple of days . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I should remind you, if I may, that if this is considered urgent, we have authority from the House to meet by telephone.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I've read through this. The only difficulty I had was on the top of page 6 under item 12(c):

no further long distance tolls should be charged to the telephone credit card nor to publicly funded telephones except calls made to

cover emergency and urgent things. I thought there was some provision, because of the installation of telephones in members' houses, that they could use those telephones but they had to reimburse the Assembly for anything that was not covered by 6(c) or (d).

MR. CHAIRMAN: I suppose if something is charged and refunded, that would meet the

requirements.

DR. REID: Okay. As long as that's what the understanding is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You'd have to go the long way around and add a sentence and say that if something is caused contrary to this, you have to pay it back.

DR. REID: That's right. I think it might be wise to put that in.

MR. HYLAND: Unless you say "unless other arrangements have been made" or something.

MRS. CRIPPS: There was a long discussion about that.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I think that has to be an inherent understanding in this. We do not know when an election is going to be held, but I'll give you a practical example that I'm currently confronted with. This is a scenario, an example. The third week of September I book, through my communications allowance, a booth at a trade fair where I would spend three days meeting with constituents. If, beginning the first day of the third week of September 1987, the writ came down for an election, my dilemma is: do I notify the Clerk and say, "Gee, I now want to reimburse you for these fundings from my communications allowance because an election has been called?"

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think that point is aimed at by this provision. This is only telephone use.

MR. KOWALSKI: Okay. I'm sorry. The whole document -- I hadn't realized we were just on the telephone.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're at the top of page 6 of the document. It's subclause (c).

MR. HYLAND: Ken's question comes into subclause (d), the one following.

MR. KOWALSKI: I'm sorry; I thought we were beyond (c).

MR. HYLAND: Your question comes under (d): materials, et cetera.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I can't see that you're in a problem under (d) either.

MR. KOWALSKI: I just feel that I would be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It says, "prior to dissolution and delivery has not taken place," but you're going to do it anyway. If they've given you space at the fair and you're paying rent for that spot, it seems to me you're bound. It's like constituency office rent; it has to be paid.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I think the example brought forward by Mr. Kowalski is the same situation as if a member had already taken out an advertisement in a newspaper. The weeklies have a fairly long deadline in advance of the actual publication date. If the writ is issued between booking that space and the newspaper appearing, that surely is a legitimate use of the funds, because that advertisement is taken out as the member, not as the candidate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It seems to me that a commonsense interpretation of the guidelines would indicate that there'd be no trouble at all.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask about 13, on page 6. What does "as soon as possible" mean?

MR. CHAIRMAN: As soon as practicable.

MRS. EMBURY: Are you speaking about after the day the writ is called or after the election day?

MRS. CRIPPS: After the election.

DR. REID: That's after polling day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would be after the election. Not the day after; as soon as practical or possible after. That has to be not a technical or theoretical possibility but a practical one, it would seem to me. I think you have to give it a commonsense interpretation. Is that all right?

MR. HYLAND: The question I would have . . . I've been thinking about this since we set it, and maybe it just adds something else to the problem. Once an election has been called or has been had, what about those people who

didn't run again or those who may have been defeated in the polls being able to return here to close their offices, move their stuff out, whatever? Do they have to come up on their own hook?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't know. We haven't covered that. We discussed it. I've forgotten whom I discussed it with the other day.

MR. HYLAND: It would be a bit of adding salt to the wounds if, after they'd served, to close their office down they had to pay their own way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would have to be carefully worked out, Alan, because the guy might have decided to go to Bermuda the day after the election, and then if you had to pay his way back . . .

MR. PENGELLY: I guess you're supposed to move out the day the writ is issued.

MR. HYLAND: Even if you're not running, no matter what party you are, you're going to be involved in the election, at least election day. You're not going to be able to stay away from it, I would think. Anyway, it's just a question.

Did we do something with (c), or did we just go on to something else?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We just talked about (c). We didn't change it. We assumed that if it was charged and you paid it back promptly . . .

MRS. CRIPPS: We should have something in writing.

DR. REID: We should add to (c), I think, the provision that any charges not covered shall be reimbursed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Suppose you add a clause like that after the semicolon and say: any items incurred beyond the scope of this limitation are to be promptly refunded by the member. Is that all right?

MRS. CRIPPS: You see, Gerry, my phone went automatic sometime during Christmas. One day it wasn't; the next day it was. I know that I have a call there to B.C. I called the office and said, "When the bill comes in, let me know," and

I've never heard to this day. So I don't know whether it's on their bill, but it's certainly not on my bill. Until that time we gave the phone number that the call was coming from, and we just gave the other phone. I'm sure there's a December call to B.C. on my bill that certainly isn't government business.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The very fact that you put that out at the end of this provision indicates that we are anticipating that some personal items will be charged but that they will be refunded. I think it saves us putting a lot of fancy language in there.

MRS. CRIPPS: I'm happy with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any other discussion about these, shall we say, election-time guidelines? Do you want to consider them further, or do you want to have a motion now in this regard?

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, I'll make the motion that we accept them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That these guidelines be adopted?

MRS. EMBURY: Be adopted, yes. It's obvious that new things may come up, but we can't sit here and anticipate them all. Just as a question, I would like to know if this will be distributed to the present MLAs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, yes; right away. There'll be an endorsement on them showing that it's been approved by the Members' Services Committee.

MRS. EMBURY: I so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any further discussion? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Just before we leave this topic and the topic of guidelines generally, I thought you might be interested in having an outside look at a members' manual. It's in French; it's from Quebec. As you know, our Clerk understands French, and he has skimmed through it. I don't want to put words in his mouth or take them out of his mouth either, but he finds that they're pretty thoroughly done, with a lot of worthwhile

thought in them. Our Clerk Assistant has had a quick look at them. I can't boast about being too proficient in French, but I think I get the gist of them. I'll have a look at them too. There are parts that deal with the limitations on the use of members' allowances of various kinds. It shows you that somebody has gone at the thing pretty thoroughly and has tried to cross the t's and dot the i's.

MRS. CRIPPS: It also shows you that it takes a lot of paper to cross t's and dot i's.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The thing is that no member would have to memorize a thing like this. If they had the general principles in mind — and I think most of us do have those in mind. They're based on common sense and decency and fairness. This would enable the administration to give administrative effect to such principles. In the odd case where a member was in doubt, he could look at these or refer to the administration and say, "What's your interpretation of this particular thing?" I think it might save an awful lot of difficulty. I'm not suggesting we go into it any further this morning, but just to let you know.

As far as I know, unless you want to discuss now a date for another meeting, which you may well want to do — you may even want to make a decision that you won't set a date; leave it to the call of the Chair or something like that — the only other business is further consideration of the Fleming report. In that regard, you asked for two items of information, one of which I have. It wasn't possible to prepare the other as yet. We're in session, and the data have to be worked out carefully.

As you may recall, one of the two items was to report to the committee job descriptions which are in effect in our administration but are on a — what is it called? — best fit basis insofar as Personnel Administration is concerned. I won't repeat the examples, but that information is not complete.

The other information you wanted was circulated to you this morning, and that is a comparison of staffing, as it was with what is. If you will look at those sheets, we had a little difficulty. Those are the sheets that were distributed this morning. They're not in your books; we didn't have them. It took a bit of work to get those together. You'll see that the first two fiscal years mentioned on those sheets

are asterisked. The reason for that is that the data were not kept at that time in a way which would readily give the information we're after, but you can make comparisons with what happened shortly after the constituency allowances were introduced on the basis of the Miller report of 1979.

You may wish to ask some questions. Chuck is with us and may be able to answer some of those questions.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, this is interesting information, but I think it's going to take a little longer to digest and look at and consider than we have time available this morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It arose out of our Fleming discussion of last . . .

DR. REID: I know where it came from, but to try to deal with this right at this time and ask the right questions is maybe pushing things a little bit. Perhaps we should have this as information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's useful information to have for now and in the future.

MRS. CRIPPS: But as an overview it shows that the staff has doubled in the general administration in the Clerk's office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a bit of a problem measuring staffing to a nicety there because of the geographical separation between the two offices. If we were all in the same location, we could have more flexibility assigning staff back and forth, even for parts of days or for a few hours, but having them as far apart as they are, it's pretty hard to arrange things in blocks of time, in blocks of half days, and say, "For this half day you're going over there, and for this half day you're going over here."

I think the total staffing is more significant.

MRS. CRIPPS: That's what I was looking at.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you look at the man-hours in the final column, you'll find that it was 112.2, went up to 116, then 118, down to 114, stayed at 114, and then went up to 116. It's still where it was in '82-83. That's really the better criterion. I don't think it's fair to compare permanent jobs when you can get other people

hired on contract or part-time.

MRS. CRIPPS: But the discussion arose from the general administration, if I remember rightly, and the Clerk's office. That's what we were reviewing and discussing, and that's doubled.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you have a staff of one and you add one, that's a 100 percent increase. So it's really not that dramatic as far as bodies are concerned.

MRS. CRIPPS: Does that include the caucuses?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. I think you might find some surprising comparisons if you did include the caucuses. Sessional staff as well.

MRS. CRIPPS: So what does the Assembly include?

DR. REID: Just a question to the Clerk. This extreme right-hand column, man-year total, that is Hansard, the Assembly offices, and people like that.

MR. STEFANIUK: All of the sessional staff that is taken on.

DR. REID: But it does not include the staffs of the caucuses under their global budget.

MR. STEFANIUK: It includes sessional secretaries taken on by the caucuses.

DR. REID: But not the permanent.

MR. STEFANIUK: Not any of the permanent staff; it includes all sessional staff.

DR. REID: Quasi-permanent.

MRS. CRIPPS: Where are the secretaries and the researchers? Where would that be shown?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I guess under caucus headings.

MRS. CRIPPS: But it's in the Legislative Assembly budget, is it not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's true, but what we were discussing was augmentation of

administration staff rather than caucus staff.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, if you're saying that contract people under some of the years include some part-time staff of the caucuses, why is that included?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to ask the same question.

MR. ELIUK: The far right-hand column, Mr. Chairman, represents the total man-years that we have budgeted for under the Legislative Assembly budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As distinct from caucus budgets.

DR. REID: So it doesn't include the contract people, the sessional people, in the caucus.

MR. ELIUK: It includes everyone that is budgeted for under government members, under the NDP, under the Reps.

MRS. CRIPPS: So it includes all the secretaries.

MR. ELIUK: Yes, it does.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You mean it includes caucus staff?

MR. ELIUK: It includes all sessional or project personnel who are working for the MLAs and caucuses.

MR. STEFANIUK: Does it include permanent staff?

MR. ELIUK: It includes permanent staff as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But does it include permanent caucus staff?

MR. ELIUK: The man-years represent what is actually budgeted for and what we receive approved budget dollars for. Positions do not represent actual individuals. They're approved position numbers, but you may have a number of employees employed as project positions, which were included in the man-years opposite the position number. That's why your positions do

not necessarily equal what is represented by the man-year count.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any man-years in the total column that are paid for out of caucus budgets?

MR. ELIUK: This includes all the elements of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That includes people paid for out of caucus budgets.

MR. ELIUK: Yes.

MRS. CRIPPS: That's out of the Legislative Assembly, though, isn't it, Gerry?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right, but there are separate budgets for the caucuses and separate budgets for administration. Are the caucus budget people included here?

MR. ELIUK: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then these figures are of absolutely no use. We're trying to zero in on administrative help.

MR. ELIUK: The first two columns are administrative and the Clerk's office. That's the administrative staff. The last column is the total staff complement for the entire Legislative Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I take it all back.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, if Mr. Eliuk's last statement is true, then what it means is that the total staff of the Legislative Assembly which does not work in relation to the Clerk's office and general administration has gone down by 4.4 man-years between 1981-82 and 1986-87.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the administrative staff has gone up by 50 percent.

DR. REID: Has gone up by 8.3.

MR. ELIUK: The total man-years in '86-87 has gone up from '81-82 by 4 man-years.

DR. REID: That's the total.



MR. ELIUK: In total.

DR. REID: But there is an increase of 8.3 between the Clerk's office and general administration, which means that the rest must have gone down by 4.4, if my arithmetic is as good as it used to be. Sounds strange.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't know whether there's anything further we can do with this or, having regard to the time limitation that some members are facing, whether there's any purpose in our getting into a discussion of the Fleming report.

DR. REID: We've lost two members already, and others have to go.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Isn't there something happening at 11 o'clock?

MRS. EMBURY: No, Alan has gone.

DR. REID: Alan has left.

MRS. EMBURY: Could we go to 11:30?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Whatever you say.

MRS. EMBURY: Is 11:30 all right?

DR. REID: I have to go then, because I have an open-line show.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have to leave?

DR. REID: I have to leave at 11:30.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to go to the Fleming report? What's your wish? Do you want to start on the Fleming report for a half hour or so?

MRS. EMBURY: I think there's a lot of discussion that we'd like to have on the report, Mr. Chairman. If the other members agree, I think it's valuable. It clarifies it a little bit more for us all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then may we excuse the staff? Thank you very much.

[The committee met in camera from 10:51 a.m.]

