

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

[9:02 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I see that it's 9:02, so we might as well start almost on time. I trust that we have the ability to maintain a quorum for a while at any rate, given the various committee meetings that go on in all the caucuses.

First off, I welcome you all to this version of Members' Services, and I look forward to working together with you. Perhaps we could go around the table and identify who we are. Some don't know some of the staff persons, and that would be useful. You may see it as somewhat of a strange exercise.

MR. TAYLOR: Is there a secret knock, Mr. Chairman, or should I let just anybody in?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone except a Liberal.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, are you a Liberal?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sometimes in his generosity he has been known to be liberal.

Mr. Clerk, we want to work around the table that way, please.

MR. STEFANIUK: Bohdan Stefaniuk, Clerk of the House.

MS BARRETT: I'm Pam Barrett, with the opposition.

MR. WRIGHT: Gordon Wright, NDP.

MR. TAYLOR: Nick Taylor, Liberal.

MR. CAMPBELL: Jack Campbell, Rocky Mountain House.

MR. KOWALSKI: Ken Kowalski, Barrhead.

MR. STEVENS: Greg Stevens, Banff-Cochrane.

MRS. PRATT: I'm Margaret Pratt, the administrator in the government members' office.

MR. DRYDEN: Bill Dryden, chief of staff with the New Democrats.

MR. BOGLE: I'm Bob Bogle, Conservative Party.

MR. PENGELLY: Nigel Pengelly, Innisfail.

MRS. EMPSON: Louise Empson, committee secretary.

MR. SCARLETT: Rod Scarlett, David's right-hand man.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And hiding back there, the man who never says anything.

MR. JENEROUX: Doug Jeneroux from Hansard.

MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Chairman, I just had a note handed to me. Licence plate DRM-598: does anyone in this meeting have that . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry, Jack; that's for you. That's a vehicle that stalled out last night, the one that you're not supposed to . . .

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. STEVENS: Whatever that's all about.

MS BARRETT: This is real intriguing.

MR. CAMPBELL: We'll keep this quiet.

MR. TAYLOR: What address was it parked in front of?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a brief comment about the working of the committee. The comments that I make are to a large degree a reflection of the last seven years, when I worked on the Legislative Offices Committee and other committees of the Legislature, but Leg. Offices and in particular the search committees with respect to the Ombudsman, Auditor General, and Chief Electoral Officer.

Hopefully when we establish the dates of meetings and that, we can do that by common consent and consensus. Also, with respect to various items on the agenda and so forth, I would see that while it's very difficult to have meetings during session, perhaps the committee could deal with the things that might be described as being the more emergent issues. From time to time when the House is not in session, I would hope that we can structure

more lengthy meetings, such as full-day meetings, so that we can come back and concentrate exclusively on the matters before us in Members' Services without our heads going off in different directions about all the other agendas, hidden and overt, that we might happen to have.

Obviously, there are some issues that will seem to be more pressing than others. We're shortly into the whole budget-building process for the next fiscal year on top of it, so that will put some other pressures on us as we go further into the fall or winter with this current sitting.

Along that line, perhaps this is not the most convenient time for all of us to meet. Later in the agenda perhaps we can deal with that as well. There might be a better day of the week and a better time of day to meet. Again, I would hope that we might see ourselves meeting, depending on the pressures that confront us, but that we don't have to feel we have to get everything done within the first two weeks. Obviously, we expect not to have to fight an election for at least 18 months or something like that.

The other thing is that I truly believe that while we have to defend various positions from time to time, we can work toward developing consensus. If we can't develop it at one meeting, then perhaps we need to go off and find additional information and work out other means of communication so that we can deal with things much more expeditiously the next time rather than burn up all the time of a meeting trying to deal with a thorny issue where some of us feel that we haven't got all our homework done.

Other than that, from what I know of the personalities involved, I expect that we might even be able to live dangerously and have a little fun while we're getting our work done.

MR. BOGLE: I have a procedural matter I want to raise, Mr. Chairman. It has to do with who sits at this table. Other than those members of the Legislature who have been named to the select standing committee, I believe the only exception that should be made is if other elected members who are not represented at this table come in, that they then should obviously join us as colleagues, but that staff members, other than those directly associated with your office, should not be at the table.

MS BARRETT: May I ask a question, please? No offence, but it seems to me that if there are enough chairs -- may I ask why not?

MR. BOGLE: Quite frankly, it's just a matter of who is a member of the committee. If you wish to bring your staff member or a staff member wishes to come with one of the other caucuses, it's an open meeting, unless we go in camera, and they're certainly welcome to be here but not at the table as part of the decision-making process.

MR. WRIGHT: I agree with that, but the particular person that I think is being referred to is not sitting at the table as part of the decision-making process but just to help us.

MR. BOGLE: There are two people at the table: one from government and one from opposition. I'm being very fair in my comments.

MR. WRIGHT: I agree with your point in principle, but since there are spare chairs, it seems to me just as easy for the person to sit at the table. Of course, that person would not be part of the decision-making process.

MR. TAYLOR: I would like to support Mr. Bogle. Not being against those who come, but there's no limit to adding. Where do you quit adding? I think it's essential that the committee just be the members that are appointed to it, because there has to be a certain amount of open and frank discussion. In effect we're quite often discussing the staff: budgets, salaries. Admittedly it gets back and they compare it anyhow. For two reasons: one, you can't stop the enlargement once you start bringing in, and secondly, I think the very people we may be discussing, not as persons but salaries and things, are present.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make an observation. There may be a time when we would like to have someone come to the meeting and make a presentation or become involved in a discussion. I would suggest that at that time that person be invited to the table. That would be the only exception I would suggest. I agree with Mr. Bogle's comments as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is this room physically large

enough to deal with — when I stop to think of the fact that the media, for example, are entirely welcome; it can be a public meeting.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, on that point I would strongly recommend that we use the Carillon Room. There's more elbow room. My colleagues are all congested in here, and the table is not even full. I don't think we have all the members of this committee here. The Carillon Room, as far as I'm concerned, is a much, much better environment than this room. If we do have guests and others who want to come and if the decision is that the only people who'll be at the table will be members of the committee, there's certainly much more room in the Carillon Room for those individuals to sort out their papers and sit proximate to where their caucus representatives would sit. On that point I would strongly recommend that we move to the Carillon Room in the future.

MR. TAYLOR: It's also easier to move farther away from the smokers, Mr. Chairman.

MR. WRIGHT: They also have a smoke-crunching machine in that room, I understand.

MR. CHAIRMAN: May I take that as consensus. We'll continue as we are for this particular meeting, and we'll move physically to the Carillon Room, for example, or a larger room, after that. Is that agreed on both counts, the room and the seating?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DRYDEN: Excuse me; do you need me to stay at all?

MS BARRETT: I prefer you do.

MR. WRIGHT: Hang around somewhere.

MS BARRETT: You're allowed to stay right here for this meeting, Bill.

MR. WRIGHT: We'll sort it out next meeting. It might be an idea to have below the salt and above the salt at the meeting. Then our puny minds won't be confused by who can vote and who can't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps it might be easier for Bill to . . .

MR. STEVENS: If you want us to relocate, that might be a little easier.

MS BARRETT: Will you entertain questions about the agenda now?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I honestly believe that some very serious matter is not on this agenda, and on behalf of our caucus it's essential that it be part of today's agenda or an immediate agenda. That is the serious overspending of certain constituency accounts inherited by our members after the election. I'm carrying with me some examples; I don't have all of them. But I think that when I make the presentation, it will be . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll add that as one of the items under Other Business.

MS BARRETT: Good. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was my intention to ask for any other items there might be. Any other items of business that should be added to the agenda under item 4? Perhaps others may well arise at that time.

Mr. Clerk, do you have any comments you would like to offer to the members with respect to item 2(a)?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, the administrative support budget was reviewed in light of the numbers of additional members and the circumstances which have changed in the configurations of members within the Legislative Assembly. Adjustments were made to each and every one of those expense codes which were affected through additions or reconfigurations. I believe they're outlined in some detail with explanatory notes as to why the additional funding is required insofar as administrative support is concerned.

The last page of that particular submission, page 5, reflects in the largest part the statutory provision for indemnities and expense allowances and the consequential payment of benefits which apply to new members. So that additional funding is all attributable to the

increase in the number of members from the last Legislature to this one. There are certain amounts which are provided for enhancements of the Speaker's Office. There are reflections built into this request for additional funding to reflect the latest enumeration. As members are probably aware, some allowances are contingent on enumeration figures. We were of course made aware of the latest enumeration figures following that enumeration.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, to the Clerk. Mr. Stefaniuk, the little booklet that we have in the budget documents which deals with the Legislative Assembly, is that where this revised '86-87 -- which blue book that is given to each of us as members is on the Legislative Assembly?

MR. STEFANIUK: The one that was tabled with the Lieutenant Governor's message.

MR. STEVENS: Which column is that?

MR. STEFANIUK: That's the middle column, original 1986-87 estimates. That's what came into the House on April 10.

MR. STEVENS: So your explanation today, the additional \$187,000 added to that amount, gives us the revised '86-87 estimate?

MR. STEFANIUK: I'm sorry, I don't follow where . . .

MR. STEVENS: I went to your last page, page 5.

MR. STEFANIUK: No. Page 5 takes care of indemnities only. To determine the additional funding which we have requested, one looks at the bottom of page 4, which is \$498,687. The two figures are separated; the \$498,687 is separated from the \$187,487 because the \$187,000 figure is based on statutory requirements.

MR. STEVENS: My question then is: the statutory requirements, the \$187,000, and the separate figure of \$498,000, which is your submission, is normally dealt with by this committee? Both items?

MR. STEFANIUK: Yes.

MR. STEVENS: And then referred to the Assembly. Mr. Chairman, is that matter normally presented by yourself or just automatically approved by this committee and then referred to the Assembly? I just want to know what the steps are.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm a new man here myself.

MR. STEFANIUK: The estimates are normally approved by this committee and transmitted by the Speaker of the Assembly to the Provincial Treasurer who builds them into the type of blue book, being the estimates of the Legislative Assembly, that is tabled in the House with the accompanying message from the Lieutenant Governor.

MR. STEVENS: Is it your intention then, Mr. Clerk, to go through these items and then to recommend the package, or how did you . . .

MR. STEFANIUK: We can if you wish, or we could answer questions relative to any of the items which appear on the list.

MR. BOGLE: I think responding to questions, if you're agreeable to that, might be an appropriate way.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, when I look at the agenda, item A, it would seem to me that in the brackets it allows me to say what I'm going to say. But if it's more restrictive than what I want to talk about, please rule me out of order and I'll terminate my comments.

Essentially, I take some leverage from your initial comments when you basically said that we should attempt to look at the whole global approach. The comments I want to make are really on the whole global question. If we're going to be going into what you've got and identified under that section A, we're immediately into some discussions and some decision-making with some specifics. I wonder if it would not be a little more appropriate right at the beginning to perhaps just highlight a couple of comments with this whole question of the estimates of the Legislative Assembly. I would simply, by way of doing that, just like to draw members' attention to the second page. I guess under that first document called Canadian Legislatures: The 1985 Comparative Study and on the second page there is a ranking of basic

remuneration paid to private members. I would simply like to highlight to all members of the committee that if you look at the various jurisdictions, you'll see Alberta, and Alberta will rank seventh on that particular page in terms of basic remuneration. I recognize that responsibility for any adjustments in that area would rest with the Legislative Assembly Act and direction from the Legislature per se rather than direction from the Members' Services Committee.

Then I would like to draw all members' attention to page 54 of that initial document. On page 54 we have a table identified as table 15, Ranking of Legislative Budgets. They are listing in there the various jurisdictions within the country of Canada and the 1985-86 estimates. It's my understanding that in the Canadian House of Commons there are 282 members, and if you were to take 282 members and divide it into \$163,398,000, what you do is come out to a per capita allocation of \$579,425. If you go to Quebec, Quebec has 122 members, and they have \$56.9 million dollars; per capita allocation is \$466,413. Ontario has, in my understanding, 125 members with \$52.3 million for a per capita allocation of \$418,248. Alberta has 83 members, \$12.3 million, and a per capital allocation of \$148,063. British Columbia has 57 members with a \$10.5 million total budget, with a per capita allocation of \$183,490. Even Northwest Territories: there are 24 members, \$4.2 million, and a per capita allocation of \$177,000.

I just put that on the table, Mr. Chairman, as some background information and ask the question: are we looking at a global discussion here this morning, or are we right into a specific discussion with special funding requirements for the 1986-87 estimates? Or is it the feeling of the Chair and the committee that perhaps we should have a general discussion as to what direction we might see for the future with respect to this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair, of course, is at the mercy of the committee with respect to it. I would think obviously the way this is presented, it's an addendum. We're asking for additional funds to deal with where we are at the moment, so I see that as being the first issue that has to be dealt with. Obviously, that still has ramifications in terms of the general discussion on the whole thrust that lies ahead. I

would hope that the committee might initially deal on a global sense as to what's required for now. Then let's get on to the business after that. As you appropriately point out in terms of the statements here in comparison to other other provinces, we have some other issues here that obviously need to be addressed and fairly smartly in my estimation.

MS BARRETT: Mine was more detailed. Perhaps what Mr. Kowalski has done is introduce the subject. I'll come back to mine after we conclude this one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Other members?

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, what is required for now, however, is fairly easy if nothing is to be changed. But the question is: ought anything to be changed? I don't see how we can separate the two points, really.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm a little concerned as a new party, new representation, and so on. I'd like to get the budget straightened out because I'm sort of limping along on the mercy of the Clerk and the benefit of mooched equipment here and there. I'd like to get that straightened out. I think that has a fairly high priority before we go into the general. I think, taking Mr. Kowalski's point quite well, we should go into the others. But I think what's on a short list is the allowances for the NDP and the Liberal Party, which have changed quite a little since last time, might be hampering our style.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I think that Mr. Kowalski has raised some excellent points. I'm not sure we can't achieve both objectives at the same time if we set our minds to it. I think one of the dangers in separating the two issues and moving ahead with the lesser of the two points is that we may not come back to the larger issue. The larger issue really is addressing the fairness, the equity, and the needs in a global sense. I think if we were to address Mr. Kowalski's points and focus on them, that with the excellent material that's been provided to us in comparison with other provinces, we should be able to move on that rather quickly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just one other brief comment, Mr. Taylor, to your comments, appropriately noted, that concern the opposition

parties. The other matter raised here on the yellow sheets, pages 1 to 5 under section A -- a lot of that relates back to the increased number of seats in the Legislature itself. So a lot of that should be fairly automatic in terms of funding, once there is a basic decision made as to what a basic component may well be. Other members?

MS BARRETT: I would just say, Mr. Chairman, that I have no objection to discussing the overall House budget with the other contexts. I agree with Mr. Bogle. I think it can be accomplished in a successful way.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Kowalski raised the matter of the indemnities. Does someone have a proposal in mind to deal with that?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, the Members' Services Committee itself has no responsibility with respect to this item. That item is covered by the Legislative Assembly Act. The tradition in Alberta generally has been that following every general election, a committee is appointed to review this whole matter. As I recall, the last time this was done was in 1979. I'm not sure what the position of the various caucuses would be with respect to this matter, whether or not we would want to make a recommendation to the Legislative Assembly per se on this matter. My intent this morning was simply to alert all members to the recognition of the ranking of members in the province of Alberta. On the national level I believe we're seventh.

Secondly, there has not been a review made of this since 1979. I wonder whether or not this committee feels it's important in 1986 to have such a review undertaken and what the various positions would be.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, is it possible to have this study that was published in '85? Some of the figures Mr. Kowalski has mentioned on those two pages go back to '83. We know there have been changes. For example, in Alberta there was a change on January 1, 1986. Is it possible to very quickly have the Clerk update at least those comparisons, or is this study that's been provided by, I assume, the Canadian Parliamentary Association -- I'm not sure; I missed it.

MR. STEFANIUK: The study is undertaken, Mr. Chairman, by the Ontario Legislature, with funding provided from a private foundation.

MR. STEVENS: I didn't mean to suggest that we look at all of these things. We have our own priorities, I'm sure, as Legislative Assembly members and the other area that Mr. Kowalski raised. But I'm wondering, when you look at the remuneration, is it possible to have those figures updated by a quick phone call?

MR. CHAIRMAN: A survey will be undertaken I guess.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, would it be helpful if we separated the components of the vote that are not related to members' services and look at the Speaker's office and the ... We are dealing with two separate issues. I think the first might move rather quickly. If members were to agree to that, then we can come back and focus on members' services per se.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you agreed to that process?

MR. STEVENS: You said it better than I said it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before we commence, I would just briefly point out for the benefit of those who are new to the table that the 1979 study that Mr. Kowalski mentioned was made up of three individuals, if memory serves me right: one representing unions, one representing management, and the chairman was a judge. But another routing may well be that it could be a committee of the Legislature. It doesn't have to be that same kind of formula, just so that there are different ways of thinking about an approach to that issue when we come back to that.

Then following upon the suggestion of Mr. Bogle ...

MR. HYLAND: Maybe, Mr. Chairman, one thing you should say about that report is that even though it recommended certain increases, except for a couple of years those increases weren't taken. The two components where it kicked in were either down below and the thing didn't kick in ... One year it was signed and not taken by every member, and the next year for a year or two it was an Act of the

Legislature that pre-empted the original Legislative Assembly Act. The numbers that show in the Legislative Assembly Act that we should be at now, if you read the Act, aren't the numbers we're at.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If we might then come back and follow along the vice-chairman's suggestion. If you'd like to identify those items then please, Mr. Clerk.

MR. STEFANIUK: Page 5, of course, deals with statutory things, and I don't know what the committee's wish is on that. That is solely the members' indemnities and tax-free expense allowances and the consequential benefit package.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, to the Clerk. These are all as identified in the Act, even the temporary residence allowance? And every one of these things is either CPP or a requirement of our agreements for insurance or whatever? That's why I was trying to separate the two.

MR. STEFANIUK: That's straightforward.

MR. STEVENS: You could not have predicted 83 members at the time of preparing these, because you didn't know there would be an election. There were 83 members intended, but you never knew when you prepared these figures that there would be 83 seats in this year.

MR. STEFANIUK: At the time the budget submission was made, we were dealing with 79 members, so this additional provision would obviously have to be now to allow us to pay those four additional members at the statutory rate.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, moving right along, do you want a motion to adopt?

MRS. MIROSH: Right now the Liberals don't get paid?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It didn't say which four members. It may well include Calgary Glenmore.

If we might go back to page 1, knowing that when we get to page 5, code 900 will indeed get unanimous consent. We're now back to page 1 of the yellow sheets, 2(a).

MR. WRIGHT: I had a question on page 5, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll be back there. We haven't passed it. Sorry; we're guilty of jumping around. We're going back to page 1, code 100. Is that right, Mr. Hyland?

MR. HYLAND: That's the page I'm on. Being as I was late, I don't know if it was said. When we laid out the budget before, the staff had prepared it for 83, and some of us who were on the last Members' Services Committee said, "No, we should prepare for the right number of the Legislature," not knowing when the election was going to be, so everything was sent back and done on 79 rather than 83. According to the term, it could have been next year. Even if we had set it for 83, where would we have put the extra four people? Where would we have put that budget money? It was thought easier to do it this way.

MR. TAYLOR: Downstairs in the bathroom.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Back to code 100. Any questions with respect to code 100, salaries, wages, and employee benefits?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, to the Clerk. Could you just explain "changes in caucus representation"? What does that phrase mean?

MR. STEFANIUK: The changes that occurred in caucus representation created a fair amount of administrative workload. Caucus representation would include the fact that there were 39 new members, members elected for the first time to this Legislature, and the work, particularly in the personnel area, starting up 39 members and so on.

MR. STEVENS: New secretaries, new . . .

MR. STEFANIUK: No, this is the administrative workload. This is the overtime that had to be put in by the existing staff.

MR. STEVENS: Does that mean that because you have a new member, you have a new constituency secretary to train? I understand that. Thank you. I have no further . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, do you want us

to vote on each one of these, or do you want to collect the vote at the end?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's go on each one, please.

MR. KOWALSKI: I move that code 100 be approved.

MR. STEVENS: I second it, or do you need one?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the committee require seconds?

AN. HON. MEMBER: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you very much.

Code 130, payments to contract employees. Motion for approval by Mr. Hyland. It's fairly explanatory: security staff and one extra page. Is there a call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion to approve code 130?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously as well. Thank you.

Code 140, employer contributions.

MR. STEVENS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I assume that's a motion first. I appreciate your enthusiasm. Moved by Mr. Stevens as a call for the question. All those in favour of code 140?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I suggest that at further meetings we cut him off before he gets to his second coffee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is carried unanimously.

MR. STEVENS: Nick, I wanted to do this 20 minutes ago.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 2, code 200, supplies and services with respect to travel.

MR. STEVENS: I have a question. Mr. Chairman, if this committee determines in its discussions, either concurrent with other things, as Mr. Bogle suggested, or if we subsequently review it based on all our members' concerns and we wish to make some changes that are within the possible purview of this committee — let me give you an example. Perhaps we wish to consider mileage charges. Perhaps we wish to consider the number of days — I don't know if that is in this, Mr. Clerk, or in another code — when a member may be doing Legislature work here in Edmonton. Are we then limiting or requiring a special warrant at some point? In other words, can we approve this right now, the way it's presented, or should we be identifying those possible changes members might like to discuss at a later date and come back to it?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, this provision under code 200 really enables us to provide the existing services for the four additional Members of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. STEVENS: Only those four?

MR. STEFANIUK: Only those four. It doesn't provide for any global increase in any of the allowances for all members. That decision can be made at a future date. It could be determined, if and when that decision is being considered, whether existing funding will cover any additional amount the committee wishes to decide upon or whether a special warrant application would indeed be required to fund an enhanced program for the balance of the current fiscal year.

Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, I could just mention the fact that it will not be too far into the future when we will be considering the 1987-88 budget, however. When the review of those initial proposals takes place, consideration could be given then to enhancing any of the existing programs to become effective April 1, 1987, which of course would not affect any of the current budgeting, or the committee may wish to give direction in advance of preparation of that budget for the enhancement of certain

programs, in which case the administration would take the committee's direction into account and of course build the figures accordingly.

MR. STEVENS: That's a good explanation, Mr. Clerk.

For example, Mr. Chairman, if the mileage rate for all members, including the four additional members, were to be revised, are there sufficient funds in a contingency area?

MR. STEFANIUK: We would not apply for a special warrant, Mr. Chairman, until we got closer to the year end and determined what our financial position was and that a special warrant was indeed required. There may be some savings realized in the course of a financial year's operations by virtue of members in fact not using their various allowances in their entirety. If funding were available as a result of that type of practice, we may not find it necessary to seek additional funding and may be able to cover the cost of an enhanced program for some portion of the year. The means of funding is usually left to the discretion of the Speaker, who makes a final decision as to where additional funds will be sought, if they are in fact required.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With respect to that, the Chair has received at least one note from one member to look at the matter of the mileage thing, so we've started to get some initial information on that across the board.

MS BARRETT: I have a question about vote 200, travel, presiding officer. I note that in the original estimates for '86-87 there is nothing, and then there are additional funds required of \$30,000, which brings the revised estimate to \$30,000. I wonder if I could have an explanation of this. Is this what is otherwise rolled into some other vote or something?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, the original estimate for the Speaker's Office really had no provision for the Speaker's travel. The Speaker's travel for attendance at specific conferences and meetings was built into the general administration budget and was detailed in the original submission. However, there was no provision whatsoever made to enable the Speaker to travel the province, to accept

invitations from a variety of groups who may want to have the Speaker address them, to have the Speaker perhaps attend certain conferences to which he may receive invitations. For example, the Speaker has recently been invited to attend a conference being held in Canada of French-speaking parliamentarians, which could be of very real interest to this particular Legislature, but until now he has not had the funding to be able to accept that type of invitation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One other aspect. It's a change of approach to the Office of Speaker as indicated by myself, in the sense that I really feel there are situations where the Speaker in the nonpartisan role can be available to various groups — and we already have one invitation, the Junior Chamber of Commerce — to meet with them to talk about the workings of the Assembly as a whole. I would think that one of the obvious places may well be with various schools throughout the province. It's a willingness on my part to make myself available to travel throughout the province when the occasion may arise but also occasionally some of these other conferences that would come. While some of it could indeed be covered with my credit card, flying between Calgary and Edmonton, I certainly don't see the Speaker's Office as being simply related to Calgary and Edmonton. That's the reason for that extra.

MS BARRETT: Thank you very much. In responding to the answers I received, the reason I raised it is not to question a change within the Speaker's Office in the outreach capacity, which I think is good; only that this must be the one vote where it wasn't put down as the Speaker's Office. I believe all the other instances are identified.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On this point, or on another, Mr. Kowalski?

MR. KOWALSKI: I'm glad that Ms Barrett raised this point. It talks about enhancement, providing officers and support staff travel. It's quite clear in the Speaker's mind that it will be for the Speaker to attend various functions; it will not be for support staff to go and play an audit role in constituency offices. We've had that discussion in the past in this committee.

We're talking about the Speaker representing the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta, and when support staff travel, it's clear in the Speaker's mind that it's for those individuals the Speaker might choose to invite to attend with him at such functions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Such as the Deputy Speaker. I might be involved in some of these things.

I'm sure you saw the look of amazement on my face when you talked about auditing constituency offices. I thought: my God; who needs to do that? The other thing is that when I'm out that way, I'd sure like to be able to drop by and see the stuff, to see how the operations are going, even in Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Come on over.

MR. BOGLE: On that specific point, under Reasons for Variance, keeping in mind what Mr. Kowalski has just said, why don't we rephrase it so it's "enhancement, presiding officer travel" and take out "support staff"? I'm assuming the Speaker has some flexibility there, but it would certainly address the point made by Mr. Kowalski.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, I would just point out that it's fully intended that this entire amount will appear under the budget for the Office of the Speaker, so the expenditure of the funds will be at the Speaker's discretion. The reason for stating "support staff" in the explanatory notes is to enable the Speaker, when he so desires, to take with him an officer of the Assembly or his executive assistant or such support staff as he may deem necessary in carrying out his Speaker's functions.

MR. WRIGHT: Then for the word "and" should be substituted the words "with necessary."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. With necessary support staff.

On the same point, Ms Barrett, then Mr. Stevens. Mr. Hyland, I haven't forgotten you; you're on the other speaking list.

MS BARRETT: Only to support what Mr. Stefaniuk said. I understand what it means to do tours, and it's very conceivable that the Speaker would end up doing tours.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, if your duties preclude your going to Fort McMurray, can you assign Ms Barrett or me, or is it only the Deputy Speaker?

MR. HYLAND: I'd sooner send her than you, Greg.

MR. STEVENS: I'm sure. I'm serious, because it says "presiding officer."

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can all understand and appreciate the fact that I'm sort of feeling my way with this, but I would see that it would be myself who is going. The arrangements would be made with respect to the availability of myself to be able to be there, so I'm seeing it as being almost exclusively the Speaker.

MR. STEVENS: I think it's a very needed thing. I just wondered why we were limiting your decision to yourself only. You might feel that there's a very important function in Alberta and that you would like to designate the Deputy Speaker or a member of the Members' Services Committee to go. My own feeling is that if you assigned that, there's nothing wrong with that, but I didn't know if we were limiting your decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The advice I'm receiving is that I have the ability to designate, if that's agreeable to the whole committee. Thank you. That's useful.

MR. WRIGHT: But in the budget item itself, it will just be under Speaker's Office, so there won't be a sort of statutory restriction, as it were.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, does that mean I would get an honorarium as support staff?

MR. CHAIRMAN: In your case it could have very interesting ramifications all the way around. I don't think we will pollute the issue.

Are we ready for the question with respect to code 200?

MR. TAYLOR: Sorry; on a point of information. Being the new boy on the block, I don't understand "spousal travel." I may have missed it in the reading of the other

background.

MR. STEVENS: You get four trips: your spouse or guests.

MS BARRETT: That's your wife: spouse.

MR. STEVENS: Or your guest. Four trips per year.

MR. TAYLOR: They check it out that closely, do they? Four trips to where?

MR. CHAIRMAN: From your place of residence, wherever your wife resides -- I trust that's not Bermuda -- within the province. Four times a year she can travel with you, either here or to . . .

MR. STEVENS: Come to Banff-Cochrane.

MR. TAYLOR: Four round-trips a year to the residence.

MS BARRETT: Within Alberta?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's come back. Mr. Clerk, would you like to give the explanation?

MR. STEFANIUK: The provision was made at the request of this committee to allow spouses to accompany members on occasions when those members were to make appearances as guest speakers, as special guests, within the province primarily.

MR. STEVENS: And it doesn't need to be a spouse or a designated family . . . It can be anybody, like a son. You may have a single parent. I don't even know if we have any.

MR. STEFANIUK: We said "spouse," Mr. Chairman, and members of the family are a whole other area. There was an issue in the federal House, as you know, about that particular question with, I believe, Miss Carney. The question is: how far do you stretch it? How strictly do you want to interpret it? Quite frankly, when we get an expense account submitted, we don't ask for a marriage licence.

MR. STEVENS: My question, Mr. Chairman, is this: are we saying that, for example, the

Member for Calgary Elbow, who does not have a spouse, may not travel with a friend? Are we saying that a single parent may not take a dependent child? Is that we've said? I didn't ever realize that we'd said that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think that an offspring comes under the heading of spouse.

AN HON. MEMBER: Or a boyfriend.

MR. TAYLOR: Not even a boyfriend. It's something like connubial privileges. We're worse off than the penitentiary; you get 12 of those a year, you know.

MR. STEVENS: I leave it, but I'm shocked that we've made that decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we've put it down as an item to be brought back another time. Otherwise we're going to bog this one down [inaudible].

MR. TAYLOR: It's not visiting the Legislature; it's going on a trip with a spouse?

MR. STEFANIUK: No. This is going on trips. Perhaps I could clarify for Mr. Taylor that each member is entitled to make 52 trips a year between the place of residence and the capital. A spouse may use six of those trips.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In addition to these four?

MR. STEFANIUK: In addition to these. This provision is made to allow a spouse to accompany a member.

MR. HYLAND: When did we change that?

MR. STEFANIUK: That's always been the case.

MR. STEVENS: I never knew that.

MR. PENGELLY: I never heard of it.

MRS. MIROSH: Fifty-two trips with your car, I thought.

MR. STEVENS: It's not in our book; it's been secret.

MR. STEFANIUK: Fifty-two trips . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. STEFANIUK: Fifty-two trips between the place of residence and the capital by whatever means of transportation is most convenient; it's not necessarily by car. Some members regularly commute by air, some members regularly commute by bus, and some members use a combined travel mode.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Fair enough, but I think what caused most of the rumbling around this table was a surprise to me also: this matter of being able to transfer six of your 52 trips to your spouse, plus the four.

MR. WRIGHT: I see why they've been getting surpluses in the budget.

MR. STEFANIUK: I'll check on it. We'll have to go through orders and previous decisions, but I believe that is the situation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we'll note that one as well. Sorry to have spousal allowances being prejudicial to the Member for Edmonton Highlands as well as others, at the moment. We'll go for some clarification, but we're only too willing to supply bus or taxi fare between that end of town and here.

MS BARRETT: The best end of town.

MR. TAYLOR: I have another point of information, the green boy in the crowd. Can I rely on the Clerk to notify me, or do I have to keep a mark on the wall or somewhere as to all these little things: six and 26 and 52 and eight? Do you have a little computer that kicks out and sends me a note?

MR. STEVENS: When you're \$100,000 overspent, you get a call.

MR. PENGELLY: Through you, Mr. Chairman, to Bohdan. If you travel by bus and wind up at the CN Tower, does that include the taxi fare from the tower to the Legislative Assembly?

MR. STEFANIUK: You are entitled to make a single trip by a variety of transportation means. If you have to take a taxi at one end and then use a commercial carrier and a taxi at the other end, that constitutes the cost of a

single trip.

MRS. MIROSH: That was my question, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good. Now, I think we're back to Mr. Hyland. We are still dealing with vote 200 in its entirety. Mr. Hyland, did you have a question on that?

MR. HYLAND: My question is on mileage. I think we should do something with the mileage now rather than wait till the next year's budget. I understand that government rates have been raised to, I think, 24 cents. We've always had between a 3- and 4-cent difference in our mileage rate.

MR. WRIGHT: Is that 24 cents a kilometre or a mile?

MR. HYLAND: A kilometre.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, could I speak to that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, but I'm about to rule everybody out of order. I said earlier that we would deal with the matter of mileage afterwards and that I'd had at least one representation. Now I have four, so that's good. We're going to make sure the item comes up, but could we work our way through this. We've got it noted as a special item to come back to. Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CAMPBELL: On that particular point, Mr. Chairman, that was my point. All we're doing on most of these votes is including four other MLAs. If we're going to get into this discussion, a lot of the members, if they're not sure, could make a visit to the Clerk's office and get updated on these particular regulations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do I have a motion with respect to vote 200?

MR. WRIGHT: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. I'm a

little puzzled over what we're doing. We're approving this on a certain basis, but we'll perhaps come back and examine the basis later. Is that what we're doing?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have to go through this to make certain that the four additional MLAs are covered for this current year, so they're brought up to speed in the benefit package with regard to everyone else. The exception in this vote is that extra \$30,000 with regard to my office. The next part of it will be that if a motion were to carry at a future meeting or even at the tail end of this meeting — but I would assume it's more likely to be at a future meeting when more homework has been completed — we might then try to examine the matter of retroactivity or at least from July 1 or, if nothing else, make sure we build any increase, if there is to be an increase, into next year's budget.

MR. WRIGHT: So we're voting this as regular, subject to increases or alterations of principles somewhere?

MR. BOGLE: If I may supplement what you've said, Mr. Chairman. It's further to the Clerk's comments to the committee. It's important to recognize that when dealing with an item like mileage, which is not really a big-ticket item in the overall budget, there is some flexibility within the budget. But if we talk about services to members, because of the magnitude of the issue, we either address it now or we could wait for another full year because of the impact that would have on the overall budget. So with small items, there's some flexibility, as I understood the Clerk's comments. That's why we can come back to it without requiring a special warrant for that particular item.

MR. HYLAND: How do you know it's small? You don't know what I propose.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have the motion from Mr. Pengelly for approval of vote 200.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Item 260, advertising. It's basically the same problem.

MR. STEVENS: It's the same principle.

MS BARRETT: I move adoption.

MR. KOWALSKI: I'm sorry; I don't mean to be pedantic about this, but somebody has to explain to me what you mean by MLA advertising.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, that is a portion of the MLA communications allowance. Mr. Kowalski may recall that when we presented the initial budget for 1986-87, we explained that the communications allowance and the constituency allowance provisions were built into three expenditure codes apiece, because those expenditures most closely reflected the type of expense incurred by the member in using that portion of his allowance. Of a total of \$729,533 in the communications allowance, \$90,000 was placed under code 260 because experience had shown us that members were using approximately that portion of their communications allowance for advertising purposes.

MR. KOWALSKI: So the other codes, Bo, would be 260 and some more of this under 290, 350, and 400 as well?

MR. STEFANIUK: There will be additional amounts of communications allowance under 430 and 820.

MR. KOWALSKI: I'm trying to get that figure.

MR. STEFANIUK: I apologize, Mr. Chairman; the explanatory note is a little inadequate. It should explain that this is the provision for four additional MLAs under that particular allowance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could we have a motion?

MR. CAMPBELL: I so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Question?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Two-sixty is accordingly passed unanimously.

With respect to code 290.

MR. KOWALSKI: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Kowalski.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hyland.

MR. HYLAND: Oh no. My question is on constituency offices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. With respect to 290: freight and postage, picking up four new MLAs. All those in favour of the motion for approval?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously.

MR. STEVENS: Could I ask a question about it now that we've approved it? I just want to ask the Clerk if the calculation was based on the then current postal rate for a regular-size envelope; in other words, 34 cents, and there has been no Canada Post change?

MR. STEFANIUK: No. It is based on the prevailing rates because it has been pointed out to us that we cannot anticipate changes in rates.

MR. STEVENS: I understood that. So it's based on the prevailing rate. Thank you.

MR. HYLAND: I guess maybe that's where my question should have been asked, as it's related to the constituency office and furnishings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Which is?

MR. HYLAND: It was part of 350.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It will come back in the other one because there are communications in that other one, are there not?

Code 350, rental of property, equipment, and goods.

MR. HYLAND: I want to ask a question, or at least make a comment. I talked to one of the new MLAs, John Oldring, who started a new constituency office. The other member from Red Deer took over the existing constituency office because of its location. I haven't seen his

office, but he described the equipment, the furnishings that were sent. We've got to do something about the crap that we get from government services into some of these constituency offices. He described his chairs — I think four or six, none matching, some ripped. This has got to end. This is just foolish. Everybody through every department gets to pick it out; we get it delivered, and we don't get to go and look at what we get. It doesn't create a very good impression when somebody walks into a constituency office. You are the legislator, you're the one that makes the rules, and they see what your office looks like in comparison. I'm not saying it has to be ultrafancy, but at least it would be nice if things appeared reasonable and matching and decent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair entirely agrees. It was one of the reasons why, in moving around the province, I wanted to go and have a look at some of the equipment that's in various offices to see if it's as shabby as some of the stuff that I've seen.

MR. STEVENS: Come to Banff-Cochrane.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yours is shabby?

MR. TAYLOR: Sure cuts down on burglaries, though.

AN HON. MEMBER: Not necessarily.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, not to digress here but for future reference: could we have advice, then, on the policy? Because there are 39 new members, and I know that the Clerk and Public Works, Supply and Services have probably done a yeoman's job in trying to organize, with or without budget approval, to get the stuff out there, and I think we all appreciate that. At some point could we have an understanding of what it is each of us is currently entitled to have? I think that if we knew that, then we could ask. I would like to know if I can have anything I want up to a certain dollar amount, or can I have four chairs, and these chairs will have no wheels or three wheels or . . . If I could just have an understanding basically, if I have full flexibility: can I borrow the equipment? Can I rent the equipment? Can we have that in some written form?

MR. STEFANIUK: Can I just make a comment very quickly, Mr. Chairman, relative to furnishing constituency offices? There has never been a budgetary provision for furnishing constituency offices since constituency offices have come into being. The Legislative Assembly has relied entirely on surpluses available from the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services to furnish constituency offices. On the other hand, as an initiative of this committee, provision has been made for a variety of equipment to be placed into those offices. The equipment is acquired en masse by the Legislative Assembly and distributed to the members who require it. But furnishings have never been provided for. The fact is that we have absolutely no budget for office furnishings for constituency offices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not in this current one. Did you hear me?

MR. STEVENS: That's why I raised it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not in this current one.

MR. CAMPBELL: On that particular point, Mr. Chairman. Within the Legislature and Annex there is one member who purchased a sofa and a chair out of his own money for his office, because the fact is that government services said they couldn't provide them. I think that through this particular committee maybe some of the positions should be reviewed in regard to this allotment of equipment. Certainly as far as the members are concerned, we're duly elected by the people, we're sent here, we haven't been invited, and certainly we're the legislators for this province. I think that particular message should be brought to a few people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. So on our future items here, it's in addition to the matter of constituency office furniture and it's also furnishings for members throughout the whole complex of the Legislature Building itself, plus the Annex.

AN HON. MEMBER: I agree.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With respect to code 290, do we have a motion to pick up on this? Just briefly there, on the telephone office . . .

MS BARRETT: Code 290, item 350.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh. Who moved our motion on 350?

MS BARRETT: It wasn't moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It wasn't moved. Thank you. Do you have a question, please?

MS BARRETT: I have a question. Is some kind of breakdown available as to what proportion of that \$57,000 additional funds required goes to new equipment, compared to the reorganization of caucus offices? The question specifically can be answered by a yes or no. Is the increase for the equipment exactly proportional to the increase in the number of new MLAs that we have?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, the entire matter of automated office equipment, the word processors and the units, is contained in the documents under item 3 of the agenda which was slated for report. In the first instance it lists all the acquisitions which were required, and on the last two pages it shows the placement of all the equipment. The equipment was determined by the number of members in each caucus.

MS BARRETT: Fair enough. Question answered.

AN HON. MEMBER: Ready for the question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms Barrett has moved approval of item 350?

MS BARRETT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Question.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Item 400, and then we'll have a brief coffee break. Any questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, if we're going to do it that way, I'd like to get on with about another

three pages. Mr. Hyland, please.

MR. HYLAND: Telephones and equipment: I guess I don't know what the extra \$15,000 is. Are we going to get a new system instead of the system we've got, like a speaker phone where you — heck, I have enough trouble reading my own writing, let alone trying to hold onto the phone and write on it. I see I've got a few agreeing around here. Is there any chance we could go to something a little more modern, like the speaker phone, and maybe some sort of rotary system where you have more than one line?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is this with respect to the Annex, all the offices there?

MR. HYLAND: Yes. I'm asking for everybody's office, not just government members but all offices of Members of the Legislative Assembly. Maybe you guys have got newer phones.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is very happy to entertain this discussion because of the number of times I slammed the phone down in disgust over in the other building because I couldn't get a line out and all the rest of that. It was infuriating. Ms Barrett and then others.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, even though the Chair has just recognized the importance of this question, I would just like to say that perhaps in the interests of expediency of getting through all this, maybe what we could do is actually deal with questions pertaining to the specifics of the votes and come back to all the issues that are underlying the basic codes themselves, which I am certainly prepared to do, but at meetings after we've settled budgetary items.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am happy to be called out of order. It's noted.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Who is prepared to move the vote with respect to item 400?

AN HON. MEMBER: Ms Barrett is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Taylor. He is rather anxious to be seen on the minutes. Oh, no.

MR. TAYLOR: Oh, no. I thought you asked if I was prepared to move. I just wanted to get it on the record so that I could show my constituents. [laughter]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion as moved by Mr. Taylor.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Vote 400 carried unanimously.

Please make a note that we send out to the constituents of Westlock-Sturgeon that he had a unanimous motion.

Can we stand adjourned for a couple of minutes to grab some of the goodies and whatever that are over there?

[The committee adjourned briefly]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee members, might we come back and deal with item 410, repairs and maintenance of equipment. That one in large measure again takes into account the four new MLAs. Is anyone prepared to make a motion with respect to item 410?

MR. TAYLOR: This is a point of information also. I don't understand what they mean by "expansion of the MLA office automation system." What's "MLA office automation"?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, what we referred to just a moment ago: the restructuring of the computer system within the MLAs' offices and the acquisition of additional equipment to provide for the four new members and the restructuring of the office. This is the maintenance charge that is attached to that equipment which was approved under code 350.

MR. STEVENS: In our legislative offices.

MR. STEFANIUK: That's right.

MR. TAYLOR: In the Legislature?

MR. STEFANIUK: Only in the Legislature. There is no program in place to expand beyond the Legislature as yet.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Legislature and Annex in this context. Okay.

A motion by Mr. Pengelly for approval.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Item 410 carried.

Item 430, professional, technical, and labour services. Any questions in this regard? Fairly straightforward. A motion by Mr. Campbell for approval. All those in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Carried.

Mr. Wright, I realize you are carrying the added responsibility for your colleague on these two votes. All right.

Item 510. Any questions? All those in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Item 510 carried.

With respect to item 540 — there's a big item. Would someone like to give me the motion?

MR. STEVENS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Stevens, with respect to 540. All those in favour of that?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Okay.

Mr. Stevens, item 600, materials and supplies.

MR. STEVENS: May I ask a question, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Indeed.

MR. STEVENS: Promotional allowances are again based on the same principles, Mr. Clerk, except it says "requires increased inventory." Is that still based on the same principle, or is it all members have . . .

MR. PENGELLY: The same formula.

MR. STEFANIUK: The same formula. What we're finding, Mr. Chairman, is that the demand

on the promotional allowance items — that is, the gift items — has increased considerably, which requires us to maintain larger inventories, and we need the funding to be able to maintain those inventories to meet members' demands.

MR. STEVENS: I'll move the vote.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Stevens on vote 600. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you.

Page 4, item 820, purchase of data processing equipment. Yes, Mr. Stevens.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, if a constituency or a member does not yet have data processing equipment — I assume a number have and a number haven't — what is this for?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, this \$100,000 which was budgeted originally is a portion of the communications allowance. Our experience had shown that members were using their communications allowance to some extent to acquire word processing or data processing equipment in their constituency offices. To enable us to acquire that equipment on a member's behalf, we transferred a portion, namely \$100,000, out of a total of \$729,000 into code 820. But it is an amount that is chargeable directly to a member's communications allowance and simply enables us to make the expenditure out of this expense code.

MR. STEVENS: Is that sufficient, then, if there are — how many new members are there, Mr. Clerk?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, we've based this only on experience in the past year. We found that in the previous fiscal year we had transferred roughly \$100,000. The transfer process can be quite lengthy. It can be a month for consideration, a month coming back the other way, and in the meantime, if we don't have the funding in the proper expenditure code, the member who wishes to acquire the equipment may have a waiting period of up to

60 days before the acquisition can be effected. Rather than hold the member up, we transferred a portion of the allowance to this expenditure code, and that enables us to make the acquisition virtually immediately on the member's instruction.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, my only question is: given that there are so many new members, given that we've had an election, do you think that is sufficient in this case, or do you have enough flexibility that you can move from one to the other?

MR. STEFANIUK: We have flexibility to move. We are simply moving in a proportionate portion.

MR. STEVENS: Sure. All right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Campbell. All those in favour of the adoption of 820, please signify.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Item 850, purchase of office equipment.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, this would go along with what we just approved under 410, repairs and maintenance. First of all, we came on our knees, then we got a little more aggressive about it. But we're talking here about replacement, because we've got some outmoded equipment in one constituency office, and it happens to be in Barrhead.

AN HON. MEMBER: Of course.

MR. KOWALSKI: I need a new typewriter and I need a new photocopying machine. I'm going to get it under this?

MR. STEFANIUK: This does provide for some replacements, Mr. Chairman. Our experience with the photocopying equipment, particularly in constituency offices, has been rather unsatisfactory. We find that the equipment is just not standing up. We're now looking very, very seriously at another manufacturer's equipment and an upgrade in the type of equipment that is being placed in constituency

offices.

MR. KOWALSKI: I've identified a need in my constituency office for several years, so could I get a specific yes or no? I need a new typewriter; I need a new photocopying machine.

MR. TAYLOR: Quit lubricating the typewriter by pouring [inaudible]

MR. KOWALSKI: This is where the decisions are made, Mr. Taylor, and this is where we have to get some answers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your interesting representation has been made, and if you're the only one who makes the request for that kind of thing, then I guess you'll get your new equipment.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much — without a report?

MRS. MIROSH: And then those of us who are new get his leftovers?

AN HON. MEMBER: That's right.

MRS. MIROSH: Don't say that in such a friendly voice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's enough money here for many of you to make your application if you put it in writing PDQ, and let's see what we can deal with. I guess that's . . .

MR. TAYLOR: In the first four years you only used that for a flowerpot.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I guess one of the advantages of being on the committee is you know you can get the letter in very quickly, Mrs. Mirosh.

MR. HYLAND: I just want to say "me too" to his comments.

MRS. MIROSH: I have mine. I did mine quickly, without even knowing I was on this committee.

MR. CAMPBELL: I suppose that's one of the benefits of being on this committee, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Probably one of the very few.

On the motion of Mr. Pengelly for approval of 850, purchase of office equipment, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any, please say no. We won't rule on whether it's a conflict of interest with respect to the Member for Barrhead.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, on that point I would like to make it very clear that these meetings are advertised outside the halls of the Legislative Assembly and attendance by any Member of the Legislative Assembly is encouraged.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right. And so they should come here and reckon in that respect.

MS BARRETT: And listen to the petitions of the Member for Barrhead.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As well as other members, when it depends on other items.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With respect to code 900 on page 5 . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would like a mover first, please. Mr. Taylor, you scratched your eyebrow in the right . . .

MR. TAYLOR: No, I was just looking at "temporary residence allowance."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see.

MS BARRETT: I would take great delight in moving this vote, code 900.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. On the motion of Ms Barrett, all those favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Mr. Stevens and Mr. Taylor, are you voting on this for . . .

MR. STEVENS: Yes, we're agreed already.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Stevens was trying to distract me, but I fought him off.

AN HON. MEMBER: You'll have to tell the rest of us how you did that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Code 900 is carried.

It seems to me we are now ready to move to item 2(b), Official Opposition. Is that correct?

MS BARRETT: I move adoption.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a question of global funding and those kinds of issues. Am I getting a motion first or discussion? I'll take a motion. Well, we'll go first with discussion.

MR. BOGLE: I wonder if this is the appropriate time to go back to Mr. Kowalski's comment in a general way and the discussion of a comparison that he shared with us vis-a-vis other provinces. It seems to me that setting aside the special needs the Leader of the Official Opposition and the leaders of other opposition political parties may have, we're really talking about the kinds of services that are necessary for elected Members of the Legislative Assembly. If that's agreeable, why not have a very general discussion before we entertain any motions on specific matters, and allow it to proceed?

MS BARRETT: For clarification, Mr. Chairman, just what does Mr. Bogle mean in terms of "a general discussion"? Are we going to go back and review what was in the first section of our book today, which was the overall indemnities, that sort of thing?

MR. BOGLE: I'm setting aside indemnities, which is outside the purview of this committee.

MS BARRETT: Right.

MR. BOGLE: I'm speaking of the services that are provided to elected members and, based on the comments made by Mr. Kowalski, really discussing the process that we follow. If we

were to look at the principle of support for members, keeping in mind the needs of the leaders of the opposition parties as a separate item, then we may be able to move the discussion along very nicely.

MR. WRIGHT: Bearing in mind that I don't think we have the figures for the official oppositions in this first section here.

MS BARRETT: For the Representatives.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You mean in that report?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If this is the direction these are going, then while we're having this discussion this would also mean that we would be talking about all parties, not just dealing with the one here.

MR. TAYLOR: If I may speak on this, Mr. Chairman, with the Member for Edmonton Strathcona. I read that front part, but it really doesn't talk to any great extent about first, second, and third parties. It does talk about indemnities for leaders but not for the office. It doesn't seem to address the office expenses.

MS BARRETT: I move let's go for whatever it is Mr. Bogle wants to do.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I agree.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Mr. Kowalski is on my list, followed by Mr. Hyland.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like all members of the committee to really understand that I'm empathetic too. I think we may have a kind of dilemma in this committee, and I hope it doesn't really come to a dilemma. I think that first and foremost we have to appreciate that we are a members' services committee and our task and our job basically is to look at the services that are provided to members. The briefing material done on a comparative study on Canadian Legislatures points out what exists in other provinces in this country, including the Canadian House of Commons. The information may not be current to this day of July 1986, but

it nevertheless serves a purpose.

In the last number of years I think the record shows that there was pretty darned good co-operation among the members of the Members' Services Committee in recognizing the roles of different caucuses. But first and foremost in terms of the discussion we have to have, I think we have to identify if we are primarily going to be concerned about providing services to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and how are we going to deal with that? We also then have to take a look at the question of what caucus support will be to the various caucuses and how we're going to deal with that. We also have to take a look at what the role of the various leaders of various parties represented in the Legislature would be and how we're going to deal with that. There are a whole bunch of varieties.

What we in Alberta have done is develop a certain mechanism. It was based on principles that are clearly identified in the Hansard of this particular committee in the past. In drawing that to the attention of various members, if you look on pages 38 and 39 of that original briefing material, we're dealing with a section called "Support Services for Private Members." Private members includes all of us as MLAs. There are a variety of alternatives. The Alberta situation is identified on page 39. There are some specifics. You go over to the left side of the page and take a look at other models that are in existence in Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and the other provinces, and you see just a tremendous variety in terms of what is happening and how we're arriving at all of this. I think that it's time for a pretty major review as to how we're going to deal with the whole question of services to members, because that will, in essence, lead to the next one, and that is services to the caucuses. The particular briefing material on pages 42, 43, 44, and 45 identifies once again what is in existence with four various caucuses within any particular Legislature.

We've bent over backwards in the past to try and arrive at some mechanism, and I know that there are always conclusions saying, "Well, that's not enough; we have to have more," and that sort of thing. But we've got to have some principles that have to be identified with respect to this whole thing. We then have to move into the so-called constituency offices as well, because that's part of the whole service

that we provide to the people of Alberta.

I recognize that we have two major requests in the book that we have here today. We have a request from the NDP caucus and a request from the Liberal caucus. I see no request — and if there was one, perhaps I've misplaced it — from the third party in the Legislative Assembly.

MR. TAYLOR: They just stay the same, because there are no changes.

MR. KOWALSKI: I'm not sure what the principles are and how we want to arrive at this. But I want to find the solution to this. I think we have to find a solution to this, and I think we have to find the solution in a very, very amicable environment. I hope everybody will understand that the arguments that will be forthcoming until we find that will be very, very amicable. It has to be based on some principles, and yet at this point in time I don't know what those principles are.

Are we, first of all, going to be focussing on the private member or on the caucus? How do we define those two? Until we define those two, I think we're going to be troubled with finding a solution to the whole question. I think we have to recognize what's happened in the past and some of the statements and positions that have been taken. But to get this thing going, I really believe that our focus should be on the private member first and foremost. Until we resolve the concerns of private members, it's going to be very, very difficult to determine what it's going to be to the so-called caucus, because members have different views and positions as to how we should deal with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Dealing with all of them — for clarification, you raised one point: no submission for any change was made by the Representative Party. Is that correct, Bohdan? Do we have it on record that they're happy enough with what their funding is?

MR. STEFANIUK: They were contacted and asked whether or not they wished any changes to their original submission, and their response was in the negative.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, then. That was for clarification. Is there additional response with

regard to dealing on the individual basis or on a caucus basis?

MR. CAMPBELL: I agree with the statements made by Mr. Kowalski. The fact is that I think we should have some upgraded information in regard to other Legislatures, in regard to members. I mean up to date; not last year but this current year. I think the members should take some time thinking about this, get that information, and we should discuss this at another meeting.

MR. HYLAND: Partly on the same thing Ken is on. I was looking for it in the old Hansard I got out from the first Members' Services meeting three and a half years ago, when we talked about this. I said somewhere there — I was reading it over; I can't find it right now — that once we're elected, we're individual Members of the Legislative Assembly and some individual Members of the Legislative Assembly, according to the parliamentary system, have certain added responsibilities and that we should deal with every Member of the Legislative Assembly being somewhat equal and deal with extra responsibilities as a different item, an extra that's added to the operation of it. That was where last time the Members' Services Committee came up with X number of dollars per opposition caucus member plus a certain number of dollars per office.

According to our last minutes, if I remember them right, we only covered two oppositions in that allotment, because that's what there was funding for. We didn't make allowance in that for three. That former committee hasn't got any influence over this committee; this committee is totally on its own to decide. That's why I'm a little surprised that the Representatives never put any proposal in even just to say, "We wish the same." That's a whole new consideration, because it's a whole different situation.

I think we should be dealing with the added responsibilities as well as the individual members. When it comes to caucus allotments, I don't really care what the NDP or the Liberals or the Representatives do with their money. All we should be dealing with is global amounts, and I think I was the one who made the motion last time that we deal with global amounts. How you, or we in our caucus, work it — that's the way the system works. If you want to hire a

\$100,000 researcher and use it all and not have any secretaries, so be it; that's your business, nobody else's.

I think we should be dealing with the individual members as an identity. When we come to deal with the caucuses, it should be global amounts and not a set amount. "We don't think you should pay your head guy \$25,000; we think it should be \$21,000 or something like that": that's really none of our business.

MS BARRETT: To answer Mr. Hyland, first of all, we provide that information as a matter of courtesy, just as the information provided for us with respect to votes respecting new members is included in these books. So it's just a matter of courtesy.

Secondly, either I'm not understanding or I understand and I disagree. I don't understand why we can't just go on to the next series of votes with respect to changes in caucus needs. We somehow didn't have a problem doing that in terms of caucus reorganization, as explained by Mr. Stefaniuk, or new members or whatever. I think the same practice has to apply with respect to our submission.

We ourselves as a caucus, and I speak on behalf of a caucus, have a lot of decisions to make; we have some planning to do. I for one, on behalf of 15 other members, would like to make representation that we don't delay this, that we get on with it. If there are questions about private members, my bid is, let's deal with them en route.

MR. BOGLE: I'd like to go back to the opening comments by Mr. Kowalski. As a former member of the committee, he's obviously spent a lot of time thinking about the process, whereas speaking for myself, I'm relatively new to the workings and functions of the Members' Services Committee. As I recall, Mr. Kowalski said that we had to make some decisions based on principle and then we could go on and fit numbers in. As I recall, he said that one of the key principles we have to decide is: are we going to deal with members as members of caucus or as elected members of the Assembly? I heard Ms Barrett a moment ago opt for the caucus approach.

I guess I'd have to take strong exception to that in that I feel so strongly that the electors in the province of Alberta have sent to Edmonton 83 members to represent them. We

are now talking about the services for those members who are not part of Executive Council, not part of the government per se. It seems to me that the support provided to those members should be on an equal basis. I again stress that the Leader of the Official Opposition and other opposition party leaders have to be given special consideration, but as members, I don't believe that the Member for Edmonton Kingsway is entitled to any more or less support than the Member for Taber-Warner. Therefore, I feel that the principle that the support should be equal to all members is one that we should address first and foremost. If that's not the view of the committee, if we're going to opt for the caucus approach, then we can address our discussions and thoughts accordingly. I think that's fundamental.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could the chairman interject for half a moment to members of the former committee and to the Clerk. Has a basic figure been worked out for individual members which is sort of the baseline?

MR. STEFANIUK: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We don't have that? I see.

MR. HYLAND: There was. It was just arrived at arbitrarily and was used, but it wasn't the same for everybody. That's what people are saying: it's time to make it the same for everybody.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you mean it varied from urban to rural or from caucus to caucus or both?

MR. HYLAND: Caucus to caucus.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I see.

MR. TAYLOR: Speaking on the issue, I'd like to go along with Pam and maybe point out that I think we can do the two things fairly closely together, maybe not contemporaneously but one following on the heels of the other. I recognize the argument that in this modern day and age the average MLA should have access to research and information to a much greater extent than he or she has had in the past, because they're becoming more independent,

not so much a part of a machine. We must remember that the way our system works, at least the way I read it, we in opposition — the Official Opposition, and we are a recognized party, as I said, with four seats or more, and then there are other parties. You really have three categories in your opposition.

The governing caucus, if you want to call it that, is already budgeted in what you call your administrative staff. You've got your cabinet and researchers and everything. That budget goes through in the estimates. All we in the opposition are arguing is that layer that's equivalent almost to the cabinet. If you follow the Athenian idea that you propose and we oppose and the House disposes — in other words, the opposing groups, in order to match up against the proposing group, the cabinet and its researchers, is a caucus. I don't think it's a layer of equating our opposition groups with the MLA groups. I think we're talking on two entirely different levels. We're talking about funding opposition groups versus the cabinet or the governing group, not versus MLAs. I agree with you. I think the MLAs should have more support. But let's do the first.

Lastly, I would suggest the greatest argument for back-bench government MLAs to get their services increased would be pointing out the opposition budgets that are already passed. In other words, it's a lever for you.

Once again, I don't buy the argument of equating us to MLAs; I think you equate the opposition caucuses to your own cabinet group as far as opposing and proposing.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, I don't think the gap between the global approach and the individual member approach and what Mr. Taylor has said is all that great. You can't pick a global figure out of the air. You must know the elements that make it reasonable to have that global figure. Therefore, it does come down to seeing what is proposed to be done with this figure for this particular caucus.

As to the idea that all members should be treated equally: for what? As services are needed in the constituency, what we call casework, yes; I don't see any reason for a difference there. But it must be recognized, as Mr. Taylor has recognized, that when the opposition, particularly the Official Opposition because of the customary role of that body, has to deal with scrutiny of government legislation

and action, there has to be a much greater backup for the caucus members that's charged to their budget than for government members. As Mr. Taylor says, the research, the foundation for government proposals and so on has all been done outside the individual MLA's budget. This is a very, very obvious point, but it is this superadded part that you must admit has to be added to the individual opposition MLA's budget, which has to be the same as all the rest; i.e., constituency casework.

MR. BOGLE: I'll make a comment in response. I think that we may be very close to the same objective, only we're taking different paths to get to it, in that the recognition that I spoke of for the leaders of the parties, all three opposition parties, in varying degrees — the Official Opposition has a role to play that is slightly different from that of the third or fourth parties in the House. But I come back to the fundamental point in my view, keeping in mind the separation in the Legislature between the government, which consists of the Premier and members of Executive Council, and all private members, and our committee is dealing with the question of services to private members.

I'm not going to dwell on the point, but I will restate that I think you can achieve both objectives and do so by using the Quebec or Ontario approach, which recognizes support to private members, and then recognize what additional support is needed for the members of the three opposition parties.

MR. KOWALSKI: We have specifically before us a summary of budget estimates that has been put forward by the caucus of the Official Opposition that sees a 1985-86 forecast of \$344,278 with 1986-87 estimates to go to \$935,237. That's a substantial increase. I'm not going to debate the merit of it other than to say that I think we should be making decisions on principles. What are these principles that we're talking about? I would like to advise members, because I think consistency of argument is very important, that on May 2, 1983 — I'd like quote from the Hansard of this committee meeting a statement made by the representative of the NDP caucus, Mr. Martin:

Let's look at what the role of the opposition is. Are you saying that if there were a big opposition, it would end up

costing you a fortune — each member if it were that close. I don't think the opposition would need that much more. It doesn't matter whether there are two or 32; the role of the Official Opposition and the opposition is the same. We still have to get ready for the same amount of time we're there. I'm sure it's not going to shorten. I don't think there should be a corresponding — let's say there were 30 members in the opposition at some point. I don't think they should get 15 times as much as they got. Surely with more MLAs, you can begin to do a lot more research on your own.

Page 105, Hansard, May 2, 1983.

I've indicated before that we should be making decisions on principles. If that's the position that led to certain decisions made on principles in 1983, we've now arrived at the point where the opposition has certainly dramatically risen in numbers. If I take the position at that time to be the position — thought out, argued, and reasoned. Now I look at the estimate that we have for this day, and I see almost a tripling. Once again, I come back to the point I made before: what is the principle that we're talking about? Are the words of 1983 now out the window? How do we deal with it today?

MS BARRETT: I'd like to respond immediately to Mr. Kowalski's observations. In the first place, the representation within the Official Opposition has multiplied by a factor of eight — I guess that's pretty obvious — and the requisition for additional funding has multiplied by a factor of less than three. So the principle that was enunciated by Mr. Martin in 1983, as quoted by Mr. Kowalski just now, is not necessarily very different. It would occur to me that, yes, Mr. Kowalski is in fact talking about the budget that has been presented.

Secondly, I would observe that we are talking about offices here as well as individual members. I think that is exemplified by the speaking and voting on matters pertaining to the Speaker's office, which is different from the member who is now sitting at the head of this table, and we recognize that. So I think that we are within legitimate parameters in this discussion, and I would say that in fact the discussion is already under way.

MR. TAYLOR: Speaking to it, I think Mr. Kowalski has a good point, and it's well that he should quote what Mr. Martin said earlier. But certainly when I saw the budget come in and we started to analyze it, I thought the Official Opposition budget was very reasonable. As a matter of fact, it was lower than I thought I would have submitted. If you break it down in analysis, prior to this election the Official Opposition got \$172,139 per member. That's the old '85-86 forecast. Now it's \$58,452, almost a third. So certainly Mr. Martin has recognized with a vengeance what you're talking about and has put in a most reasonable request. As a matter of fact, we're disappointed that it's so low, because we wanted to hitch our cart onto it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wright.

MR. WRIGHT: My remark has already been made by others.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If one is allowed to muse out loud for half a moment. To use a hypothetical situation here, if in the course of the combined wisdom of this committee, the group decided to approve what has been proposed by the Official Opposition, and you did a discounting for the office of the official leader, and then you did your division by the number of members, and that figure is X, are we then in the mood to think that the Liberal party gets four times X, plus a certain amount added on for the leader of that party, and that the government members therefore will also get exactly X so that we then have a consistency of approach with respect to all members in the House? Fair?

MS BARRETT: It may seem a very judicious course to follow, and I now speak on behalf of both the Liberals and the Representatives, having experience at that level as well, but it's not necessarily true that it makes sense. For example, being an Official Opposition caucus, every time a constituent gets mad at his or her government member, believe me, they phone the opposition. That changes the sort of needs you have. There are all kinds of regional considerations that come into play. Grant Notley used to get calls from surrounding areas that required attention. I quite frankly wouldn't be a bit surprised if that happened to Nick Taylor. So I'm not sure that that particular

approach would answer the question. I mean, it seems judicious, but given the nature — at this point I do agree with Mr. Kowalski and Mr. Bogle, that we must entertain a discussion about what it means to act in a particular role. I think that would come into play for the government members' caucus, the Official Opposition caucus, and the recognized party caucuses as well.

MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Chairman, in regard to Ms Barrett's comment, I would like to relate to her as a government member that I don't have the opportunity to make excuses or say they're not doing this or they're not doing that. When a constituent comes to me — they want a piece of highway or whatever it may be — I have to react in a very positive manner. I'm not unlike the opposition members. I go to the minister and make my case, and a decision is made. So I don't really go along with your argument, Ms Barrett.

MR. HYLAND: Just to say two things. Firstly, Mr. Chairman, following with your theory, we're looking at \$692,000 and some for the opposition once we've — if I remember the figure rightly, roughly \$243,000 for the leader's office, assuming we did the same as last time. That's taking that assumption. So that's the number we're dealing with.

Secondly, to comment on your — that knife cuts both ways. People who are upset with their member phone the guy next door. Sometimes he's opposition; sometimes he isn't. They keep on phoning, so I get calls from Bow Valley, from other places too. I get calls from Bob's because they know me. He gets some of my calls because they know him. So that works both ways, not just one way. It isn't just the opposition that gets the calls.

MS BARRETT: May I read into the record that I apologize; I certainly didn't mean to upset the members. I was just using that as an example.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think anybody was upset.

MR. HYLAND: I wasn't upset; I was just illustrating that ...

MR. TAYLOR: Damned mad, that's all.

MR. HYLAND: The extra stuff can happen the other way too; that's what I'm saying. It doesn't necessarily go just one way.

MR. STEVENS: Before I make a comment, Mr. Chairman, could I ask a question? I don't have the information in front of me. Just roughly and approximately, what is the amount provided in our last budget for, let's say, the Representative Party, the NDP, and government members? I appreciate that the Liberal Party was not represented. Are these figures here just pulled out of the air?

MR. TAYLOR: If you go to the Liberal budget, we've put in what the Representative budget in the last — \$214,000.

MR. STEVENS: So the Representative budget was \$214,000, and the Liberal budget is the same roughly or with some modification.

MR. TAYLOR: No, we tried to come in between. We have less per capita than the ...

MR. STEVENS: Okay. So we won't count the Liberal budget yet. What was the NDP budget at that time?

MS BARRETT: \$352,000.

MR. STEVENS: And was government members identified as a separate — how much was it roughly? I appreciate Mr. Taylor's comment about cabinet members and so on.

MR. STEFANIUK: \$944,597.

MR. STEVENS: Now there are four new members, of course. I'm just following up your comments, Mr. Chairman. That's roughly \$1.5 million. I presume that four members — it could be argued as to what capacity they are. But there are 83, so one could make an extrapolation on that. Maybe you can argue with my comments. There is one Speaker, there is one Premier, and there are a number of cabinet members in the government caucus, leaving 35 members. There is one Leader of the Official Opposition and 15 members of his party; there is one leader of the Liberal Party and three members; and there are two members of the House who are not represented today.

Is there not some way of looking at other

parliaments? I don't know if this is Mr. Bogle's or Mr. Kowalski's concern. But if one took a figure of \$90,000 or some other number and worked those out and then added to that number an appropriate amount recognizing the role of the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Party -- I would argue about the leader of the Representative Party -- is there not some appropriate way of doing that, to give each member more flexibility than we presently have, to give the Official Opposition its special dollars that it does need to do its research and to respond and to propose, and to give the leader of the Liberal Party the same opportunity in his caucus? Did our committee wrestle this to death the last time and find that was not a good way to do it? I don't see the problem with it. That would allow, Mr. Taylor, the cabinet to do what it does. It would allow you and Mr. Martin to do what you must do. Why is that a bad way of going? If we look at a global amount, just multiply it out and give the members the flexibility, and then add to those amounts the appropriate amounts for the leaders' important role in the House.

MS BARRETT: I'd like to ask a question directly of Mr. Stevens. When you say "and then add" according to the status of a leader, you're not referring to the allowance of a leader but you're talking about the overall caucus operation that would go along with it?

MR. STEVENS: Whatever the leader chooses to do.

AN HON. MEMBER: But through the leader.

MS BARRETT: Yes, I understand.

MR. STEVENS: I sort of agreed with Mr. Hyland that how you spend the money is best suited to you. We don't need to know your staff arrangements; I don't understand why we need to know that. In other words, we had \$1.5 million allocated in the last Legislature for this function that was apportioned in the ways in which the committee finally decided. We have a new party represented and we've had changes in the House. Can we not take some amount of that and determine it? Or is that too hard for us to do?

MR. TAYLOR: May be out of my turn . . .

MR. BOGLE: If he wants to respond, certainly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If Mr. Bogle is willing to wait, if you're just responding to that.

MR. TAYLOR: I notice Mr. Stevens is an engineer like myself. We sometimes get our jollies trying to work out proportions and tensions.

MR. STEVENS: Yes, I just did it.

MR. TAYLOR: I did a lot of playing along the lines he's talking about, and I seemed to come up with the idea that each time you added a member, there was an \$8,000 reduction over what it would be if you started out with just two members. Of course, I started figuring out then what your backbenchers would be. You get a fairly huge reduction if you get up to 60 people. I happen to be in sympathy with you, Mr. Kowalski, because I feel that the more the backbenchers are informed and the more research they have at their hands, the more likely they are to start trouble in the government than they are on our side. In other words, it's a sort of little underground we have working for you, the better informed you are. So I like to think that you're going to be able to hang your hat on better services for the back bench on the government side by aiding the opposition, because you use that as an argument.

If the Official Opposition is cut down on the amount that's allotted to it, we all suffer. The only people that gain by the Official Opposition being cut in the budget is the cabinet. Maybe we should throw Mr. Kowalski out, but the cabinet is the one because they have the budget with everything going on. It doesn't matter.

They would like to have -- I wouldn't say they would like to have. What I am getting at is that the only counter information source to any cabinet is its own back bench, which should be informed, and the Official Opposition. So I think it behooves those that believe that the MLA, particularly on the government side, should be strengthened to be doing all possible to strengthen the Official Opposition, because then it feeds back to ourselves. I think you're in the danger of shooting yourselves in the foot here by having a cabinet minister suggest that we should maybe keep the opposition down a little bit, because it will be coming back onto

you people with a hell of a lot more vengeance than it will onto us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think the cabinet minister said that, with all due respect, Mr. Taylor. He was arguing for equality, in his presentation, for all members.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, but perhaps . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: In fact, this is essential. We're not here to turn this into a polemic.

MR. TAYLOR: I just wanted to say that I think the philosophy of having a well-informed MLA and an MLA that has a staff to answer constituency problems and that is a very important one. Let's face it; it's also going to help you in generating policy to put the pressure on the Executive Council. I think your well being, as is my well being, is very closely tied to the Official Opposition. I can't see pulling down the Official Opposition, because I think that when you do that, you pull down the second and third parties and you pull down your own government back bench.

MR. BOGLE: It's my turn, and for the record I want to state that as a former member of Executive Council, I know from my many discussions with Ken Kowalski when he was not a member of Executive Council that the views he has expressed today are consistent with the views he has expressed over the years, that we should not be talking about pulling anybody down but rather enhancing the role of the individual members of the Assembly.

If I may now make my point. I wonder if the committee is ready to entertain a motion. It seems to me that there are really two schools of thought, the one put forward by Mr. Kowalski that the support should be based on a per member basis with special recognition to the leaders of the various parties, and the second approach, as expressed by Ms Barrett, that we look at global support based on caucuses. It seems to me that until we find out the view of the committee on that fundamental question, we really can't address items 2(b) and (c) on our agenda.

Clearly, depending on the will of the committee, we can then either move today and address those two items or go back and do

further detailed examinations of the numbers of what would be necessary in terms of both per member support and leader support and come back at an early opportunity and get this issue resolved so the various parties can get on with their longer term planning. I agree with you; you're in a straitjacket now, and it's not a matter that any of us enjoy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair senses that we are ready to entertain a motion. No matter what happens in all of this, the Clerk . . . We are indeed making certain that the various caucuses are being funded at the moment. They're not being hounded by creditors and things like that and personal guarantees on Nick Taylor's loan. Mr. Wright, is this a motion?

MR. WRIGHT: Dealing with Mr. Bogle's idea, I do wish to stress, Mr. Chairman, that it seems to me that the difference between the two approaches really disappears on analysis, because, at the risk of repeating myself, you just can't pick a global figure out of the air. It must make sense in its elements, on the one hand; on the other hand, in saying that the extras come from the leader's allowance, we agree with that, if by leader's allowance you mean all the extra research that has to go on and does in fact go to other places than the leader. There are critics in each shadow portfolio, for example, who need the benefit of that research. So I'm not convinced that we are really talking about different things.

MR. BOGLE: I agree, and I think I made that comment early on, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the chairman sense that the two of you want to have a fast coffee break outside the hallway to come to a motion, or do both of you have a motion in your hip pocket that you can agree on?

MS BARRETT: I think the chairman is very sensitive to the members of the table.

MR. TAYLOR: If you want a motion, I would move approval of the Official Opposition's budget in a global amount. I agree with Mr. Hyland. I think that picking away at what goes for repair and maintenance versus material and supplies is silly. I think we should vote the global amount.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For purposes of the meeting, the chairman left the Chair one minute ago because duty called. If any of the rest of you would like to wander around . . .

[The committee paused briefly]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, group. The meeting is reconvened. The new coffee is about to be brought around. The Chair recognizes Ms Barrett with a motion. Is that correct?

MS BARRETT: Yes, we had a chat. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to do that. It seems to us that there is a consensus — and I know this is not supposed to be partisan — but amongst certain government members in any event, that what we have to be doing is looking at a per capita allowance for the legislative functioning of each member of the Assembly. I believe I'm right in that some brief calculations would indicate that with, say, 37 non-Executive Council members of the government side and a budget of \$944,000 as it stands right now, that would be bringing that into the area close to \$30,000 per member.

On that basis, we'd like to propose that we discuss, if this is the consensus of the table to look at a round figure by member and then make allowances for the status of a caucus, that we look at in the area of, say — and this is open to discussion, as is everything — maybe \$40,000 per member and then adding on top of that for the three caucuses according to their recognized standings.

Maybe we're jumping the gun on this, but it's just that it seems to us that it's either that or we have to come back again and again. I petition the people at this table to understand that while what the chairman has said is true that we don't have the creditors nipping at our heels, at the same time we do not feel comfortable in expanding our complement of staff to do the sorts of things we have internally decided we want to do, including keeping up with just the research and, alternatively, for longer term plans. So maybe that's the sort of thing we could all agree to look at.

MR. BOGLE: If I could respond to Ms Barrett's general observation, I would suggest that it is premature to discuss dollar figures. I think we should stay with the global concept of services

per member and then additional services as required by the leaders. How the leaders decide to use those resources is certainly within the purview of that individual plus the caucus. But we should stay with the principles and in no way at this point, because we would need to go back, as I am sure you would like to, to the private members of our caucus and discuss with them the concept in a more detailed way relative to numbers.

MR. TAYLOR: I just have a question. Am I to take it that you don't like the idea of a global budget, just as it is here? Your caucus is pretty adamant about seeing so much per member than so much per caucus duty?

MR. BOGLE: That's merely after looking at the comparison of other provinces and looking at the Ontario and Quebec models.

MR. TAYLOR: Maybe just to do it with my fellow engineer, I've run it through here. One of the advantages of sitting here by yourself is that you play with calculators. It isn't that hard to come up with a figure that's in the range of \$40,000 per MLA, so that means your 37 members would see a jump all the way up to \$1.4 million. Then the caucus duty starting with the Reps was \$200,000. Their caucus is a nonrecognized party, and they have the two \$40,000 members in there already. That brings them to \$280,000, and their old number was \$272,000.

If we then take a 50 percent jump from \$200,000 to \$300,000 to the Liberals, which are a recognized party, that gives \$300,000 for their caucus — you'd like this, Mr. Stevens — and another \$40,000 for their members, which is \$300,000 plus 40 times 4 is 160. That makes \$460,000. Then you take another 50 percent jump for the Official Opposition, realizing that the Official Opposition caucus duties are heavier than any other party in the opposition. That means they would get \$450,000 for the caucus or leader, whatever you want to call it, plus their \$40,000 for their 15 members. That means that you are coming up with a total of a little over \$1 million, which is close to the budget here.

The big benefactor in the system we're talking about — I think you would want to pass this if you possibly could, because I'm sure there would be loud hosannas and palms stretched and

sprinkled in front of you if you walked into the government caucus with this; we would have increased the back benches overall from around a little less than \$1 million to \$1.4 million. If you're engineering, I think it's a formula that works out quite well. It gives everybody the envelope they're thinking about, yet there is a formula that recognizes the opposition parties, the recognized parties and the nonrecognized parties.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce a motion. I would like to move that the opposition members of the Members' Services Committee return to the Members' Services Committee by Tuesday next with two recommendations: number one, the amount of dollars that should be allocated to the office of the Leader of the Opposition, the office of the leader of the Liberal Party, and the office of the leader of the Representative Party; and two, the amount of dollars that should be allocated on a per member basis to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, recognizing that this per capita figure would serve as the criterion for the determination of all caucus budgets on a global basis. Or perhaps a per member basis.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have a motion then, Ms Barrett.

MS BARRETT: As a matter of fact, I can bring up my original point and respond favourably to the motion that's on the floor, Mr. Chairman. It seems to us that this is exactly what we've done. We formulated it instantly in the hall on the basis of wanting to stick close to our original budget requests, and on behalf of the Representatives, who have already stated that they would like their budgetary status to remain the same. Therefore, the reporting next week — the members from the opposition caucuses who are present have the authority of our caucuses to make the proposal that we have just made, that being, for the offices of the leaders of the various parties: \$200,000 for the Representatives, \$300,000 for the Liberals, and \$450,000 for the New Democrat Official Opposition caucuses. The matter which remains to be discussed, and maybe the government would like to take this, is the exact figure that we would like to talk about with respect to all members of the Assembly. But on our part,

we're certainly flexible and prepared to both discuss and decide that right now.

MR. HYLAND: Just a discussion on the motion. Pam, you have come up with \$200,000. You didn't use the \$40,000 then for the ...

MR. TAYLOR: That's just for the caucus.

MS BARRETT: This would be for the caucus considerations. Then whether we agree with \$30,000, which is close to what it is right now on the per member basis ... If one divides the overall budget of government members by government members, it's about \$30,000 right now. That would leave the Representative caucus at \$260,000. Alternatively, we could go a little higher, if that's the will of the committee. We were just dealing with round numbers, but we're able to discuss this right now, if the members of the committee so choose.

MR. HYLAND: I guess my question is how you get \$200,000. You've got two people there at the \$40,000 you talked about, and that doesn't come out to \$200,000.

MS BARRETT: The request that was originally placed on the table, from Mr. Bogle and Mr. Kowalski, I believe, was to deal with distinct caucus as opposed to individual members. What we talked about is trying to stay close to our original budget requisitions. It's followed very easily with a calculator that we were really close to dealing with a formula in any event. Therefore, we're prepared to present that formula, which Mr. Kowalski's motion addresses for next week's meeting. We're prepared to deal with that right now. Have I made that clear, or does somebody else want to take over explaining?

MR. TAYLOR: Maybe I could get in for a moment, because I had been playing, maybe because of my newness at the game, with a formula. It was rather amazing how the envelope costs seem to come to almost exactly the formula I devised, which was \$200,000 for the caucus — not the backbencher, but \$200,000 for the caucus for the nonrecognized party, \$300,000 for the caucus of the recognized party, and \$450,000 for the Official

Opposition. You'll notice that there's a 50 percent jump from \$200,000 to \$300,000 to \$450,000. All the back bench then was at \$40,000. Right now you're running around \$30,000. If you put \$40,000 per member, that means that from now on the Representatives have \$40,000 and \$40,000; that's \$80,000. Add the aforementioned \$200,000, and that comes to \$280,000. Take the NDP: 15 times \$40,000 each is \$600,000; add it to the \$450,000, and it comes to a little over \$1 million. Take your own caucus, which is now running around \$32,000, because you only have 37 members on the back benches; you get the biggest jump, because \$40,000 onto the 37 runs you around \$1.4 million. So you jump from around \$1 million up to \$1.4 million; you jump about 35 percent. It's a beautiful formula; it works out just fine. Everybody gains . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Part of the difficulty the Chair is having is that I don't have your ability to be able to see those figures in the air that you've been spitting out.

MR. TAYLOR: He asked in the motion . . . We don't have to wait a week. We've got it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a real need with respect to written documentation of what's being negotiated.

MR. STEVENS: Well, I guess the two engineers are doing fast calculations. Based on what I understood in the first proposal by Pam and followed by the additional comments by Nick, I had a global budget of \$4.27 million, which I rapidly brought back to \$1.7 million. Since you have calculated now that there are 37 government members — I assume you're including the Speaker in that.

MR. TAYLOR: He just got travelling expenses.

MR. STEVENS: I know. I guess I thought the motion Ken has brought to us is to come back to the committee on the principles, based on our further discussions with all of our own members. I am uncomfortable, Pam, with my understanding of your proposal. Nick, when I looked at your numbers, I guess I could challenge it from the way you presented it in each case. It's an interesting formula. I'd like to have Ken clarify for me what the motion is

that he's put forward that we're discussing. Ken, can you detail what you have?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Louise, would you like to read the motion, please.

MRS. EMPSON: I didn't get part two of the motion. Mr. Kowalski was speaking rather fast. Moved by Mr. Kowalski: That the opposition members of the Members' Services Committee return to the committee by Tuesday of next week with two recommendations: one, the amount of dollars to be allocated to the leaders of the Official Opposition, the Liberal Party, and the Representative Party; two, the amount of dollars is to be worked out. I imagine it's on a per capita basis per member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that what you said, Mr. Kowalski?

MR. KOWALSKI: I have it written down. I could read it again. The first part is that the opposition members of the Members' Services Committee return to the Members' Services Committee by next Tuesday with two recommendations: one, the amount of dollars that should be allocated to the office of the Leader of the Opposition, the office of the leader of the Liberal Party, and the office of the leader of the Representative Party; and two, the amount of dollars that should be allocated on a per member basis to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, recognizing that this per member figure would serve as the criterion for the determination of all caucus budgets on a global basis.

MR. STEVENS: Can I just ask my question, Mr. Chairman? Why can't I do that, Mr. Vice-Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I appreciate the fact that the vice-chairman was trying to keep things on track here, because I wanted to make absolutely certain that we had this down at this end. We were just getting a little confused in the flow of traffic here.

The question please, Mr. Stevens.

MR. STEVENS: I would just like a clarification, because this is where I was lost in Pam's first comments. Would you please clarify item two. Do you mean that the figure the opposition

members are being asked to come back with is per member of an 83-member Assembly?

MR. KOWALSKI: We are talking about members. I suppose that's part of the debate: whether or not we just deal with non-Executive Council members in terms of dealing with the government caucus or deal with all members of the government caucus. That is certainly part of the debate with respect to the motion.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, that's why I raised the question. That's why I have a variation from the formula that Mr. Taylor presented, from \$4.2 million down to \$1.7 million. That's where I was a little lost, based on the numbers that have been discussed today, not on coming back. That's why I think we should vote on the question. It would then allow the members to develop a proposal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bogle and then Mr. Taylor.

MR. BOGLE: First, can I get a point of clarification from the Clerk? We are referring to member support services for private members. Does that not include all members of the Legislative Assembly who are not members of Executive Council?

MR. STEFANIUK: That's right.

MR. BOGLE: So we are not speaking of members of Executive Council; we are speaking of all private members: non-Executive Council.

MR. TAYLOR: This is why -- if I could speak for a moment, Mr. Chairman. I like his motion, but what I'm saying is that we have calculated it out. We have done this work and have already put it on the table today. If you people want to take a week to think about it, that's one thing, but we don't see losing a week to present you with something we can present you with today. If you want to take a week to think about, fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Mr. Bogle, you may finish your point.

MR. BOGLE: I may finish my point?

MR. TAYLOR: I'm sorry. I thought he finished.

MR. BOGLE: There is a motion on the table. I suggest we vote on the motion, and if there is unanimous concurrence with that motion and time permits, make your proposal. But it should not be in any way construed that the motion has any numbers attached to it, because as I heard Mr. Kowalski, it is a motion based on principle.

MR. WRIGHT: Could I have the concluding words of the motion, starting with "recognizing that"?

MRS. EMPSON: Recognizing that this per capita figure would serve as a criterion for the determination of all caucus budgets on a global basis.

MR. WRIGHT: As long as it isn't fixing it per se. It's a major element, is what we're pointing out.

MR. KOWALSKI: We're basically trying to set forth a principle, and if the members agree to the motion, then we'll have the debate as to what we're specifically going to be talking about.

MR. HYLAND: When we talk private members, we exclude Executive Council, but we include the Leader of the Official Opposition?

AN. HON. MEMBER: Yes.

MR. HYLAND: I just asked for that clarification because it makes some difference. Formerly, when we agreed on the number for the office, it was arrived at by the average of all the Executive Council's offices. In addition to it, we also attached whatever the payment was per member -- \$50,000 or whatever it was. So that's why I wanted clarification of whether the leader was included in that, because it makes quite a difference in the budget if he isn't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question on the motion as presented. All those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shall we record it?

MR. WRIGHT: All that's necessary then is putting down in writing what we've said. This can be done in the half hour.

MR. TAYLOR: Is the meeting open to take a motion now? That we would make the motion now that . . .

MS BARRETT: No, the motion was passed, and there were three opposed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What we're dealing with at the moment — my last question was whether you wanted it recorded. I understand that the answer is yes. Therefore I recognize that the three persons opposed to the motion were Barrett, Wright, and Taylor. All others voted in favour of the motion. That's where we are in the procedural part. That's now cleared away.

The motion has been carried, and the request to come back, dealing in terms of next week. The Chair assumes that that means at the next meeting of the committee, whenever they can indeed be brought together. Now we're open to . . .

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, is it possible to quickly adjourn this afternoon's meeting and then we'll make the motion? We don't see sitting around for a week to make a motion that we have on a piece of paper here now.

MR. BOGLE: Unfortunately, we've gone over the time that we expected we'd be meeting. One of our members has to leave.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Number one, to the question raised by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon: no, we're not going to adjourn the meeting and start over again today.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, we can save a week, at any rate, by circulating the proposal immediately to all the members, because the motion says "by next Tuesday," not "on next Tuesday."

MR. BOGLE: That was really my point. If we can have your proposal today, great.

MS BARRETT: Sure.

I take it from the discussion that members

have to leave, but I wondered if people had heard that part of Mr. Kowalksi's motion which has been accepted, that we meet by next Tuesday. Is that understood?

MR. BOGLE: Do we have a suggestion for a time?

MR. STEVENS: Could I make a suggestion? Given the pressures on us all and that the House is going on until mid-winter, I heard you say, but certainly for some time, could I make a suggestion? I understand from yourself and the Clerk that we have a number of things that we'll have to do fairly early, things like concluding the budget discussions, preparation for the new budget, and so on. After that, with the pressures of the House, maybe we'll have other meetings that may be full days, and so on. Would it make sense to set aside the time of day called a supertime, between the close of the House at 5:30 and the beginning of the House at 8 o'clock, say on a Tuesday, which would give us the morning free to do other things that all of us probably have to do in our own areas? I'm only suggesting that for the period of time that the Chair needs to have these items of business attended to, following which we can go back to some normal hours. While we're all here, I just wonder if that makes some sense.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If that's the time that suits all committee members, that's fine indeed. We just had to strike a time to get the first meeting going, from an organizational point. Is that supper hour a reasonable time for everyone? Does it fit everyone's schedules? Might we determine what day of the week it might be? I've heard Tuesdays. Gordon?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, that's fine. I was just going to make the additional point that we are in a state of suspense in paying and hiring our staff, so the sooner the better.

MR. TAYLOR: When's dinner, by the way? There's a night sitting on Tuesday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Might we all concentrate on our date books for a moment, please.

MR. TAYLOR: July 22. Is that what we settled on? Bearing in mind that all the opposition

parties are ready to meet in five minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll change another commitment that I have. It will have to be 5:45, and we'll let you know which room. That's Tuesday next. The reason for that is the urgency of the items before us.

MR. TAYLOR: So that's 6 o'clock on the 22nd.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it's 5:45 to 7:45.

MR. STEVENS: Or we vote without you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do we have agreement on next Tuesday for the next meeting?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MS BARRETT: Under the emergent items, we didn't get to the over-run constituency accounts. It's obvious that it's going to take a little while. I just need some kind of official comment that would indicate that those members whose accounts have been thoroughly overspent will be allowed to operate their constituency offices until we have this matter settled.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I had an initial discussion with the Clerk about this. I assume that there is some money left in all of those accounts, and I will check on that.

With respect to that item of Other Business, we also have these two other items: one I wanted to update you on with respect to former MLAs, and the other is a memorandum that I would like to have circulated, which I received late yesterday afternoon; so you have that for future.

It's my understanding that there are funds, Mr. Clerk, for the operation of those members and their offices. If you'd like to speak to me privately about that right after the meeting -- but it's my understanding that there is something there to keep you going.

MS BARRETT: Some of them are real tight.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, I'm sure Mr. Gogo did not intend to use his promotional allowance for the propagation of plagues, which is what it says.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Talk to his secretary.

Is this with respect to those three items?

MS BARRETT: I would like to note for the record that the inherited allowance for the Member for Edmonton Kingsway includes a 92.13 percent expenditure of the communication allowance. As long as we have agreement that he can function. In the event that this doesn't get dealt with next week, Mr. Chairman, I think we need something.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With respect, for the use of the meeting time today, it's been duly noted. If you'd like to mention the constituencies involved by name, please, and then if you would like to stay behind to meet with me afterward so I can get fully apprised on it.

MS BARRETT: Kingsway with the communication allowance particularly. The Edmonton Glengarry promotional allowance has been overspent by 157 percent. The constituency of Athabasca-Lac la Biche promotional allowance has been spent to the tune of 111.66 percent. I'm not sure that I have all of them with me, Mr. Chairman, but certainly for the record, just to show that some of these are pretty urgent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's been noted. Members have a real pressure of time here. Let's deal with the last one you raised, because what we passed today will make the allowance for that.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, on the status of the estimates that we've approved, it must be understood that they've been approved on the basis that we mentioned and should not be taken as simply having been approved period. Is that correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What does that esoteric statement mean? They've been approved.

MR. WRIGHT: Exactly, but we were at pains to say that if we changed the principle of calculation, they would in fact be altered.

MR. HYLAND: We didn't approve any caucus budgets.

MRS. MIROSH: We only approved the four new ones.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've approved the base amounts for the current fiscal year. That has been approved.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If some other things might be changed, such as travel allowance, as an example, that will come. Is that our understanding?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: By having done it, that's the only way we can make certain that everyone is totally funded to the base amount.

MR. WRIGHT: Pro tem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Thank you all. I know you've stayed here longer than anticipated, but I think it was very useful in terms of some basic principles. The meeting stands adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 11:50 a.m.]