

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

[1:05 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, ladies and gentlemen, the meeting of Members' Services Committee comes to order. Thank you. You have an agenda before you. What is your wish with regard to item 1 in the minutes?

MR. HYLAND: I move we approve the minutes of January 18, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Can my motion do both, or do you want them separate?

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion to adopt the minutes of January 18, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Item 2(b), the January 19 committee meeting minutes. A motion for adoption? Thank you, Member for Grande Prairie. Discussion? Those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you very much.

In the ongoing quest for fiscal responsibility in all quarters, the committee has invited the chairmen of three of the standing committees. First, we might recognize that Mr. Stewart, the Member for Calgary-North Hill, Legislative Offices, is here; Mr. Pashak, the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn, with regard to the Committee on Public Accounts; and the Member for Red Deer-South, Mr. Oldring, in regard to the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act.

My understanding was that the first is Mr. Stewart, and the Member for Calgary-North Hill has sent a memorandum to myself. We've caused that to be distributed to all members, and I trust you have it before you. Fred, would you like to speak to the proposed budget for '88-89?

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, by way of clarification and in reference to the memorandum that has been distributed, may I say that the previous budget that apparently had been distributed to members of your committee reflected a very preliminary stage. It was prepared by the previous chairman of this committee before such time as the members themselves had had an opportunity to review it. The committee did meet subsequent to that and, indeed, unanimously approved a budget that I would like to discuss with you today, copies of which have been distributed to your members, the bottom line on that budget being \$40,000.

Just by way of background, Mr. Chairman, the budgets for this particular committee reflect some change year by year. In 1986-87, for example, the budget was \$50,000. In 1987-88 it was \$35,000. And this year, as I say, the budget as unanimously approved by our members on this committee was \$40,000. It has three components to it, two of which are basically static. One of those components represents the audit fees for the audit of the office of the Auditor General, which is done by outside auditors, and that remains fairly static year by year. The second component, which again is quite static, is those costs that relate to the meetings of the select committee, and four meetings are budgeted for each year.

The third component is variable, and it relates to travel to and from conferences with the respective officers of the three offices that fall under the committee's jurisdiction. Obviously, it varies year by year because of the venue of the particular con-

ferences and also, of course, the corresponding costs that relate to airfare and accommodation. So that's the one that has given us our greatest concern over this past budget-building process. The situation is that last year four conferences were held, firstly: one in Edmonton, two in Ottawa, and one in Toronto. All of our members participated in the Edmonton conference that related to the office of the Ombudsman, and two members were budgeted to go to Toronto, two to Quebec city, and two to Quebec city again. It turned out that there was some variation as to the availability of members to actually attend, but that was the budget-building process for those years.

I think it's safe to say that the committee members feel very strongly about their obligations and responsibilities to keep on top of the offices, to find out what's going on in other jurisdictions that relate to those offices. The members have in the past participated on panels as well as just attended. As a matter of fact, I think Dr. Elliott attended and participated on a panel in Quebec city, and four of us participated on a panel here in Edmonton. So the members feel very strongly about their role and their responsibilities in respect to these conferences.

I might just give you an idea as to how we arrived at the budget of \$40,000, which was unanimously approved by our members for '88-89. It relates principally to the fact that of the conferences this year, one will be in Canberra, Australia; one in Halifax; one in Orlando, Florida; and one in Montreal. So the venues are much different this year than last year, and that's the reason for the increase in the budget allocation that has been designated to travel.

On the budget-building side, what we did was, number one, go strictly with excursion fares, not economy. We have no spousal allowances in respect to our members. The past practice has been that two members attend, and there's no spousal allowance. The budget-building process involved us looking at one member to Canberra instead of the usual two, because of the inordinate distance and extra costs. It also was built on the basis of the usual two members going excursion fare to the other three conferences on the North American continent. So that was the basis of the budget-building process. The members felt strongly, however, that they did not want to pin themselves down to a policy of one or two members. They wanted some flexibility there, because of individual circumstances, that might allow for some change, but they did build the budget around that sort of premise.

So the budget figure that was approved by the committee was the \$40,000, recognizing that that does involve an increase from last year's \$35,000, but in comparison to the previous year's \$50,000, it was felt to be in order.

I'd be glad to answer any questions, Mr. Chairman, that members may have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. WRIGHT: The Council on Governmental Ethics Laws: is that a joint U.S./Canadian council?

MR. STEWART: Yes, it is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Cypress-Redcliff, followed by Calgary-Glenmore.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your comments

you said that a good portion -- and it's shown under Professional, Technical, and Labour Services -- of the cost of the committee was the audit of the Auditor General's office. Has that always been taken out of the committee, or is that something new? Why wouldn't it be taken out of the Auditor General's office operation?

MR. STEWART: No. It has always come out of this committee. The committee's budget has allocated those moneys for the audit of that office by independent auditors.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Stewart, I appreciate your comments with regard to the distance your committee has to travel compared to previous years, and I know these meetings are very important. However, I feel that this committee is looking at making more significant cuts in our budget, and I would like to move the motion that we leave the budget as submitted to this committee, the budget that was prepared November 4, 1987.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, we now have a motion. The Chair's understanding is that that would be \$35,000. Is that correct? What's the amount? I've got a November 4 one here -- I'm sorry, \$33,463. It's time for new bifocals. Are there questions or discussion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a call for the question. All those in favour of the motion as moved by Calgary-Glenmore, please signify. Opposed? Motion carries.
Thank you, Calgary-North Hill.
Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: I'm in the chair of the Public Accounts Committee of the Legislature of the province of Alberta, and I'm here today, I guess, to explain our budget. Perhaps a little background might be helpful for members who have never sat on the Public Accounts Committee. I believe it was Premier Lougheed who originally suggested that the Chair should be a member of the Official Opposition, so I'm the Chair and I'm a member of the Official Opposition. The co-Chair of this committee is a member of the government side; he's Mr. Ron Moore.

Traditionally, the committee only meets during session, at least in the Alberta Legislature, with the exception that the Chair and the co-Chair attend an annual conference of Chairs of public accounts committees from all of the Canadian Legislatures and the federal Parliament. Last year we met in Quebec city; the year before we met in Regina. So what you see here are travel expenses that would permit the chairman and the co-chairman to attend the annual meeting of the Chairs of public accounts committees, which is scheduled for Halifax this July. I think it's important that I attend this committee meeting if we're to remain in this association with other Chairs of public accounts committees. I'm the first vice-president of this association, and the following year I'll be the president. In that year the meeting of the Chairs of public accounts committees will be held here in Edmonton, so there will be quite an increase in the budgeted amount that we'd request at that time.

Generally speaking, I don't know whether it's necessary or not to go to my own committee to have them approve budgets, because it's just been traditional, as I understand it, that the Chair and the co-Chair travel to these conferences, although in 1986-87, in anticipating the '87-88 budget, I did try to introduce

some reforms and brought those reforms that would have added to the expense of the operation of the committee before the committee itself. When they were rejected -- well, in fact one of them was approved by the committee but then rejected by Members' Services. I don't know if that's sufficient background for your purposes today, but I'm certainly open and would welcome any questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Members of the committee?

MR. PASHAK: Maybe I should point out, as Mr. Stewart did, that there's no spousal allowance in this. Spouses are welcome at certain events that are put on in conjunction with the conference, but they pay for at least their travel expenses out of their own pocket.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I would move for the sake of discussion that the budget for the Public Accounts Committee for the coming fiscal year, '88-89, be the same as it was for the '87-88 fiscal year, that amount being \$5,650.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Speaking to the motion, Member for Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: I'm going to ask the chairman of the committee: you made reference to a function which would be taking place in Edmonton; what was the year that that would be happening?

MR. PASHAK: That would happen in July of 1989, but attendance at this conference would be a preliminary step to it.

DR. ELLIOTT: Do we see any costs in this budget of yours here in preparation for the 1989-1990 budget in preparation for hosting that activity in Edmonton?

MR. PASHAK: No, not other than the travel to the conference. Actually, there is a possibility that we may have . . . Well, in some years they've held meetings of the Table officers of this association in the place where the next meeting of the joint Public Accounts Committee is to be held. But in the last few years we've done this by teleconferencing rather than by actual travel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Other members? Yes, Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if Mr. Pashak could indicate for clarification, if operating on the \$5,650 budget -- that is, last year's budget -- what would have to be cut from the committee's activities in order to achieve that? I believe that's the motion that's under way right now, is it not, Mr. Chairman? Yes.

MR. PASHAK: Well, the only variable in here is really the airfare itself. I mean, obviously we're going to try to get the cheapest airfare we can, but it may mean booking well ahead on the lowest possible fare that's available to us. I think that would be the only major change.

MS BARRETT: Do you know where the meeting is and the time and everything, so that you could do that?

MR. PASHAK: Yes; it's July 10 in Halifax. I think we could

book a long way in advance and make sure that we come within that budget.

MS BARRETT: The committee could continue to function properly then?

MR. PASHAK: Pardon?

MS BARRETT: The committee could continue to function properly and adequately on last year's budget?

MR. PASHAK: I think so. I mean, I'd rather have the flexibility of covering contingencies, you know, but . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Other questions? Call for the question. All those in favour of the motion by the Member for Cypress-Redcliff, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. Oldring, Red Deer-South.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to say what a pleasure it is for me to be able to appear before this august body this afternoon. I want to note that the deputy chairman of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act select committee is also serving on this committee. I also note that the former chairman, the hon. Mr. Kowalski, is also serving. I'm going to make reference to that in a few moments in terms of the dollars that I'm here to appear before you on, because I know that he'll want to support me in light of the drastic cutbacks that I've made since he's stepped down as chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund select committee, I'm happy to report, is working extremely well. We've had good participation from all members and good co-operation. We've also had good participation and co-operation from the Premier as well as numerous cabinet ministers who have various projects being funded through the trust fund committee. I might mention that amongst our responsibilities as a watchdog committee over a \$15 billion-plus fund -- I think the budget that we're appearing before you on is a very insignificant amount of dollars and a very small amount of dollars for the responsibilities and the challenge that we have to meet. I might mention that last year the trust fund committee reviewed a record-setting number of recommendations. Some 70 recommendations were given careful consideration and thorough debate. As a result of that we brought forward 15 good recommendations to the Provincial Treasurer and Executive Council.

I would also mention that in last year's budget -- I should start with the '86-87 budget, which I was able to inherit from the hon. Mr. Kowalski, and the budget at that time was \$151,850. We cut it back last year by almost \$30,000, to \$124,175. What I would propose for this year's budget, the '88-89 budget, is a further decrease of some 12 percent, or \$15,000, which would bring us back to \$109,175. Although that's certainly going to leave us with some constraint, I think it is fiscally responsible to be able to offer those kinds of reductions at this time. I would certainly hesitate to make any further reductions in that and still hope to maintain the job that we're doing and be able to tour the projects that are necessary for us to closely monitor.

On that note, Mr. Chairman, I'd certainly be happy to try to answer any questions that the members might have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just for clarification, Mr. Chairman:

\$15,000 -- how much is this reduction?

MR. OLDRING: I am suggesting a \$15,000 reduction. That would bring us back to \$109,175.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Mr. Kowalski.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I would move that the committee accept a figure for 1988-89 of \$109,175 for the select standing committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Speaking to the motion, Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: The budget as prepared is for \$124,000, as you pointed out. Where will the reductions take place, in your belief?

MR. OLDRING: I would assume, Mr. Wright, that the majority of the reductions will take place under Travel Expenses, Indemnities, and Allowances.

MR. WRIGHT: Do you expect, then, that the hearings will be shorter next year?

MR. OLDRING: No, I wouldn't anticipate the hearings being any shorter, but what it might mean is that we won't be able to get out to as many projects as perhaps we would like to, although I am satisfied that if we spend our dollars wisely and if we schedule our projects wisely, we should still be able to see the necessary projects on an ongoing basis. It might mean seeing three projects next year as opposed to four, but hopefully, in a three- or four-year cycle the members will have an opportunity of getting out and seeing the various projects that are being funded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any other questions? Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Is there much or any out-of-province travel?

MR. OLDRING: The only out-of-province travel that the committee has experienced since I've served as chairman, and I think even prior to that it was the same, has been the Prince Rupert grain terminal, which of course was a major project funded in part through the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and I think most committee members have at least had the opportunity to go out and see it once. So other than that, there hasn't been any out-of-province travel.

MR. PENGELLY: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Oldring, would that reduction include seeing more than one minister per day as a witness?

MR. OLDRING: Well, in most instances, when the committee is meeting, we attempt to see at least two ministers per day if it is at all possible. It isn't always possible to be able to schedule two ministers on the same day, but in most instances we have at least two, and sometimes more, in the same day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The call for the question has been heard. All those in favour of the motion by the Minister of the

Environment, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you.

Thank you, Red Deer-South.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN: Members of the committee, I understand there is a motion to be proposed with regard to one of the Members' Services orders that was passed at one of the last meetings.

MR. PENGELLY: Mr. Chairman, I so move the purchase or rental and installation of an office telephone service in the member's constituency office and in his office at the Legislature and a residence telephone service in his constituency and in his temporary residence within the meaning of section 41 of the Legislative Assembly Act, effective February 8, 1988.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Is there general understanding of the motion, which is an amendment to the previous Members' Services order?

Innisfail, followed by Edmonton Highlands.

MR. PENGELLY: The purpose of the earlier enhancement to the residential telephone program was to reduce the costs of toll calls by enabling members to dial direct rather than to use operator assistance. Listed telephone numbers for MLA Legislature and constituency offices provides reasonable accessibility for the public. This amendment does not prevent a member from requesting listed residential service.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MS BARRETT: I can support this, certainly. My question, though, has to do with the thing that we passed a few weeks ago, which is really restated here. I'm wondering if the implication of this motion is that an individual line can be hooked up in an MLA's Legislature office as opposed to going through what we have in terms of those rotary systems. Is that what's meant by this?

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, my understanding of this -- and I stand to be corrected -- is that it wouldn't allow just what the member suggested, another line in the MLA's office. It allows for a silent phone number in a residence, whereas you've got other listings of other numbers. I think it's in the first part of the amendment on the paper passed out, where it says the amendment removes requirements for listed residential service. My understanding of the intention of this is for that, and not for an additional line into an office in the Legislature.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Edmonton-Highlands, in response, followed by Taber-Warner, followed by Edmonton-Strathcona.

MS BARRETT: Thank you. I understand; it spells it out. It says: "This amendment removes the requirement for 'listed' residence telephone service." I have no problem with that at all. If the purpose of this is to sort of reinforce what I thought we agreed to more than a year ago, then why does it refer to "the purchase or rental and installation of an office telephone service in . . . and in his office at the Legislature"? You see, that's the part I don't understand. Why is that in there?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, my understanding, in discussing this with the Member for Innisfail and based on a representation I received from one MLA, was that what we're trying to do is take the wording in the motion as passed several weeks ago and repeat it as much as possible but add one further bit of flexibility. That flexibility would allow a member to have either a listed or an unlisted number in the residence. That's the intent of the motion. I concur with the Member for Edmonton-Highlands in that when you see the entire motion brought back you wonder: why are we reinventing the wheel when in essence, as my understanding is, we're repeating the thrust of the motion as approved several weeks ago with that one minor amendment and addition which gives the member the flexibility?

MR. WRIGHT: I think the Member for Edmonton-Highlands was asking not about the amendment but about what we passed before. It does seem to say that you can have such a line in your Legislature office.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I suspect that this committee could decide the interpretation of this motion ourselves. I guess what I'm looking for is an interpretation that does allow the individual line at the Legislature office as well, and I can make my case very clear.

In my office I can't hear the phone; I can only see the phones ringing. I work a lot of late hours here; I usually work during the supper hour. I can't have return calls because I can't hear the phones. So if I'm absorbed in paperwork, it doesn't do anybody any good to try to call me back. If members were allowed under the interpretation of this motion to have individual lines or some such equivalent installed so that you could hear the phone when you're working after hours or on the weekend, that would suit me admirably.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's another issue. I have the same problem with the equipment, because when I'm in here working on the weekends or late at night, I can't hear my own phone ringing.

MS BARRETT: You can open your door and hear it from Mary's desk. Right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hopefully.

MS BARRETT: I can't do that. I'm in a different building altogether.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a real problem with this current system.

MS BARRETT: You're right; it is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's another issue that perhaps we can try and address in another way.

MS BARRETT: All right. Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a call for the question. All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: As a point of information, Mr. Chairman, with

regard to ringing phones, I encountered that, and they can put a little switch at the switchboard that will ring your phone. In other words, whoever is operating the switchboard can flick the switch, so when they go home it'll ring in your office. Mind you, that's only one.

MS BARRETT: That's right; that's only one.

MR. TAYLOR: If there are three or four, then you can't. But that's one way of getting around it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you make a note of that please, Clerk, so that we can try to see if that fancy equipment can be improved?

All righty. Any other motions at this time?

Okay. My understanding is that with the budget procedure we're now going to move over to section 11, *Alberta Hansard*. Once again, the summary page is there, showing zero percent. I'm sure members can read those paragraphs.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, am I allowed to make a motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're always allowed to make a motion.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, I feel that *Alberta Hansard* has done an extremely good job over the last year. With the reduction in the budget last year, I feel that it would be only appropriate to make a motion that we accept your budget as proposed, as prepared January 6, '88.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion to approve the budget for *Hansard*.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, is Mr. Garrison available to come in?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, he's coming down.

MR. BOGLE: I for one would appreciate an overview of the *Hansard* services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair also saw a couple of other hands. Could you raise them again? Thank you very much.

Dr. Garrison, perhaps you could give a quick overview of *Hansard*, to take the members through the operation; for example, perhaps the changes that have taken place within this last year in particular, and perhaps touching on some of the pages.

DR. GARRISON: Okay. Some of the more obvious changes that have taken place at *Hansard* in the last year include the next-day service, of course. We've gone from producing the *Hansard* for the second day after the sitting reported to producing it for the next day. That means, as you all know, producing a separate night issue, which wasn't the case before.

A major thing which has a direct impact on the budget, of course, is the implementation of in-house typesetting, which was done just before the spring sittings last year. As was mentioned at the budget meeting of this committee last year when I was before the committee, we had received a tender for printing which was less than half what we had been paying before, and the majority of that savings was directly related to our acquiring in-house typesetting capability. We're now in the second year

of our printing contract. The printing contract expires at the end of this year, and as you'll notice on -- I forget the page where printing is indicated -- page 12, we've included an amount to cover a possible price increase for printing for 1989, because at that time we would be under a new contract.

Just before the spring sittings as well, our office was moved from this building to the Annex building. That didn't really affect the budget, but it of course has had a significant impact on our operations.

We have lost one full-time position over the course of the year -- a person resigned -- and that position has not been refilled. But the work has been reassigned, some of it to full-time people and some of it to part-time wage employees.

In early June we did a user survey. We surveyed all the MLAs, as I'm sure you'll recall, and we surveyed all our subscribers as well. One of the results of the survey was that we discovered a pretty strong interest in people having the capability to perform computer searches of the *Hansard* text, so that if they were looking for everything that was said on a particular subject, they could perform a computer search by key word. There is a provision in the budget that is before you for funds which would enable us to proceed with that, at least on a trial basis. We are hoping that if there is enough interest in it and if it proves to be useful enough that we want to continue it, we would be able to establish a subscription rate for users so that we could recover some of this cost from the users themselves.

Another thing that we did this year was acquire a microcomputer which will enable us to produce the *Hansard* index completely in-house. Up to this point we've been relying on the mainframe, which is run by Public Works, Supply and Services, to provide indexing capability for us. The software we've been using has been getting pretty old, and it's been very hard to maintain it properly. A number of things about that operation were somewhat awkward, but I guess one of the key factors in obtaining this capability is financial. It costs us about -- well, maybe I'll just refer to page 13 of the estimates. There's a decrease of about \$8,000 for Data Processing Services. That is the amount we won't have to pay anymore to the data centre, because we will be processing the data in-house. There's another approximately \$3,000 that we will be able to save each year when the annual index is typeset. That amount is referred to on page 12 and is shown as a savings of actually \$3,400.

Those are basically the highlights of the changes that have taken place at *Hansard* this year. Did you wish me to go through the actual ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll hold it there for a moment. Are there other questions or areas? Do you wish to go through it page by page?

Cypress-Redcliff is up, followed by Westlock-Sturgeon, followed by Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, my question was related to the reduction in the salary positions and the increase in wage positions, with a net reduction of about 8 percent, but unless Dr. Garrison has more to add, I think he kind of covered that in his preamble. It was dealing with does he feel -- and obviously he said he did; he feels he can provide the same service, because of the upgrading, with less personnel.

MR. TAYLOR: Mine, Mr. Chairman, is probably more one of administration. On page 11 you have after-hours standby for word processing at \$6,000, and you didn't have it last year.

Was it somewhere else last year, or is that a new service?

DR. GARRISON: It's actually not a new service. This item had been overlooked previously because -- well, I guess one of the biggest factors was that there was difficulty in getting the billing from the company doing the service. One of the factors involved there as well is that the amount spent under this category in previous years has been much less than this. As a matter of fact, it's been less than about \$2,000. The reason for that is that the hourly rate for standby time up until about October was \$5 per hour, and now it's up to \$10 per hour. We're anticipating a few more hours as well if the pattern continues -- as we had last year -- of more sitting days and maybe more night sittings than in previous years.

MR. WRIGHT: I notice on page 12 that there's an item for console operator this year; none forecast for last year. But surely we've had a console operator all along?

DR. GARRISON: It's been the same console operator too, I might add. He's under Wages on page 3. If you're wondering how he got from \$11,046 to \$13,123, that is basically the 1.5 percent market increase and as well an increase to cover the employer contributions, which of course he doesn't benefit from if he's a contractor.

MR. WRIGHT: That's all right. I'll pass.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Other questions? Any other issues with respect to *Hansard*?

MR. WRIGHT: Oh yes. I notice that your forecast is exactly the same as the budget. Is this true?

DR. GARRISON: Well, I think these forecast figures were just taken directly from the budget. I wasn't asked, for the purpose of this budget document, to provide a forecast. As I'm sure you're aware, the expenditures at *Hansard* depend very much on how long committees like this sit and how long the House sits on any given day and that sort of thing.

MR. WRIGHT: The forecast is for the year that's close to ending, so you should have some idea. But I accept your reply that you really didn't make a special exercise of forecasting the expenditures for this year.

DR. GARRISON: Yeah, our expenditures are expected to be reasonably close to the estimate from last year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other comments? A call for the question on the motion to approve the budget as presented. Those in favour please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to console them if we're having trouble getting the bill. There's a number of government members down east who are having trouble getting the bill for what they owe too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A wonderful flight of fancy -- not terribly germane to the conversation. I thought you were going to offer him consolation, or at least offer consolation to the console operator, for having to listen to all of us sometimes.

Thank you, Dr. Garrison.

I wonder if we might have a five-minute coffee break and come back at 2 o'clock.

[The committee recessed from 1:54 p.m. to 2:10 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, we have Blake McDougall, the Chief Librarian, with us to look at section 12: Legislature Library. Again, that first page there gives you the written overview. Perhaps, Blake, you'd be good enough to sort of deal with that page and other comments you'd like to make of a general nature with regard to your areas. Then I'll take questions.

MR. McDOUGALL: Mr. Speaker, first of all, by way of introduction I'd like to say I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to discuss the Legislature Library's estimates for 1988-89 with the committee. I'm also pleased to report that 1987 was another record-breaking year in terms of the volume of services supplied by the Legislature Library. As well, in the first month of 1988, January, the volume of services continued to climb, one being as high as 9 percent. The reason I'm putting this information forward is to give an indication that I feel this is an indication that the library continues to provide a valuable service and the services it supplies are required by the Assembly.

This budget presentation is a no-change. First of all, I'd like to say, by way of introducing this presentation, that I wish to note that last year the library's estimates were reduced by 11.3 percent, and this resulted in fairly severe reductions in supplies and services as well as the abolishment of two permanent staff positions.

Our 1988-89 submission represents no increase in spending. This will allow the library to maintain its existing service program as well as resume the microfilming of Alberta weekly newspapers at approximately 20 percent of the former rate. This program is popular with Albertans and had to be discontinued in 1987 because of budget reductions. We received a number of letters concerning the effect of those reductions, and there was also a column in the *Calgary Herald* reflecting the same views. New efficiencies at the library have helped us to recover some of the funding; consequently, we'd like to begin the program once again. Unfortunately, it's at a reduced level.

Those are my introductory remarks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just for clarification, would you like to give just a bit more, by way of amplification, of how you go about doing the weekly newspapers? It's not just sort of on a daily basis but it's more of... Would you like to explain that, please?

MR. McDOUGALL: Mr. Chairman, the Legislature Library began acquiring Alberta weekly newspapers shortly after the province was formed. Fortunately, the collection has been maintained. Consequently, it represents probably the most definitive history of the province in existence. It's certainly the largest collection of Alberta weekly newspapers in the province.

The problem with newsprint is that it has a very high acid content and deteriorates very rapidly. Consequently, shortly after my appointment as Legislature Librarian in 1974, we began to take steps to try to secure funding to microfilm the collection. At this point in time, microfilming is the most cost-efficient way of preserving newsprint. Originally we were to continue to acquire the newspapers; the Provincial Archives were to fund the microfilming. However, they were not able to

realize any funding, so I pursued that problem locally and over a period of years acquired \$30,000 a year plus a microforms clerk to help with preparation of the papers.

Basically, the way it worked is: representatives of the communities, usually an official of the local historical society, museum, or archives, or the publisher, would come forward and volunteer to assist us in the microfilming of the papers by supplying issues that are missing from our collection. That way, when the microfilming project was undertaken, the file would be as complete as possible. That's generally how the work was done. There are members that have had microfilm projects completed in their constituencies that are present here today, and they're probably aware of that program. Albertans generally have a very high regard for the program because of their great interest in their local history. Consequently, there's been very little criticism of the program over the years, practically no criticism, and it has received very positive support from the media as well.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I thank Blake for the good explanation of his budget. As a regular library patron not only here but at the university and the EPL, I think I recognize the important vehicle a library is to a member of the Assembly in making informed decisions. I commend every aspect of the library operation in this building. It is outstanding in quality and service. I therefore move that we adopt the budget proposal as presented by the library and by Mr. McDougall.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion to approve the budget as presented. Discussion on the motion? [interjection] It's already been moved. Thank you, Westlock-Sturgeon. Any comments?

There is a call for the question. Those in favour of the budget as presented, please signify. Opposed? The motion fails.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I move that the legislative research service branch be eliminated, thereby reducing the 1988-89 estimates by approximately \$172,963.

Mr. Chairman, that figure is derived by taking the actual budget for Legislative Research Services, which is estimated at \$207,555, in recognizing that in order to abolish a program, a certain lead time is necessary. I believe three months is customary, if not statute directed. Therefore, if we look at the month of March, which is the last month of the current fiscal year, and the first two months of the new fiscal year -- that is, April and May -- and we subtract the approximately \$34,592 from the \$207,555, we come back to the \$172,963.

I further move that the Legislature Librarian, in consultation with the hon. Speaker, is authorized to reallocate \$50,000 of this reduction to other Information and Reference, and Co-operative Government Library Services. The abolishment of the branch is to be completed by June 1, 1988.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Two separate motions or . . .

MR. BOGLE: No, one motion, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

I'm just trying to absorb things here for a minute. The Chair will indeed recognize Edmonton-Strathcona, Edmonton-Highlands, Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: I think Edmonton-Highlands had her hand up first.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I speak strenuously against this motion. As I recall last year in this committee, the Leg. Library service was directed to reduce its staff by one and not even allowed to determine whether or not it would be, say, a support staff like a secretary but in fact a researcher. That resulted in at least splitting of one job at one point. At that time I said that I believed the worst thing a member of this Assembly can do is to cut off its access to information or analysis.

Now, to completely eliminate the legislative research services is bizarre to me. There are 83 people elected by Albertans to run this bloody province. We're supposed to know what we're doing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can I ask you to watch your language?

MS BARRETT: Well, I didn't know that "bloody" was swearing, Mr. Chairman, and that's the way I feel about it right now.

The people of Alberta go out and vote, and they ask for people to be informed and to make decisions in their best interest on behalf of Albertans. Now, I think they don't go out and deliberately ask for doorknobs to get elected. They're asking people who've got the time and the guts and the courage to do a little bit of reading and do a little bit of analysis, much of which is facilitated by Legislature Library research services.

Moreover, Mr. Chairman, I note that the Official Opposition budget sustained an enormous cut last year, which led us, for instance, to rely more and more heavily on Leg. Library research services, the result of which is fairly good information and well analyzed in a critical sense. That's what happens, you know, when you hire people who've got some experience, been to university, undertaken some training, and acquired some skills. They get good at what they do, and they're able to offer useful information and knowledge to MLAs so they can make the very best decisions.

It seems to me that I can't think of an instance that is more analogous to cutting off one's nose to spite one's face than to cut the intellectual component of the Legislative Assembly, and that is precisely what is being moved under this motion. We're not talking about, you know, "Oh well, we have to save a few dollars." If you want to save a few dollars, the interlibrary loan system, for instance, can be conducted by libraries and library techs within the main library itself. You cannot replace Legislature Library research services within the library. It is distinct, and it has a particular role that can't be done by people otherwise on staff.

Finally, I'd make the point that again I think this is a deliberate attempt to cripple the ability of the opposition to have, in lieu of sufficient budgets, our own research offices properly staffed and working. It's a deliberate attempt to cut off our further access to information and particularly analysis, which takes time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: I echo the comments of my colleague, Mr. Chairman. It seems to me that this is very clearly a partisan move, and it should not be the business of this committee to make motions based on political advantage or disadvantage.

The government caucus can have all the research it needs to boost its arguments in favour of government policy done through the ministers' offices.

MS BARRETT: And they do.

MR. WRIGHT: And they do. The opposition cannot. It must rely on the public funds that are set out to do this very necessary job of an opposition. We are being cut again in this respect. It is a partisan move. I ask the members of the committee to resist such a flagrant, I submit, abuse of our power.

I think the librarian has done an excellent job in exercising the restraint that we are told is necessary and which I concur in many ways is necessary. Why then must there be a further cut beyond the budget, which is basically a stand-still budget, even in the face of inflation? Only because the opportunity is being seized to make a partisan move, and I repeat my strong objection to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the Chair could indeed be ruled out of order -- just a moment, Westlock-Sturgeon -- but I do want to rise to the comment about nonpartisan motions and the life of this committee. I couldn't agree more. But I must say that as Chairman I was some upset after the last meeting when we got into this hassle about wages of female employees. That struck me as being certainly not nonpartisan in what happened.

MS BARRETT: Well, I want to respond to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's fine, and I'm going to give you a chance to respond. But in terms of these kinds of motions and so forth...

MS BARRETT: If the Chairman wants to play tit for tat, the Chairman should resign from this committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MS BARRETT: If that's the Chairman's attitude, he should resign. If you can't stand the heat, then get out of the kitchen, Mr. Chairman. That's a tit for tat comment. That's what's going on with the Chairman.

Go ahead. There's more. [Inaudible]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that sort of proves the point all the way around, doesn't it?

MS BARRETT: No, it doesn't, Mr. Chairman. When you acknowledge me, I'll make a response to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's fine.

Having said all of that and given the fact of not only in that area but in other areas, especially with regard to the internship program and especially with regard to this particular motion with regard to the research component, I was about to say that I indeed agree with the position of Edmonton-Strathcona and Edmonton-Highlands. The difficulty with the budget process as it goes on here is indeed the matter of trying to make the adjustments that have to take place within the whole Legislative Assembly envelope. I think the record shows in terms of last year's budget as well as this one that in terms of the overall efficiency of a department, all the members in the Legislative Assembly office have indeed been trying to achieve that. While

we have the responsibility for dealing with certain dollar issues that flow through to the caucuses which are beyond our control other than doing the administration as a service to the members, so it is that with regard to the operation of, for example, *Hansard* and Legislature Library administration and so forth, I think we have indeed been making every effort in terms of better efficiency, also the matter in terms of personnel.

As for the value of the various programs, I don't need to be convinced as to their merit. I certainly have great concern, as I was obviously showing by my comments at the beginning of this discussion, as to how far one can indeed cut back in terms of the operation and what is a sense of fairness in each element of the organization, whether it be in paid salaries or in workload. So as Chairman I'm at least able to make those comments on behalf of a department.

The Chair recognizes the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. More in the nature of information, I initially share the feeling of the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona that there seems to be a move that is not conducive to having better service for the public or better service for the members of the Legislature. So I was wondering if there is any kind of breakdown of the use that's been made. For instance, it's one thing to go out and cut services to the opposition, as this appears to do. I must confess that with my office next door to the library, I make a great deal of use of the library. It's very handy, and I have found them fantastic. They were even able to recover something of Robbie Burns' early poetry that I could get nowhere else in town.

To get back to actually what's going on in politics, I was wondering: are there schools or are there people outside the MLAs that advantage themselves of the... In other words, who uses this research? Is this strictly a 100 percent MLA call? I'm just wondering what it's doing, because it may be a lot more than just stepping on a couple of opposition MLA toes here. There may be some other areas we're cutting off that normally access this and wouldn't be at all appreciative of the fact that it dried up.

MR. McDOUGALL: Mr. Speaker, first of all, in connection with who can use the legislative research services section, the legislative research services section is only available to Members of the Legislative Assembly, which of course includes the Speaker of the House and senior officers of the Assembly. So that would be the Clerk, myself, director of administration, and so on. In terms of utilization of the service, the library has conducted four studies. I have that information with me, if it is the desire of the Speaker to have it tabled, as well as a brief overview concerning the section itself.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you've got it there, sure. You've got it there?

MR. McDOUGALL: Yes.

MR. TAYLOR: Can I get some copies?

MR. McDOUGALL: Yes.

MR. TAYLOR: You wrote down as to use by government, or is it opposition MLAs? It is?

MR. McDOUGALL: There are four studies completed, and it

has who uses the section on a percentage basis.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, perhaps the Librarian would summarize it to us and then table the report.

MS BARRETT: He's going to do that.

MR. WRIGHT: Oh, I see. Okay. Good.

MR. McDUGALL: Mr. Speaker, there are two documents here. The first one, dated January 7, 1988, is a brief overview concerning the Legislature Library's legislative research services section. It contains all of the most basic and, in my opinion, important information concerning the development of the section, and in particular on page 2 outlines the consequences of abolishing the service or discontinuing the service. The second document is a display. Four studies were done concerning the sources of requests for service the legislative research services section has received. This in no way violates confidence because the Library of Parliament in Ottawa, which is the senior parliamentary library in Canada, publishes these figures in its annual report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of comments. First of all, your reflections on my initial comments with respect to this motion are most appreciated. The comments with respect to any partisan motivation I may have had with respect to salary changes with new incumbents was not at all partisan. It is no secret anywhere in Alberta that I am an advocate of equal pay for work of equal value and certainly the 1956 Canadian legislation, equal pay for equal work. That was the point of my having raised it in the Assembly. It was not preplanned, motivated. I did not hold a news conference, and it was not an attack on the Speaker. It was a series of questions which I believe need to be addressed systematically, and that is in terms of equal pay for equal work.

Now, I see from Blake McDougall the breakdown of the use of the Leg. Library research services, and I think the 1987 study clearly indicates what I had been suggesting earlier on. With the cut to the opposition budget last year of some \$167,000, we had in fact to render null and void signed contracts we had with employees who were about to come on in our research division. We couldn't do that. As a result, we had to go more and more to Leg. Library research services, who, by the way, have done sterling work, Blake. I hope they survive all of this.

Anyway, you can see the shift over the last six years in terms of who's using the services most, but inevitably what you'll see is that there's still an awful lot of use of these services. I don't think that eliminating them can be warranted under any circumstances. If they are eliminated, I think it's now patently clear that it is a move to directly, once again, cripple the ability of the Official Opposition to act as the Official Opposition on an informed basis. It's a serious pity. I urge members of this committee to overturn the motion that's currently under discussion.

MR. WRIGHT: One of the concerns could have been that people other than those for whom it was really intended were over-using this service, I mean, relative to their numbers or other resources. That doesn't seem to be the case either. The government members have greater facilities elsewhere, as I mentioned earlier, and so they have a lesser usage, as one would expect.

The three opposition parties have the greatest use; together it comes to nearly 60 percent of the total usage. So it very clearly is -- and I respectfully echo your words, Mr. Chairman -- a move that is of a partisan nature. Those are not your exact words, but I agree with and respectfully adopt your remarks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes. Just a quick analysis of the situation. Certainly from '82 to '87, government members' use has declined from 20 percent down to 12 percent, almost a direct reflection, I might remind the government members, of their vote totals in the province. It might be an indication that if they want to bring their party back into esteem, they go back and start doing more reading in the library.

The other part that's interesting, though, Mr. Chairman, is that for some reason or another the nighttime reading of Mr. Speaker has gone from 27 percent down to 5 percent. [interjection] Maybe you're watching more VHS than you are reading, Mr. Chairman. But that's interesting.

The opposition, if you bulk it together, starts out in '82-83 at 26 percent, falls off in '84 at 20 percent, then starts to climb fantastically to 53. I might remind the members that that's when Liberals first hit this House. I guess we can be accused of reading too much. Last year in '87 the opposition parties together used up 67 percent, which is over two-thirds of the use, so certainly any move to cut the research budget when the opposition parties make up two-thirds of the use of it is clearly a partisan move, taking our cut of 18 percent last year overall and then moving not to cut the library research but to decimate it, take it away. I don't think the public of Alberta will take kindly to that. That's using your force and vote in committee to ride roughshod over the fact that the opposition, who are also elected by the same people who elect the government, are supposed to be, if you'll pardon the rather sexist expression, castrated as far as their efforts to do research. I think the public will look at that.

I would ask members maybe to table the motion, and if they want to cut expenses to the Legislature, rather than use the draconian methods they're using here of reaching in and picking something -- by the way, you'll notice the government members rarely use. They used it 20 percent in '82, now down to the government members only using it 12 percent of the total. In other words, the total opposition uses the library research very close to six times as much as the government does, with much fewer members. So I think a move such as this -- you might as well make a silly move like saying, "Let's remove the desks and chairs for the opposition and make them stand in a group behind the TV cameras." It's not put together in any such way [interjections]. Give them ideas and they might do that, or take away their chairs and tell them to stand on bare feet. I mean, this is a type of thing you wouldn't expect from any educated group of people.

If you really want to cut the budget -- and I can see maybe they want to. But to just go out and pick one thing the opposition is using and say that that's it -- I venture to say that they didn't have these studies, and I would like to take the very tolerant attitude, which is very rare for me, and make a move to table the motion so that they can go back and study these statistics and realize that possibly I'm saving them from making fools of themselves. Consequently, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to table the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion to table. No discussion. Those in favour of tabling? Four. Opposed? Five. Defeated.

Others speaking to the motion? Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding in the work I did before putting this motion forward -- and I want to assure members of the committee it was not put forward lightly -- that seven out of 10 provinces do not have a separate research service or branch. Those seven provinces include the other three western Canadian provinces: British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Three provinces do have such a service. We are indeed in a time of fiscal restraint, a time when all services are being, as they have in the past fiscal year, examined very carefully. I appreciate that there will be a greater emphasis on the member and the member's immediate staff, as provided by the caucus fund, to carry out certain research activities.

It should never be forgotten that the elements we deal with under the Legislative Assembly envelope relate to services for members. That's the primary function. And it's imperative upon us as legislators to review on an ongoing basis the level of services provided to ourselves in this province as that relates to the other provinces in Canada. I know it's much easier to look at areas where we're adding services or increasing the budget. It's always difficult when we look for areas of restraint, areas where we need to reduce a service. This is one which was not reached lightly, but the motion stands.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion reads:

that the legislative research services branch be eliminated, thereby reducing the 1988-89 estimate by \$172,963. The Legislature Librarian in consultation with the Speaker is authorized to reallocate \$50,000 of this reduction to other Information and Reference, and Co-operative Government Library Services.

The abolishment of the branch is to be completed by June 1, 1988.

Those in favour of the motion please signify.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, [inaudible] to the motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it a point of clarification?

MS BARRETT: Oh, I see. That was just something I...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, it was summation. And I mentioned...

MS BARRETT: Well, it is a sort of question, yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I mentioned it to the House before we allowed the member to continue. Let's try, but it may not be...

MS BARRETT: Well, I just wonder if the mover of the motion has stopped to calculate, let's say, the capital costs of redesigning the office currently occupied by Leg. Library research. I mean, inevitably what happens is that when people vacate an office and a new division or department is assigned that space, a lot of moola goes into redesigning. I'm not so sure it wouldn't cost quite a bit of money to redesign that office space to accommodate different needs and whether that wouldn't offset the putative savings that would be achieved this year by eliminating the branch.

You see, my point is that certain economies are achieved. If your goal is to, let's say, reduce the budget by \$170,000 this year, which isn't all that much money, and it costs you \$100,000

to rework that area, and next year you just so happen to be in an expansionary fiscal position where you might even consider reinstating the division, has any of that been taken into account? Can the mover indicate that the real savings are going to be \$170,000, or are the real savings actually nothing when all those factors are taken into consideration?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the Chair would really direct it to the Chief Librarian. The question would perhaps have some assumption that the space would just go vacant. Blake?

MR. McDOUGALL: I don't have any information or opinions as to how Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services would arrange for the disposition of the space after the unit is discontinued. I'm not aware of any... Of course there wouldn't be any plan in existence, because to this point, at least, it had been occupied.

MS BARRETT: Can I just add one further point on that then? Can you possibly estimate -- let's say hypothetically that we went into an expansionary fiscal regime next year and we were going to reinstate this program. Would the start-up costs of doing that outweigh or even come close to matching the amount of money that could be putatively saved by this particular cut this year?

MR. McDOUGALL: Mr. Chairman, this would largely be a matter of opinion and would depend on the particular circumstances surrounding the regeneration of the program.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Basically the cost of having to hire again. Most of the space that's there, in my estimation, would just go dormant. It's on a floor that is available to the Legislative Assembly Office so that in the next hypothetical expansionary thing it would be a matter of hiring personnel, but the space or walls, I think, would just stay the same.

We've had the summation... Sorry.

MR. McDOUGALL: Mr. Chairman, just one concern is that the cost projected in the motion will provide for the amount... As I'm sure you all know, there's a minimum 90-day notice that must precede position abolishment and layoff, and I have some concerns that these figures will meet that requirement. They may do that, but I'm not sure because I haven't had an opportunity to calculate the figures.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I thought I addressed that matter in the motion when I explained how I came to the calculations contained within the motion. I believe I did as well use the word "approximate." If I'm out a dollar in my math, I apologize to the committee, but clearly the intent was, as this is the eighth day of February, to give the full month of March and the first two months of the new fiscal year and to subtract the first two months in the new fiscal year from the total, from the \$207,555, so there would be ample dollars there to address the transition.

MR. TAYLOR: You can't give notice now, though, can you?

MR. BOGLE: That's not a notice now. I gave it during the motion so that all members would be aware of how the figures were developed before being asked to debate the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would be completed by June 1, which

does indeed give three full months plus the balance of this month, if the motion carries.

MR. TAYLOR: I suppose the budget is always approved by the House, but the House might rise up in rebellion on something as blatant as this. Consequently, I don't think you can give anybody notice until the House has approved the budget, first of all. Secondly, the three months -- I don't know the people we're talking about, but having been somebody who's had to let employees go at times, if they've had five or six years on staff, they're more likely to get a six-month notice period. You, Mr. Chairman, would be aware that there are certain laws and rules and threats that when you let someone go, if they have more than five years' experience, it's usually pretty stiff unless you get them transferred to another department.

Lastly, I would think that if you look also at the use made in '87 -- like Assembly administration, parliamentary background papers, and others -- there is about a 25 percent cost that has to be made up somewhere. The legislative committees just suddenly can't operate in a vacuum, in spite of what we think their resources are. So I think the \$50,000 is way too small, and I'd be willing to amend the motion to \$100,000 at least so that we then have room to operate, to move to zero. I'll vote for the amendment, but I would still vote against the motion even if the amendment passed, Mr. Chairman. But at least it will be getting it to a reasonable amount. Fifty thousand is not reasonable when you look at the number of people that have to be moved around and the work that still has to be done by the library committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. The Chair recognizes that the previous motion had been given summation. Therefore, the House will vote on that motion. If after that, however . . .

MR. TAYLOR: May I amend the motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. If after that, however, the member wishes to try to put a motion to the House to increase it to \$100,000, the Chair would be only too happy to recognize that. We're into this whole procedural mess-up because we got courteous to one member and it's blown from there.

So the motion before the House is the reduction as moved by the Member for Taber-Warner, leaving in place \$50,000. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed, please signify.

MS BARRETT: May we have it recorded, Mr. Chairman, please?

MR. CHAIRMAN: By a vote of 6 to 3.

MR. TAYLOR: I'd like it to be recorded too, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's by a vote of 6 to 3. The three members were Westlock-Sturgeon, Edmonton-Strathcona, and Edmonton-Highlands. Do you mean recorded by constituency or just recorded by numbers?

MS BARRETT: Constituency, please.

MR. TAYLOR: I'd like to move now, Mr. Chairman, because I think there's a possibility the \$50,000 would be hard to get in and if these things can be done cheaper, they will always be

done anyhow. Certainly our Librarian and your department have shown themselves quite reasonable in adjusting, so I would like to move that although it can be a guideline, the \$50,000 maximum be moved up to \$100,000 so it would give enough room to do the transition properly and without hurting some of the chores that must go on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Motion by Westlock-Sturgeon: \$100,000.

MS BARRETT: With reluctance, Mr. Chairman, I support that motion. The reason I'm reluctant is because, you know, if the so-called reason for having passed the previous motion was to save a whole bunch of money, the whole bunch of money won't have been saved. I think what's made clear then is that the whole purpose of the exercise was to get rid of an intellectual component of the library that certain members of the Assembly either don't like, are afraid of, or don't use.

On the other hand, it does seem to me that the job done is more important than that. Having an additional fund of \$100,000 so that some of those functions can be performed is absolutely no compensation for disintegrating a unit that enjoys an economy of scale, particularly in terms of efficiency and shared information. On the other hand, it's better than nothing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Call for the question on the motion by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. Would Westlock-Sturgeon like to make one more passionate plea?

MR. TAYLOR: No. I think it's just reasonable in these things. From long and bitter years of experience in administration, you just can't switch things that fast. I think that the \$100,000 certainly -- of course it's not going to reoccur anyhow if the department dismisses. I think it leaves an abundance of room in which to manoeuvre to do the adjustments that are necessary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: Might I make a suggestion, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, here we go again. Could we call it a point of order or something, because we're right back into having said to everybody this was summation, and now this point of order . . .

MR. WRIGHT: I'm sorry. Perhaps I should think quicker than I do, obviously. But just in case it might solve a problem that might occur, the point of order, I suppose, is that we are in part considering a legal question here. What is the proper reserve to be established? It might commend itself to the proposer of the original motion as well as to the proposer of this motion if the amount to be established be established after consultation with Parliamentary Counsel, to have a proper reserve which may be more or less than either \$50,000 or \$100,000 for that matter -- in consultation with the Speaker or some other person.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the House wish the question to be put, or is the House interested in having a short coffee break? Is there a call for the question?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair needs a cup of coffee, which will probably take three minutes.

[The committee recessed from 2:59 p.m. to 3:05 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Everybody back?

We have a motion before us, as moved by Westlock-Sturgeon, to increase the amount in the previous motion to \$100,000. All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed? Motion fails. Thank you.

That gets us through the budget estimate book as it relates to the Legislative Assembly Office, and when we meet tomorrow, we'll be able to come back in with the various figures and revisions that we have picked up from the previous two days of meetings. I would see that I would be supplying that information to the committee after we've gone through the caucus budgets.

Any other items for today, or would you . . . Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, just for clarification then, we would start tomorrow morning with the caucus budgets and then go back to the beginning of the budget book and work our way through, picking up areas where additional information was requested.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would be my understanding.

MS BARRETT: What time?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nine. We're scheduled 9 to 12. And some thought of future meetings: we would need at least one meeting of Members' Services Committee before the House returns. I think there were some dates that had been speculated upon. Any dates at the end of February, after the Olympics? I think of February 29 and Tuesday, the 1st, as being two possibilities. So from that we all know that the House shouldn't be in here before March 2 at any rate. [interjections] Perhaps we could sort of hold the 29th as a possible.

MR. TAYLOR: St. David's day would be even better.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't know any saintly Davids.

All righty. A motion to adjourn until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock: is that what we are now going to deal with? Cypress-Redcliff moves that the committee stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed, if any? It carries by a vote of 2 to nothing.

[The committee adjourned at 3:08 p.m.]