

[Chairman: Dr. Carter] [9:15 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It seems like only yesterday.

I understand that a subcommittee of ours has a meeting at 10:30 to deal with one of the issues that was carried over on the agenda for the last meeting or two, so I propose that we adjourn at 10:30 for an hour. Then at 11:30 lunch will be served, which will be another working lunch. Because of other commitments for this room at 1 o'clock, we'll have to get out of here by 10 to 1. Obviously, we'll have to come back another day about balanced budgets, because I don't suppose we're going to go through this like greased lightning.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'm driving, so I'm fairly flexible on the time, but I've heard a couple of members of the committee mention that they would like to catch the 1:15 airbus for some commitments elsewhere.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many might that be? A show of hands, please, because then we can . . . That would still keep quorum.

MS BARRETT: Just. Who knows? If someone goes to the bathroom, we might win an issue here. Greg, are you sure you want to stay all day?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I promised both Nick and Pam that I would give up one speech today since I am here today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very gracious of you and of them also. Why don't we go with a quarter to 1 cutoff? Then we will make arrangements to get the taxis here to get these two people to the airport. All right?

MR. TAYLOR: Because I thought we'd be free, I made an appointment for 12:30, but I guess it's all right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sure you can have them wait. Give them an extra cup of coffee. Promise not to extra bill, though, Nick.

MR. TAYLOR: That's all right for you fellows. The press will wait for an hour to talk to stars like Stevens and Pam.

MS BARRETT: When we're ready to review the agenda, I have a proposal for the agenda for today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. First, I propose that we do a little tidy-up of yesterday with regard to that first section, the administrative side of the Legislative Assembly. A number of questions were asked. I gather documents have now been circulated of each of the pages?

Clerk, would you like to speak to those, please?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, the first revision was made to page 8, which was simply a correction of a typographical error. "Annapolis" should have read "Indianapolis," under the National Conference of State Legislatures.

On page 16 there was a question raised relative to MLA constituency offices and a statement there which said something about rental of furniture. That should have read "rental of office space, photocopying, and office equipment," and that has been corrected.

On page 19 there was a question raised relative to the last item at the very bottom of the page, "Budget estimates distributed to MLAs." There was a comment appended to that which said "100 copies per member." That statement should not have been there. That is simply the cost of the budget documents, the books which are distributed to members for their use in the House and for any extra copies which they may wish.

Page 24. There was a question raised about the promotional allowance program and a statement which previously appeared on that page relative to transfer to other appropriate accounts. The fact is that there is no transfer of any funding from this account. It simply stays under that particular expense code where it is shown, so that reference has been deleted.

Those are the revised pages which have been distributed, Mr. Chairman. In addition, questions were asked relative to an item on page 15, the postal rates. We have determined that new postal rates will be going into effect on April 1, 1987. For first-class domestic mail there will be an increase from 34 to 36 cents, which represents 5.9 percent. General householder mail will be increased from 7.2 to 7.7 cents, which is an increase of 6.9 percent,

U.S. mail by 7.7 percent, and overseas mail by 7.4 percent. The average increase in postal rates to come into effect April 1 will therefore be 5.5 percent overall.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, do you have figures on the advertising rates?

MR. STEFANIUK: General householder: 7.2 cents to 7.7 cents, an increase of 6.9 percent.

MR. BOGLE: It's my understanding that if we mail material in bulk, where it goes to every box in a rural post office, we're going on the advertising rate, and if it's under 50 grams, the current rate is, I believe, 6.4 cents. I think there is something like a 22 percent increase in that category.

MS BARRETT: If you don't mind, Mr. Chairman, if you're getting it for 6.4, you're getting quite a deal, because the rest of us ordinary folk pay seven point something, and I don't think Canada Post has discriminatory rates when it comes to any classification . . .

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, could the originator please complete the point.

MR. BOGLE: It's dependent upon the weight of the material you are mailing. I raised the concern yesterday because I recall from the news report that there were to be two rate increases for the advertising category, the first of which, I believe, was 22 percent and the second, either 12, 14, or 16 percent. So it's a very substantial rate increase, and any of us who use a bulk mailing approach would be affected by that.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, the information I have given is the result of an inquiry made directly to the postal authorities between the adjournment of the meeting last night and this morning. The information we have is that general householder mail, which is that mail which is addressed to every household . . .

MR. BOGLE: I'm not talking about addressed mail.

MR. STEFANIUK: It goes to every household -- general, to the householder, bulk mail. It is

going up from 7.2 to 7.7, an increase which they have defined as 6.9 percent. I'm sorry; that's the information we received.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With respect to the committee, the information supplied deals with a number of areas, and the question being raised is with regard to the rural postal thing. Maybe there is another wrinkle to that, and that might require an additional question. Or was the question raised with regard to rural postal box stuffing?

MR. STEFANIUK: We asked the post office to identify for us all postal rate increases which have now been determined.

MR. BOGLE: The news stories may not have been accurate.

MR. STEFANIUK: This is the information which we received.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MRS. MIROSH: I was just going to ask a question. This increase isn't reflected in the budget, even though you have the formula. If it's a 5.5 increase, shouldn't it be reflected in the budget?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, I believe it is up to the committee to decide whether or not the committee wishes to revise the budget. The postal estimates appear on page 15 of the budget books. There are at least two items. One is the postage charges incurred by the Legislative Assembly Office, which had been estimated at \$72,780. That is for all the mail which goes out of the Legislature complex here in Edmonton.

The other portion of the budget which could be affected is that which is used by members in connection with their communications allowance, and the amount that is dedicated there to postage is presently shown as \$295,412.

Mr. Chairman, I respectfully suggest that the committee may now wish to consider whether or not one or both of those figures should be adjusted in light of the fact that these increases will take effect on April 1, which coincides with the new budget year.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I have two

points, and I wonder if I could come back to one. I'd like to come back to one which was the result of a correction on page 24, so if I could leave that for a second . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: And come back? Sure.

MR. STEVENS: Beyond the postage, a 5 -- whatever the figures are -- percent increase does not necessarily reflect the 5 percent increase in the budget. The Clerk indicated yesterday, for example, that the Legislative Assembly Office would prefer to assess the matter. I think he made that clear. I don't propose to make any suggested changes for the Legislative Assembly Office postage portion of the budget on page 15.

What I would like to know is -- there are three items that are transferred from the MLA Communication Allowance. The total is \$295,000. What are the three items that make up that total? It may not be that that is all postage.

MR. STEFANIUK: No. The amount that is left in Postage is \$295,412.

MR. STEVENS: That's the total.

MR. STEFANIUK: The total budget for Communication Allowance is \$778,952, at the top.

MR. STEVENS: But what are those three items?

MR. STEFANIUK: We take three items out and transfer, and I will attempt to locate them in just a moment. One of them, I believe, we identified as advertising. Yes, there is an amount of \$94,140 which is transferred to Advertising.

MR. STEVENS: That's not postage then.

MR. STEFANIUK: No. There is an amount of \$284,000 transferred to Printing.

MR. STEVENS: That's the larger amount of the three, and that's not postage.

MR. STEFANIUK: No. There is \$105,000 transferred to Purchase of Fixed Assets.

MR. STEVENS: So we really don't know, Mr. Chairman, what postage is.

MR. STEFANIUK: Postage is the bottom line under those three: \$295,412.

MR. STEVENS: I guess I must be rather dense. You said \$94,000 is charged to Advertising. Is that the advertising cost or is that postage charged to Advertising?

MR. STEFANIUK: That's advertising.

MR. STEVENS: So where is the postage?

MR. STEFANIUK: Here's the global figure. These amounts are transferred from the global figure to other budgets, and \$295,000 remains in Postage.

MR. STEVENS: Okay. I apologize. So the postage is \$295,000.

Mr. Chairman, a number of options: one would be to make some adjustment in the figure, and I don't know how you could adjust it by the formula made by the post office, because it may not be necessary. But I do think the committee should look at its own orders and decide in the next while whether or not the formula should be changed. That can only be done on the basis of some experience.

MR. BOGLE: So we would come back to it another time, Greg?

MR. STEVENS: I think we should look at it with the basis of some experience and then consider whether or not the formula should be changed. If additional funds are necessary, we can find those.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Now we do a transfer. Basically, you're saying: leave this estimate as it is for the moment, and then we'll take it as a carryover item in the course of the year. What you're basically saying is no change.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, wouldn't experience dictate that you wouldn't know what the hell the federal government's going to do the next time around?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, could I come back to the other point on page 24?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just half a minute. The point has appropriately been raised that some increase should be reflected above in the postage of the Legislative Assembly Office, because we can't bring that section back for transfer.

MR. STEVENS: But the Clerk made a comment yesterday that he would prefer not to, unless he has changed his opinion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, we're having this discussion over here. I think we're still going to keep the corner turned down on this document, because as everyone in the room ought to know, including people newly attending this meeting today, this is very much a draft budget. Whatever figures are being quoted here are not necessarily the final figures when we finally get around to giving approval to this budget. So the corner is still down on 15, having got some useful information.

Your other page number was 24?

MR. STEVENS: Page 24. Mr. Chairman, the Clerk indicated there was a reference to the promotional allowance program deleted on a new page. That leads me to ask: what is the promotional allowance program? I think we assumed yesterday that it was our promotional allowance program in our constituency plan. But it's not, so what is it?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, the promotional allowance program is that program which enables members to acquire quantities of promotional or gift items for distribution to their constituents. That is developed on the basis of a formula as well.

MR. STEVENS: But why is it not then transferred from or to? Why was that transferred?

MR. STEFANIUK: It's not transferred because it appears under Materials and Supplies, and that in fact is the expenditure code that is appropriate to charge those items to.

MR. STEVENS: Well, then the Treasury doesn't have very consistent advice to this office.

MR. PENGELLY: Go talk to Treasury.

MR. STEVENS: It just doesn't make sense to me that we have some items in our formulas shown as now being transferred from, to, or whatever, and here's one that sits out somehow independent of all that. I preferred it the way it was before. I thought it was a new item.

MS BARRETT: For clarification, this figure, \$301,174, would not show up again under the constituency budgets.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. STEVENS: That's very strange.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is indeed an inconsistency.

MR. STEVENS: Could we leave that with you in the draft to determine what is right and what is wrong?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, we have three separate members' programs: a constituency office program, a communications allowance program, and a promotional allowance program. The promotional allowance program, which covers the cost of acquiring gift or presentation items, is appropriately shown under code 512P99, Materials and Supplies, since the purchase of those gift items is in fact appropriately charged to that particular expense code. There is no need for a transfer.

MR. STEVENS: The other ones then were corrected, and we're putting them into the appropriate location. This was already there.

MR. STEFANIUK: That's right. Mr. Chairman, we have formulas for determining the amounts that are appropriated to each member for each program. The global amounts have to be shown somewhere in the budget, and so they are. But then within those programs the expenditures which are incurred are not necessarily appropriate for the expense code under which the global amount is shown. So portions of the global amounts are transferred to the appropriate expense codes.

MR. STEVENS: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sounds logical.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, through you to

the Clerk. Maybe you can answer. I've been assuming that where it says there's a transfer in this budget, we really can't do that much about it. It's already legislated or is part of regulations. Because this one isn't transferable, can this committee reduce it?

MR. STEVENS: Only if you change the formula.

MR. TAYLOR: What I'm getting at is that I didn't make motions to reduce the others, because it meant going back through the whole long, involved formula we have for our constituency account. If there's anything I would like to see reduced 10 percent, it would be the ability for the MLAs to buy ceramic chickens made in Tokyo to give their constituents.

If it's this way, I will so move. But for the other ones I didn't think it was in order to make a motion to change something that was in the regulations. I think that when you put it this way, you open yourself to having it cut, and I think it should be cut.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I would have to do some checking back. I assumed the formula was established by a Members' Services order.

MR. STEFANIUK: It was.

MR. STEVENS: It's right here in the book.

MR. TAYLOR: If the formula is in there, you have to put something -- in other words, we can't cut things that are in the formula.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You would be able to change the formula, but the Chair won't accept a motion to do that at this particular moment.

MR. TAYLOR: Can I make a motion that we cut this promotional allowance for members by 10 percent?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, but I would take it as a notice of motion to be discussed before we pass the budget.

MR. TAYLOR: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm not saying no to your motion; I'm saying no at this time to your motion.

MR. TAYLOR: Fine. Rather than screw up the whole system, I'll wait for more discussion before we move. If nothing changes, I'm going to ask for the floor back to make a motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But hon. member, remember that that may well not be today because of the process of trying to get through this document.

MR. TAYLOR: We'll keep Mr. Stevens up here yet whether he likes it or not.

MR. STEVENS: I think a good 20 percent in all these things would be appropriate.

MR. TAYLOR: What did you eat last night?

MRS. MIROSH: A point of clarification once again, Mr. Chairman. Does that mean the MLA can spend their promotional budget at the constituency office, and then come here to the Leg. Building and receive more gifts and what have you?

MR. STEVENS: If you have the money in your constituency promotional . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Nice try.

MR. TAYLOR: Only those chickens that are still left in the warehouse.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, we should perhaps mention that each member is advised via a monthly statement of checks and balances relative to each of the allowances.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's the same old problem: if you use them all up before the end of the year, tough.

Did that pick up all our questions on that section raised yesterday?

MR. STEFANIUK: There was one additional one relative to MLA and officer letterhead, which is shown on page 20. There are amounts of \$14,940 and \$17,585 for letterhead and envelopes -- and that is for the cost of printing virtually all the letterhead and envelopes -- and then an additional small amount of \$3,800 is provided for overprinting, on members' requests, with their individual names and constituency identities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's as opposed to the general stationery requirements of paper clips, general paper supplies, and all the rest of that stuff, which we noted on page 24.

MR. STEFANIUK: Right. I think there was one final question in respect of \$25,000 for promotional allowance bulk requests, which is listed on page 24. We researched the history of that and found that this particular item became a subject of discussion in 1982 and '83 and was first introduced in the 1984-85 budget. Members who were invited to present large quantities of items such as pins to convention groups meeting in their respective constituencies felt it was unfair to tax their individual promotional allowance budgets with large, bulk requests. So an amount of \$25,000 has been budgeted since 1984-85 to enable members who are hosting large delegations, which requires them to present 300, 400, or 500 pins on a single occasion, to identify the occasion or event, the dates and location on which it would take place, and to obtain from this separate fund pins they might use in connection with that.

I am informed that we are now beginning to receive some number of requests for bulk presentations in connection with the 1988 Winter Olympics. From the present indications we anticipate that this particular budget will indeed be taxed to its capacity in this next fiscal year, and we may in fact run out of funding. In connection with the question raised yesterday, Mr. Chairman, about some need for special funding in connection with the Winter Olympics, this may be the appropriate place to consider where members may be assisted.

MR. BOGLE: Through the Chair, I would like to ask that when we come back to this particular element of the vote, we have some additional information. I'd like some research done on how the bulk requests have been dealt with in the current fiscal year and in several past. It seems to me that if the MLA for Banff-Cochrane . . .

MR. STEVENS: I haven't asked for one.

MR. BOGLE: . . . is asking for 600 pins because there's a convention of hockey coaches from North America in his constituency, his request should go through the minister who's responsible for that area.

It may well be that we could eliminate this \$25,000 element and transfer it to the hospitality area under the Speaker's name, because I believe the Speaker is going to need some additional resources in light of the very unique activities that will occur in February 1988. But before coming to that firm conclusion, I think we should look at how the bulk requests have been dealt with in the past, and then the committee must decide whether or not line departments more appropriately should be supplying the various MLAs with those promotional materials.

MR. STEFANIUK: Two comments, Mr. Chairman. One, we can answer some of those questions now. In the matter of how they're handled, it's on a first come, first served basis as long as the money lasts. I asked for examples of requests to be given to me this morning, and I have two of them here. One was made last May in connection with an international baseball tournament hosted by a local Elks group, and the request was made for 150 Alberta pins. Another one was a military reunion, again taking place in May '86, which involved 350 people, and that number of pins was requested.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So that's part of it. The question was broader ranged, about the requirements.

MRS. MIROSH: I get a number of requests for pins for people who are the head persons of international or provincial organizations. I've gone to the ministers, and the maximum number of pins you can receive from the department is 50.

MR. TAYLOR: It's along that line. I want to express a bit of trepidation or caution on the suggestion of the member for Milk River-Warner about going to the line departments. By the very nature of our parliamentary system we usually belong to one party or another. For an opposition MLA to wander in to a cabinet minister to try to get a thing -- I know you run your department with strict impartiality, but it was not always so. Particularly if we Liberals take over, we might not be that impartial either, so I'd rather have it in more impartial hands when I go to ask for a gift for presentation if somebody is having a convention

in my area. I've had some experience in that line already.

MS BARRETT: In the booming metropolis of Legal -- jeez.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, our research has shown that the fund or the budget was instituted because members did in fact encounter difficulties in attempting to obtain a required number of pins, and we're dealing with pins primarily from a minister who may have appeared to have been responsible for the event. That's why the Assembly instituted the budget item.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We have some follow-up information to be given there.

Does that take us through this section, Administrative Support? We have a couple of questions to come back to.

Edmonton Highlands, just half a moment. There's one other item that we're just trying to clarify here. Remember we had some discussion yesterday about group photographs of the schoolchildren. My understanding is -- it's to be confirmed -- that the memo that came out from Public Affairs was that that stopped immediately. Is that correct?

MR. STEVENS: That's my understanding too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Then I think we should pause for another moment to have supplementary information that Rod was able to pick up as to what the process could be for these photographs now.

MR. SCARLETT: I gave that yesterday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I thought there was follow-up. Okay. So there we would be talking about roughly \$42,000, which could indeed be transferred from the member's own communication allowance or promotional allowance, whichever they care to do. It is accurate to say that if it's the wish of the committee, we will still have the photographs take place, and then the billing process will be shifted over to the members.

MR. BOGLE: That's the issue we discussed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what I'm asking,

folks. All right.

MR. BOGLE: I thought we had come to an agreement in principle that while many of us do not use the photographer very often because we don't have that many schoolchildren in, by the very nature of the fact that the capital is located in the city of Edmonton, there is a much greater use by Edmonton and area MLAs. Ms Barrett, for instance, may have 10 or 15 school groups coming through the Leg. each year, whereas Cypress has one. It would be unfair for the MLA for Edmonton Highlands to dip into her communication or promotion allowance in that way. Therefore, it's an expense that should be shared by all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So then we're going to basically move in principle \$42,000 that we're going to now add into our budget.

MR. BOGLE: Reluctantly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we should have some guidelines on it that we're only talking about black-and-white photographs, not these great huge colour ones. We're just talking about standard five by seven black-and-white photographs.

MR. BOGLE: If the member wishes to enrich it, then the member should do so at his own expense.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. That was my lingering concern about this. Procedurally, ladies and gentlemen, we did not make a motion to this effect yesterday; we just discussed it. Could we have a motion to the effect that . . . There will be two motions, one with respect to next year to build in a budgeted amount of \$42,000 to cover the costs of school photographs, the understanding being that they're black-and-white five by sevens only. That's one motion to put it into effect, to plug that figure back into our budget. Then we need a subsequent motion, because if indeed the present program has been terminated and you wish it to continue, we need a directional motion to the effect that we will then try to find the money in this year's budget to cover the rest of the present fiscal year.

Before we do that second motion, I need someone to go and find the memo to make certain that that is indeed the case, that it has

been hoisted. Thank you, Charlene.

Is someone prepared to move the motion to add the sum of \$42,000 to the administrative support budget, please? It is so moved by the Member for Banff-Cochrane. Comment?

MR. TAYLOR: I want to speak against it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Fine. Now is the time, now that we have a motion.

MR. TAYLOR: I can recognize the argument that those in Edmonton, and I have a constituency that's close to Edmonton, are inundated -- I think that's hardly the word. We have many more schools visiting. I know I have many more schools visiting than the member from Milk River would have, but it is advertising, if you want to call it, for the constituents. Although I have maybe five or 10 schools visiting, that's five or 10 sectors of support that I start, parents that see my smiling face looking out over their living room, that the poor deprived Member for Cypress-Redcliff is not going to get; he can't. I don't see why it isn't fair to charge the constituency allowance of those people that the school is coming from. It is promotion. If it weren't promotion, I wouldn't be standing out there getting my picture taken.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Other comments on the motion?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to direct a question to the Member for Edmonton Highlands. If the Member for Edmonton Highlands concurs with the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, and they obviously are closer than any of the other members in the room to the matter, and if the Member for Edmonton Highlands feels that this is indeed an appropriate expenditure for the members to absorb, then I'll be pleased to withdraw my motion.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, that's what you call throwing a drowning man a straw.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Whatever you want to call it, the Chair recognizes the Member for Edmonton Highlands. The question was posed about what your preference is.

MS BARRETT: I don't really have one; I don't know.

MR. BOGLE: Do you know what we're talking about?

MS BARRETT: I know what you're talking about. You're talking about instead of Public Works absorbing the cost for the photographs at the Legislature of visitors with their MLAs, we take that cost rather than have it go to the constituency budgets. Right?

MR. STEVENS: No, it doesn't go to the constituency budget.

MS BARRETT: I move we table the motion until we've decided what we're doing with the constituency budgets.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a motion to table.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, there's a misunderstanding in the committee. It's quite obvious here that there's a misunderstanding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. I'm sorry, hon. member; there's a motion to table?

MR. STEVENS: There's a motion to table?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. We've just received a motion to table. Sorry. Very soft-spoken.

MS BARRETT: For me? Yes. But my voice is fully recovered. Would you like me to repeat it now in my loud, booming style?

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion to table, please signify. Opposed? The motion to table carries. Thank you. The Chair then doesn't expect to look up and see anyone waving about doing current -- but one does. The Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, if we're ready to proceed now with other than administrative details, I have a proposal for the agenda.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The Chair must comment that having earlier said with regard to photographs that one motion would be about future fiscal years, a second possible motion might be about the current fiscal year, because

as the memo which has been sent to us here stands, the current school class photograph program is finished. We therefore have an interregnum period if there is no motion.

MS BARRETT: Let's live with it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair sees no motion. Edmonton Highlands, with regard to the balance of the meeting.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before we go on to the next section in these estimates, what I'd like to do is ask for consent to present an alternative motion to that which was presented yesterday with respect to caucus budget allowances.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair recognizes a slightly irregular procedure, but at least notice has been given. The motion was moved by Mr. Bogle. Does the mover wish to withdraw the motion?

MS BARRETT: It was just tabled. Legally speaking, under Robert's rules, anyway, I think we can entertain a similar motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We can indeed, but first -- the motion that came after this one was to have the matter dealt with today, which was a tabling motion of one day. So now this matter comes back today. That is appropriate. The request has been made by a member that the mover of the motion withdraw the motion that was on the table yesterday, and that has to be -- I think some discussion has taken place or whatever, and then if the mover of the motion wishes to withdraw, there has to be unanimous consent to withdraw that motion so the table is clear to be able to put another motion forward. Is it time for me to have a . . .

MR. BOGLE: No, Mr. Chairman. We dealt with one motion yesterday by the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands. We defeated it. Another motion was put forward. We agreed to see the matter tabled until today. If the Member for Edmonton Highlands has an amendment she wishes to put forward to the motion that falls within the guidelines, then that's certainly appropriate, but I think it would be . . .

MS BARRETT: I would be amenable to making

mine an amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. To remind everyone what the motion was, which has now come back to the table:

Moved by the Member for Taber-Warner that for the budget of the government members, Official Opposition, Liberal opposition, and Representative opposition, the following would apply:

- (1) The \$40,000 per member allocation be reduced by \$8,000 per member, which represents 20 percent,
- (2) The budget for the Leader of the Official Opposition be set at the average budget for all ministers' offices, using the existing figures,

and I believe there was agreement on that eventually of \$273,411,

- (3) The leader of the Liberal opposition office budget be set at a portion of the Official Opposition office budget, and
- (4) The leader of the Representative Party office budget be set at a portion of the Liberal leader office budget.

Now, an amendment.

MR. TAYLOR: It's the motion that was tabled.

MS BARRETT: The Chair has the right to revive it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it was tabled yesterday to come back to our next meeting.

MR. TAYLOR: But you haven't lifted it off the table.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I certainly have, by reading it.

MR. TAYLOR: So we're back on it. I thought that we were going to deal later in the meeting with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair, at the request of the Member for Edmonton Highlands, and the interplay with the Member for Taber-Warner, has an alternative to raise the matter and has done so by reading.

MR. TAYLOR: I thought she was just filing it under Robert's, the alternative motion, and that sometime later in the day we were going to

bring them . . .

MS BARRETT: No. I said I was amenable to Taber-Warner's suggestion that I propose an amendment to the previously tabled motion instead of going for the alternative motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has read the motion and lifted it from the table.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I propose that the motion in front of us now be amended to include the following:

Further, that a 20 percent cutback on the following perks be implemented:

- (1) airline credit cards, totaling \$45,714 savings;
- (2) gasoline credit cards, totaling \$31,460 savings;
- (3) MLA car mileage allowances, totaling \$84,035 savings;
- (4) annual expense allowances, totaling \$115,830 savings;
- (5) subsistence allowances, totaling \$117,000 savings;
- (6) temporary residence allowances, totaling \$78,000 savings;
- (7) payments to MLAs for attending legislative committee meetings, \$29,180 savings;

and finally,

elimination of spousal travel by MLAs' spouses to conferences approved by the Members' Services Committee, a \$52,500 savings.

That is the conclusion of the motion. I would add that I have calculated the savings on the basis of the estimates which are currently in front of us. Those savings total \$553,719, which more than matches the savings proposed by the initial motion, which was dealing strictly with the caucus offices. I don't propose to entertain a debate for very long on this matter, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't suppose it's up to you to make that decision, hon. member.

MS BARRETT: I am allowed to make remarks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But not that remark, because it's not up to a member of the committee to say whether or not the member will entertain the debate.

MS BARRETT: I meant me personally, Mr. Chairman. All I would like to do is propose that in considering this motion, we look at the overall savings we are able to accomplish by so doing. The motion as originally presented yesterday asked for certain sacrifices within the functions of particular offices. The amended motion in front of us now asks us as MLAs to participate directly in helping enhance those savings; in fact, more than double them. That concludes my argument.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could I have a copy of the motion?

MS BARRETT: You may.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you got enough copies for everyone?

MS BARRETT: I'm not sure. I'm sure that they can be got, though.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that would be useful.

MR. CAMPBELL: It's nice to be able to read it and not hear it on television.

MS BARRETT: I could have given notice of motion, I suppose. Of course, I had to work on it yesterday after we concluded our meeting.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, some of these things . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is not recognizing anyone at the moment; I'm sorry. I'm waiting for everyone to have the copy in front of them. It's only fair to all members.

MR. STEVENS: Bob, did you receive the courtesy of an earlier discussion?

MR. BOGLE: No.

MR. STEVENS: I thought that was quite normal. There was no courtesy of an earlier discussion as had been rendered to the acting leader of the New Democratic Party?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me a moment, ladies and gentlemen. I think it's time for a seven-minute coffee break. See you back here at 10 past 10.

[The committee recessed from 10:03 a.m. to 10:19 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: First, Member for Edmonton Highlands and committee members, the amendment as presented is defective and therefore out of order. We now have the original motion standing here, and I assume that the meeting is open to any further amendments.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, shall I put it in proper form now, as discussed with the Chair? I won't repeat the details; they're on the record, and they're in front of you. The amendment adds:

That we recommend the Members' Services Committee approve further changes to members' services orders as applicable,

with the following items, as I enumerated, sections (a)(i) through (vi). We eliminate section (a)(vii) — we'll come back to that — (b) stands as is, and a new section is added. It would read:

(c) and recommend to the Government House Leader that a government bill be introduced in the next sitting of the Assembly to the following effect: "payments to MLAs for attending legislative committee meetings, the savings of which would be \$29,180."

That concludes the motion as amended.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comments with respect to the amendment?

MR. BOGLE: Question.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm a little bothered by what I see around the table. As leader of a party that's fought in the field for many, many years, I'm not scared of a fight, and I'm fairly used to people going after each other. But with both the Official Opposition and the government here, I think we're liable to end up with a Pyrrhic victory of some sort, which for those who aren't classical Greek scholars, means that by the time one side or the other wins, nobody has anything; it's been burned to the ground.

We can sit there and hack MLAs' overall budgets, tell wives and husbands they should stay home, and murder the opposition's research facilities. You've used the government's overpowering majority of about six to two in

this meeting to railroad things through. But I think we're getting awfully close to acting like children. Not children — as a matter of fact, being the father of quite a large family, I've never seen them act this bad. We're sitting here trying to throw porridge at each other and raise hell.

I don't think enough thinking went into either the government motion or the retaliatory — and that's what it is — New Democrat motion. I think we must remember that we're going through this budget bit by bit. I think that's the real way of cutting, rather than the draconian methods of coming out with a cleaver all the way across the board. In the present amendment, things like cutting out spouse allowances sound like more of a castration complex than any sort of really intelligent move to aid the government. As an administrator for some years, I'm quite aware that sending the wife or husband along on a convention is a good business investment. It helps everybody, all the way around. Amendments like airlines, gasoline, and mileage discriminate against rural people.

Then the government's original motion, which I think was equally ill conceived, of hacking the opposition wasn't really getting at where the public wants to see cuts made. If we're going to make cuts, it should be in our salaries or our global constituency budgets or something like that. In other words, it should be to what we're spending or what we're getting. The grants to the opposition are really the taxpayers' money. When you cut a grant to an opposition party, you haven't saved them money. You haven't even hurt the opposition; you've hurt the taxpayer. Opposition grants are set for the same purposes the public elects an opposition. If indeed government was better by having only one side to the House and only one side to the argument, we wouldn't have Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. Consequently, part of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and part of what the public wants to see is an opposition that is not only elected but has the force and the material to carry out the opposition. So a cut to the opposition is not a strike at cutting expenses. I think it's undercutting the public's right to knowledge, the public's right to a loyal opposition, the public's right to an opposition that is well informed.

Seldom do I have to try to sit and pour oil on troubled waters. So many people are trying to

pour water on troubled oil, as has happened here in Alberta. I rather get the feeling that if we took a week to think about it in a more rational light of day, we could make cuts and do it step by step without trying to murder each other. Sure, the government could force through a motion today. You have a six to two opposition. You could vote that the opposition gets zero and get away with it. We could also go along with hacking amendments across the board, implying that rural MLAs are flying in and out of town right, left, and centre, with or without their spouses, which I think is equally silly. I feel a little pee'd off, if you'll pardon the expression, with the whole committee. It's something that's supposed to be working for the strength of the taxpayers. It's supposed to be trying to get the best possible government, and we're breaking down into petty tit for tat. Consequently, Mr. Chairman, I move that we table the whole issue for at least a week.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion to table. Those in favour? Opposed? Defeated. Is there a call for the question or further comments with regard to the amendment?

MR. TAYLOR: So much for my powers of persuasion.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I think I would have been one to call for the question early, but I appreciated the comments made by the leader of the Liberal Party.

As I looked at this first draft of the amendment, I could not believe how it was presented. I was further disturbed by the thought that in between press conferences or whatever, there was no courtesy extended to the committee by the acting leader of the New Democratic Party in presenting what she believed was a well-written and prepared document. Obviously, with the assistance of yourself or others, Mr. Chairman, we now have a new, presumably acceptable amendment.

It is discriminatory. I suppose a single person living in the capital city wouldn't understand what other members face in taking on these assignments. I say that with the greatest of reluctance. It's discriminatory. It presupposes that this committee is not prepared at any time to review and consider amendments from any member with respect to the matters under its jurisdiction. It's frustrating to me to think that

this kind of process would be presented as some kind of retaliation. What was considered in the original motion could logically have been fully discussed overnight. Instead we found ourselves bombarded by television and radio and written responses to an attitude of this particular member that I find offensive.

Mr. Chairman, I found much of what the leader of the Liberal Party said -- I do not often say this, but I found much of what you said was how I feel about this kind of approach.

MR. TAYLOR: It was all right.

MR. STEVENS: I'm not going to vote for the amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Other comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The mover of the amendment can . . .

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I realize that this amendment is almost certain to face defeat in a few moments. I'd like to address some of the observations made by Mr. Taylor and Mr. Stevens. First of all, with respect to the courtesy not being extended to the committee, let me explain that I suppose I could have, if I had wanted to, called reporters in yesterday afternoon when I left this committee to decide what sort of amendment or counterproposal I would like to make. I chose not to do that, because I think we should be dealing with this ourselves.

In terms of, shall we say, negotiations, I would like to reflect for a moment on the sort of negotiations that occurred while we were originally discussing caucus budgets in the summer of 1986, which, I have said on the record many times to reporters and in this committee itself, I thought were fairly honest negotiations. We did talk. We talked sometimes in committee, and we talked sometimes casually, out of the committee. We came to some conclusions. For example, I went on the record saying that I don't approve of going for this per member kind of formula, but I am going to support it because we have been able to agree on the overall figures -- that sort of thing.

That process, Mr. Chairman, was not one which was extended to me on Wednesday, January 7, 1987, when I was advised by the Member for Taber-Warner that it was very likely that the pre-existing motion -- that is, the one that simply addressed the caucus budgets -- was going to be introduced by a government member of this committee when we met yesterday. In fact, I even said, "Is that it?" The member said, "Yes." It was made clear to me that there was no room for negotiation. Nor was there room for negotiation yesterday when I moved to table the pre-existing motion as it was. There was no discussion at any point about how we might come to an agreement on how to address fiscal restraint -- which may be the government policy, for various reasons -- or the real, genuine needs of an opposition caucus.

I observed that in all instances the government caucus -- non-Executive Council members -- decreased from the 1986 pre-election period to the 1986 postelection period, while the opposition composition of the Assembly burgeoned. That was a decision of the electorate. Nonetheless, even in light of those changes of figures, the government members ended up with a budget substantially larger, twice as large almost, as that which had pre-existed with a larger government caucus -- non-Executive [Council] members -- while the Official Opposition budget, for example, was not even tripled. In light of that, when we look at 20 percent cutbacks which would be applied across the board on the formula basis, we see that what I believe to be a disproportionate figure would remain. No indication was given to me at any time that any adjustments were humanly possible. The government members of this committee have made up their minds, and that's the way it's going to be.

In that event, Mr. Chairman, I realize that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon believes that my amendment is retaliatory. I would say that it is not retaliatory inasmuch as it is, having canvassed our own caucus members, theft. If we have been told, which I was, that we are going to have to live with a 20 percent cutback in our office's ability to function, then by God we're going to do it as members too.

Inasmuch as I am charged with having discriminated against rural MLAs, it seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that I was faced with coming up with a counterproposal, or an

amendment in this instance, that would achieve similar savings. Yes, some of those savings would be done on the basis of travel, for example. Some of these matters are consequential. If you're allowed to charge for fewer kilometres traveled in your own car, it naturally means you'd be using less gas -- that sort of thing. I would not assume for a moment that MLAs in and around the Edmonton area don't do a fair amount of driving themselves.

When it comes to being able to apply cutbacks, as far as Members' Services orders are applicable, I didn't see that there were a whole lot of other areas in which I could do this. My preference ultimately would be to be able to work directly on a budget -- for example, start to eat away at the \$1.26 million hosting tab in it which is recorded to date for the 1985-86 fiscal year. That was beyond my control; I did what I had to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Forgive me, hon. member. By prior consent of the meeting, we were to adjourn four minutes ago. I would like to give you ample time to finish your comments, if you feel that can be done immediately.

MS BARRETT: I can do it in about two minutes. I'm almost done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think I need consent of the House here assembled to sum up this item of business. Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Sorry; I am constrained by the meeting.

MS BARRETT: Thank you. I believe that in looking at this charge of discrimination against rural MLAs, one has to address that there is a case also for discrimination in the pre-existing motion, which called for the across-the-board 20 percent cutbacks, inasmuch as the roles of opposition caucuses differ from those of government caucuses. Not only that point holds valid. Also, as far as I know, in the memo from the Provincial Treasurer which we received and made public late last summer, it was the government's directive to pursue a zero, 5, or 10 percent cutback where possible, not a 20 percent cutback. So one has to assume that there were other motives operating.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we were advised through administrative corridors that we should not operate on the assumption that the cutbacks coming to any caucuses would be any greater than, if in fact to, the maximum amount specified in the Treasurer's memo and that we should operate on that assumption. The 20 percent cutback would severely hamper our operation, and if we're going to make that kind of sacrifice in the name of saving the public a few dollars when it comes to the operation of an Assembly, then we can match it by making personal sacrifices.

MR. CAMPBELL: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question comes with respect to the amendment to the main motion. Those in favour of the amendment, please signify. Opposed? The amendment is defeated.

Before we go on to the main motion, we stand adjourned until 11:30.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, might I move that when we come back, we do so in camera? There is one brief matter that needs to be dealt with which is unrelated to the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We stand adjourned until 11:30, at which time we will commence in camera. That's a motion. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed?

MR. TAYLOR: I'm sorry. A point of elaboration: is the motion to go in camera to consider something entirely outside this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: A different matter.

MR. TAYLOR: I wouldn't want you to try to sneak through your motion in camera. It smells bad, but not that bad.

[The committee recessed from 10:37 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question that has been raised by one or two of our members and also by members of the media is: did we have the right to go in camera? The answer is yes. Standing Orders allows for strangers in the House to be cleared from the galleries at any time. In actual fact the real reference is back to Beauchesne. It is citation 628, both (1) and

(2). I believe I really should read it into the record for purposes of our meeting, because a number of people, including observers, are here for the first time and don't know what has been the practice of the committee in times past. It reads:

(1) A committee, having the right to exclude strangers [strangers means visitors] at any time, it may be inferred, has the right to sit in private and have its proceedings protected by privilege. The publication of its proceedings in that case would be an offence which the House could deal with upon receiving a report from the committee.

Oh, Mr. Kondro, you're just in time to hear what's being said. That was one reference from Beauchesne. The second one is:

(2) The purpose of in camera sittings is to allow Members to feel free to negotiate, discuss, deliberate and, sometimes, compromise without the glare of publicity, which might add to the difficulties of agreeing to reports when it is desirable that these proceedings be treated in confidence. The final decision of whether to sit in camera, however, rests with the [committee] members themselves.

The chairman, having said when the date of the next meeting was, also [inaudible] into the record. Thank you.

The meeting on Monday will be in room 512.

MS BARRETT: In order to alleviate any potential question that might come up, I wonder if you might agree to finding a mechanism to indicate that we were not at any moment discussing the previous motion that was on the table. Is that appropriate?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The member has made the statement, and that therefore gives the notification. The committee cannot say what it was discussing, but it can say what it was not, I suppose.

On the table we have a motion by the Member for Taber-Warner. I don't think you need me to repeat it. Do you wish it to be repeated?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You know what the motion is. Are there further amendments, friendly or

otherwise?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question? All those in favour of the motion with respect to the budget, please signify. Opposed?

MR. TAYLOR: Just not trying.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. members.

MS BARRETT: Too late. Your budget's been cut by 20 percent, Nick. So has ours.

MR. TAYLOR: We voted against it, though.

MS BARRETT: Too bad, but we lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is carried.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to put a motion on the table and speak to it.

MS BARRETT: It's too late. You were asked.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pardon me?

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to speak to the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, hon. member. I tried to get the attention of every member in the room. I believe you were in discussion with a staff member. I started to read it and . . .

MR. TAYLOR: I thought you were working on the motion about the right to go in camera.

MS BARRETT: We finished that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We had concluded that, hon. member. I'm sorry.

MS BARRETT: Well done, Nick.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With regard to the motion that was passed, there needs to be further delineation as to what are the proportions under sections two, three, and four of the original motion.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, just to say that I was the one who called for the question.

Previous to my calling for the question, you asked at least once, "Are there any further amendments to be made?"

MR. TAYLOR: I think this is a kangaroo court, Mr. Chairman, and you can have it as far as I'm concerned. I'm walking out. This was some sort of an agreement. When we'd be moving the tabling -- I thought the thing was understood. You ran through a motion here; you put a 20 percent cut. You've got an overpowering majority here anyhow, with the government. To run a committee like this is absolutely nonsense. I thought I had an agreement with the other side coming in that we were going to talk about tabling, so we go ahead and vote on a motion. What's the use of having these meetings?

Sorry, you can have the meeting on Monday morning if you'd like to.

MS BARRETT: Would you wait a minute, Nick, please?

MR. TAYLOR: A bunch of phony kangaroos here.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I realize we're not on a motion. I request to speak for a moment. One of the difficulties this committee got itself into this time is that we did not go through the similar process that we did in establishing our budgets this summer. I hereby move that we table the part of the motion that is still left vague until we next meet again and provide that there is still opportunity to revise the motion which did pass under those circumstances. If we're talking about negotiating, then for heaven's sake let's do it instead of going the way we did. I don't like the process any more than anybody else does.

MR. TAYLOR: It would be very useless for us . . .

MS BARRETT: You have a motion on the table, Nick.

MR. TAYLOR: . . . to attend a motion here when this government majority carries on like a bull moose in rutting season going straight through everything in sight . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: . . . without any idea of any sort of debate or question.

MS BARRETT: You might want to speak to the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, committee members, in the process of committees, committees can rescind motions at any time if they so choose. If they choose not to, that's also the decision of the House. With respect, hon. member, the Chair tried to gain the attention of all people in the room three times. I can't do anything more than that.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm not blaming it all on you, Mr. Chairman. There is the chairman on the government side. I thought we had made an agreement. If there's any integrity in the thing, surely to God I don't have to not only make agreements, a one-man party, but sit there and enforce the darn thing. I'm just highly put off. I thought you were aware; if you're not, you're not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I was not.

MR. TAYLOR: What's the use of having some sort of an understanding . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I remind you that I haven't been in this room on purpose. I absented myself not only once.

MR. BOGLE: If I can stray from the amendment very briefly, I sense the frustration the hon. member is expressing. For the record, I was approached by the hon. member and asked if I personally would consider an amendment to table the motion for more time and consideration. I said that sounded reasonable to me and that I would certainly speak in favour of that. That was my full intent. But, with respect to the hon. member, the chairman gave that opportunity. You were turned around speaking with your staff member. I tried to signal you, and in the meantime the question was called by another member and we voted on it. In fact, you didn't . . .

MR. TAYLOR: Sitting next to you.

MR. BOGLE: With respect, I did not communicate with the gentleman sitting next to

me at all. By the time you turned around, the vote had already been taken. What do we do?

MR. TAYLOR: This is a committee meeting. It would make some sort of sense that the Chair . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, please. I've recognized this member and that member, and then you can respond. Please, let's try to get all of the responses.

MR. BOGLE: If I may now conclude by addressing the amendment to the motion, because the amendment to the motion very specifically addresses a part of the motion that was, to paraphrase the mover of the amendment, specifically left vague so that there could indeed be some discussions between the various opposition parties as to what the relationship between the leaders' budgets should be for those parties.

Indeed, when we next meet, if some other concrete proposals can be brought forward relative to the entire motion, I would urge my colleagues in this committee to look at them very carefully. So the door isn't closed tight.

But let's have respect for the chairman of this meeting, who has to conduct the meeting. He's having great difficulty, and I'll be the first to admit that I have been laggard, too, in the comment and discussion with colleagues on either side. Other members have been doing the same thing.

MR. TAYLOR: I think there should be some judgment used.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me again, hon. member. The Member for Edmonton Highlands, please, and then you're next to respond.

MS BARRETT: In trying to conciliate this matter, Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that there had been no signal from any member at this table or any member of this committee that there was room to negotiate. I think that's why the question was called. I think you did the right thing. You called it. You waited and you waited and you waited. I had no indication that any further amendment from me would be accepted. No one has spoken to me about this issue. Everybody who has spoken has spoken only on record. There's been no discussion.

I think now is the time to not . . . I repeat the nature of my motion, if not the exact wording, Louise, and that is: that the part of the motion just passed which was vague be subject to reconsideration at the next meeting of this committee and that if in the interim further discussion on the main part of the motion, the clear part which is passed, can be revised, then that be considered as well.

Quite frankly, I don't want to have to go back and tell the people who answer the phone in our offices to put on the telephone answering machine. For heaven's sake, will you support the motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion that we have before us is basically . . . Well, no, I'd better not. Yes, please carry on.

MS BARRETT: I have concluded.

MR. TAYLOR: After cooling down a couple of degrees, Mr. Chairman, can I make a motion to rescind the motion? If my memory serves me right, I've seen that done.

MS BARRETT: You're talking to a motion at the moment that calls for tabling.

MR. TAYLOR: No, I meant it on a friendly . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Unfortunately, the word has now come out that I had my momentary silence on. We have a motion to table parts 2, 3, and 4 of the original motion to the next meeting. I must call the question without any further comment.

MR. TAYLOR: This is just a point of information, Mr. Chairman.

MS BARRETT: Call for a one-minute recess, please.

MR. TAYLOR: If the mover of that motion were to withdraw the motion, can I make a move to rescind the previous motion?

MS BARRETT: A motion to table cannot be withdrawn. I'm positive.

MR. TAYLOR: That would put us back to . . . Pardon?

MS BARRETT: A motion to table cannot be withdrawn. I think I know my rules of order. It would have to be defeated. Call for a one-minute recess, please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. You can have your own procedural discussions afterwards, thanks. The effect of the motion on tabling, if it carries, is that all these kinds of things may well indeed take place at the next meeting of the committee.

There's a motion to table. All those in favour?

MR. TAYLOR: Just a point of information, Mr. Chairman, again as a guide to the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's no such thing as a point of information.

MR. TAYLOR: . . . labyrinth that I may have contributed to in large part. If the motion to table is defeated . . .

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, none of this is permitted. There's a motion to table.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know.

MS BARRETT: There's no discussion if we table.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry; I'm tied by the rules. We've bent the rules all out of shape.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, could we have a one-minute recess?

MS BARRETT: That's legal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You've got it.

[The committee recessed from 12:29 p.m. to 12:33 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have a tabling motion. All those in favour of the motion to table, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you very much.

Given the time and the fact that the committee is reconvening Monday at 10 and going through until 6:30 . . .

MR. STEVENS: This item is not on the agenda,

Mr. Chairman, but I gather you are suggesting we might be departing. I would like to make a motion, and I will give you a copy of it. I have signed the motion and will hand the secretary a copy, but I will read it. Be it resolved that an order of the committee issue, pursuant to section 19(2) of the Legislative Assembly Act, providing that the regulations made pursuant to the Public Service Act relating to severance payments to employees and Treasury Board directive 11/85 be inapplicable to employees of the Legislative Assembly office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Discussion?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A call for the question. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

What is the pleasure of the committee? To adjourn until Monday?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The committee adjourned at 12:35 p.m.]