

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

[10:13 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have the agenda before you. Any additions or deletions you want to make? Yes, Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, I have an item under Other Business. I'd like to make reference there to a topic on MLA office space in a member's home. I'd like to raise it at that time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Under Other Business, go on, Grande Prairie.

MS BARRETT: I have a question. Do constituency office budgets come up under 5(h) under budget estimates?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They're not under there. It would come under where? Leg. Assembly budget? Under (k).

MS BARRETT: Okay, good. Thanks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay?

MS BARRETT: Yup.

Were you in fine form for your play, Stock?

MR. DAY: Yes, I was.

MS BARRETT: You should keep that on afterwards.

MRS. MIROSH: Oh, God.

MR. DAY: No, no. I was Herod.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Close.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I'm not so sure about how close. Closer than some anyway.

All right. Does somebody want to move approval of the agenda, knowing full well we can add later on?

MS BARRETT: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Edmonton-Highlands. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Minutes of August 21 as circulated. Moved by Grande Prairie. Approval.

MS BARRETT: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question? All those in favour of approval of the August 21 minutes. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

August 22 committee minutes, 3(b).

MR. BOGLE: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Taber-Warner, approval of the minutes as circulated. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you.

Item 3(c), August 28 minutes.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, is this an appropriate time to ask whether anybody has actually refused the pay increase? That

was under these minutes. I don't see another item on the agenda.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Everyone accepted the pay increase without exception.

MRS. MIROSH: What was the answer?

MR. McINNIS: Everyone accepted without exception.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any other questions?

All those in favour of the approval of the August 28 committee minutes, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously. I hope it was moved by Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Sure. I moved that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your graciousness.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, may I on that last motion . . . No, I'm sorry. I'll wait until further down the agenda.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Business Arising from the Minutes, 4(a), Legal Aid Costs for MLAs. In your binder you should have some documentation. Parliamentary Counsel?

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, I have done analysis to divide up the issues in a certain way as to which types of liability might fall on a member and how they are presently covered in general terms. I've also done a note on the present items of litigation that members are involved in, at least those which are matters of public interest and in the media. If I may just pass this down to members now, it could be passed down the side. I'll pass one pile down there.

AN HON. MEMBER: Just one page each?

MR. M. CLEGG: One page each, yes.

I'll just briefly go through the second document first, because it's really an analysis of the present situation of litigation, and then I'd like to make a few comments on the document in your binders, which is headed Legal Assistance for MLAs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Just before you proceed, it's your opinion that it is all right to have this in the public record at this stage?

MR. M. CLEGG: Yes, indeed, Mr. Chairman. There's nothing in this document that is not a matter of public record. In fact, the reason I wanted to mention this second document first is that in the third paragraph I mentioned this committee is, of course, bound by the sub judice rule under Standing Order 23(g). I have recommended that the committee in these proceedings do no more than recognize the existence of these actions, because the question of whether things done or said in the actions were in the course of a member's duties or not could be a factor in determining liability at trial. Therefore, all I have done is listed the actions, the parties, and the broadest description of the nature of the action so members are aware of what is happening.

There are, of course, quite likely to be met other matters of civil litigation which members are involved in in their personal capacities, such as family issues, and I felt it would be an

invasion of members' privacy to have a search done of all the judicial records to pull that kind of information out. So these matters which are listed on here are the ones which have been in the press and which relate to public statements and matters already in the public domain.

As members will see, almost all these cases are in fact defamation cases. Some of them are between members; some of them are actions brought against members. None of them relates to things said in the House. One of them relates to a controverted election petition in Calgary-Millican, which is more or less complete except for costs. One of them is against a cabinet minister for something said during his official duties. Those are essentially the matters of litigation which are presently before the courts on public matters.

As to the analysis of the issue, speaking to the document which is in your binder, these events can be divided into affairs which arise in the House and those which arise outside the House. The expression "in the House" means anything which arises during a proceeding in Parliament, which means during a proceeding of the Assembly or a committee of the Assembly, and which might also be extended to something done in connection with the business of a committee if it were authorized by the committee to be done. It certainly covers things said in the House and said within the precincts of a committee during its meetings. Such matters would come within the protection of parliamentary privilege, or potentially they would come within that protection.

The area of parliamentary privilege which is most well defined in an absolute sense to give members absolute immunity from suit is that respecting the things said in the House. As members know, it is an element of parliamentary privilege that members enjoy absolute immunity from civil suit with respect to things said in the House, including in committees.

There is an undetermined question about how far this extends to things done; for example, physical assault, which is something we fortunately see very little of. It is highly probable that if it took place within the House, it is something the House would take jurisdiction over and decide what to do. For anything which resulted in criminal proceedings – and some actionable wrongs can either be dealt with in civil proceedings, such as a physical assault, or in criminal proceedings – parliamentary privilege has generally been waived. It is quite clear that parliamentary privilege as a defence or immunity does not cover anything which either is exclusively a criminal matter or is proceeded against by criminal proceedings. So with respect to parliamentary privilege and the immunity we're dealing with, 99 percent of civil issues which arise in the House in the history of Parliament have always been things said. On very rare occasions, I suppose, one member has thumped another member, but this, as far as I can determine, has always been dealt with within the House.

MS BARRETT: That's why we're two sword lengths apart in the House.

MR. BOGLE: Some of us are. Some aren't.

MR. M. CLEGG: Maybe this committee table is not quite wide enough.

In any event, it would be a matter to be determined, in the first instance, by the Speaker as to whether it was a *prima facie* case of privilege which was involved, and subsequently by a committee of the Assembly. In other words, it is within this

House to determine whether or not the matter is covered by parliamentary privilege and, therefore, whether the issue would be dealt with within the House – in other words, whether there would be legal proceedings.

If the House determined that it was a matter that came within parliamentary privilege, then any attempt to bring the matter into the civil courts would be met by the position of the Assembly, argued by its counsel, that the matter was one of parliamentary privilege and should not be before the courts. This would not be a defence; this would be a denial of jurisdiction. So if a member were to be threatened with litigation with respect to something said in the House or within the committee, just to look at the most common possible risk, then generally speaking, if it was agreed that it was within the House, the House itself would not literally defend the member but would, on behalf of the member, state to the court that the court did not have jurisdiction because it was a matter within parliamentary privilege.

So what we're mainly concerned with is what would happen outside the House. With respect to matters outside the House, the issue is very different. In very broad terms, a member is in the same position as any other member of the public for things he does outside the House, be it defamation or any other actionable wrong generally not covered by parliamentary privilege, because a member's protection of immunity only extends to proceedings in Parliament or in the House.

However, the government does provide coverage to employees of the public service and also to members pursuant to a recent order of this committee which extends coverage, on the same basis as the public service, to members for things which are done in the course of their duties as members. This, then, becomes a most difficult matter to determine: whether a certain thing which arises during a member's public duty in a general sense is within his duties as an MLA or whether it's in pursuit of some other public duty. That is a difficult thing to determine. It's difficult to establish guidelines or rules, and it's quite likely that every item, if it were something which had to be determined, would have to be looked at case by case. I've discussed this issue with Mr. Whitehouse from risk management in Treasury, and he agrees that from the insurance point of view they would find it very difficult to proceed by way of generalities in this and to say, "If you do this kind of thing, you will be covered, and if you do that kind of thing, you will not be covered."

With respect to public servants, if what they do can reasonably be viewed as something which was in pursuit of their duties and was not an intent to do harm and was not something which had been forbidden by order, then it would be covered even if it was not a particularly sensible thing to do. They have tended to interpret this coverage in a generous way, because they don't want employees to be constantly feeling a threat of civil liability. So the test for employees in the public service: if they were doing something which would reasonably be interpreted as something which fell within their normal duties, if it was not an intent to do wrong, then they would be covered. If there was evidence of malice, then of course the employee would not be covered if it was determined by the government and by the insurers. In some cases this is covered by government carrying its own risk and in some cases by insurance. This is why I use the expression "coverage" and not insurance.

If it's determined that the action generally was reasonably within the employee's duties and was not an intent to do harm, then the government would defend the employee and would indemnify the employee for any liability which arose. The

situation now is that MLAs are covered under the same general rules as employees. It is certainly more difficult, in any event, to determine whether a particular action was within the duties of an MLA than to determine whether it was in the duties of an employee, because an employee has a job description, has very well-defined duties both as to what they do and generally as to where they do it and how they do it. They have reporting lines. They have obligations to consult and to obtain permission to do certain things.

Members are in an entirely different position. They are independent. They have a very wide range of things they do. The line between some of their public duties which are not clearly MLA duties and those which are clearly MLA duties is a gray line, and it would be possible to envisage all kinds of scenarios which would fall into this gray zone. Clearly, something which is done in pursuance of Legislature duties, probably things which are done reasonably to pursue constituents' interests: most members would probably agree that these are MLA duties. One area which is more difficult to be certain about is when matters are more in the political sphere, but even that is a very difficult term to define. In the case of political campaigning, this is generally restricted to provincial campaigns when members are no longer members, but that isn't always the case, because members sometimes get involved in campaigning for others in elections at other levels of government. So there are gray zones which will come up. But anything which is reasonably and clearly within a member's normal duties would be covered.

It's possible that this committee could attempt to prepare some guidelines as to what this committee feels are an MLA's duties and what it feels are not an MLA's duties. That would be quite a difficult task but something this committee could indeed attempt.

There is a special situation with respect to private automobiles. The present policy of the government with respect to employees is that where a member claims mileage for use of a private vehicle, the government expects that employee to arrange adequate insurance to cover any liability that member might incur during that use which is being reimbursed. In some cases the member will be required to pay an extra premium if they say to the insurance company, "Now, look, I will normally just be commuting or using it for social purposes, but occasionally I use my car on public business and I'm paid X cents per kilometre." They will say, "Well, how much will it be?" If you say, "Maybe three or four thousand K a year," they may well say, "Well, there's no extra premium, but you could tell us." If you say, "Look, it's going to be about 25,000 K a year," almost inevitably they will want to charge you an extra premium. It is the policy of the government that they will reimburse employees under certain circumstances if they are generally required to use their cars on public business – are reimbursed but are nevertheless required to pay a higher premium. There is a limit on this. I think it's approximately \$100 for the extra premium. That is the way in which that matter is determined for employees. It's something I wasn't aware of, having worked for the Legislature for 15 years, and it behooves all of us in the organization and the public servants to be aware of the situation.

This is something which should be considered by the committee, as to how it should be extended to members. Many members use their cars to a very great extent and have mileage charges. Whether they have adequate insurance coverage is something which should be looked into, and the effect of any higher premiums should be looked into also. Risk management

has offered to discuss this with us further and look at the actual problem as it exists if we can define to them, say, that on average there are maybe at least 25 or 50 members who are claiming for at least 10,000 K and probably would have to pay an extra premium – to determine whether this is something which is refundable on the same basis as employees. It would seem unfair for members to have to pay this if they are having to pay an extra premium because of this. I mention this because it's a special situation I discovered during my research, this business-use surcharge.

To summarize the situation, an alleged liability resulting from a statement or other noncriminal act or omission that took place in the House would be countered by the Assembly claiming privilege as a bar to litigation. Unprotected areas in the House would include criminal acts or acts which were proceeded with under the Criminal Code as an option, such as physical assault. A claim of bar of parliamentary privilege would be handled by the Assembly because it would be protecting the Assembly's privileges. Current Crown coverage exists for members outside the House acting in the course of their normal duties unless harm is intended. So to summarize, the unprotected areas outside the House are acts which are not reasonably within an MLA's normal duties as an MLA: acts that are a deliberate attempt to do harm, whether it be defamation or some other kind of harm, and acts which take place at a time when a member is not actually a member. During a period of dissolution we have to remember that with respect to many of these benefits, unless there is some specific provision, MLAs are not MLAs from the moment of dissolution and they would not be covered by the government's policy for public liability.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

I had two hands raised. The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Well, there are two issues now that have been raised in the question about insurance for automobiles. I don't have a problem with that one. I think a little bit of common sense would dictate that one gets that extra coverage and makes sure liability coverage is sufficient to counterbalance some of the large lawsuits we see today. We're only talking there about a few dollars. It's not a great cost in addition to what one would normally pay for insurance. So I'm not worried about that. That's crept up in here; it wasn't part of the original questions I had.

MR. M. CLEGG: Right.

MR. WICKMAN: But getting back to the question of reimbursing or assisting in legal costs, as it pertains to the original matter, we seem to be kind of going around and around. Somewhere along the line we'll either decide we're not going to pursue it any further or we're going to get some specific direction. I still feel that specific direction should pertain to providing legal assistance when the member is acting in his or her status as a member.

To quote here from a letter we have from the House of Commons, from the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you're quoting from the letter, are you going to give a copy to the whole committee?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN:

Should a civil action be commenced against a Member involving his or her status as a Member, the Office will attempt to negotiate a reasonable settlement in the circumstances.

The key there is "his or her status as a Member."

If litigation is necessary, consideration may be given for practical purposes to assisting the Member by reimbursing the payment of legal costs to outside counsel. Of course, the involvement of outside counsel is always subject to this Office's supervision.

So in that particular case, it's the office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel that is involved.

If we were to set up guidelines or give some specific direction, possibly it could be under that office, Mr. Chairman, or it could be under the Speaker's office to make that determination, as to whether it is reasonable to provide that assistance depending on the circumstances. One has to define: is the involvement during a period of time when that person is acting in his or her status as a member? That becomes the ticklish part, where somebody has to make that decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, in background to all this, is there a specific that's acting like a burr under your saddle, so we could focus more on what the concern really is?

MR. WICKMAN: Not under mine. If we look at the list that was provided, my name was not on that list, but we do see a number of people on the list. As it stands right now, they're responsible for their own legal costs. It's a question as to whether they were acting in their duties as a member during the incident that caused the lawsuit to be launched.

Let's just go back to that list. You can see, for example . . . I'm not familiar with all the cases, but I am familiar with the two that involve members of the Liberal caucus. In both cases, as it stands right now, there is no legal assistance. It's simply that these people want to know. Are they entitled to it or aren't they entitled to it? Our feeling is yes, they should be entitled to it. Otherwise, it inhibits one's activities as a member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, forgive me. Sometimes perhaps some comments should be inhibited.

Edmonton-Jasper Place, followed by Red Deer-North.

MR. McINNIS: I thought I heard you say, Mike, the origin of this was that the Members' Services Committee passed an order extending the protection a public servant has to MLAs without putting in a definition of what the MLA role is.

MR. M. CLEGG: That's correct.

MR. McINNIS: It's the lack of a definition. Well, I guess we need to deal with that. I'm assuming that nobody on this list is receiving any funding from the Assembly or any legal support.

MR. M. CLEGG: That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

I'd just like to make another note to explain something which Mr. Wickman read from. I don't believe Mr. Pelletier's letter to him implies that it's Mr. Pelletier's office, the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel's office, which determines that a certain action was within a member's duties. I think he means that once that has been determined, the legal services are under his

office's direction. I believe in Ottawa indeed it would be the Speaker, perhaps on the advice of Parliamentary Counsel, who would determine: was this something within a member's duties?

MR. WICKMAN: I kind of suspect that too, and that's why I made the reference that possibly the Speaker should be the one to make that determination.

MR. McINNIS: Well, if I might just comment to follow that up, it seems to me we're going to get into trouble every time we try to apply rules meant for public servants to MLAs, because in fact we have a political relationship with our electors whether we like it or not, and it's difficult to ignore that. Outside of the elections, they elected us to represent them politically. You know, they weren't sort of electing another government official to provide a well-defined function. So if we have this type of extension, this coverage is going to have to extend in some sense in the political realm. I'm not sure I like the idea of us, members of the Assembly, suing each other and having the taxpayers pick up the legal bills. That question's a little bit odd, so I think we're into a difficult area. My only observation is that taking public service rules and applying them to this job doesn't seem to work very well in practice.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, just a question to Mr. Clegg. Outside of any legislative consideration, member A sues member B. Member A is not successful in his suit. Are there not channels available for member B to recover some costs?

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, indeed that's the case. As in all litigation, if the defendant wins his case, he can always claim costs against the plaintiff, and the court will make a determination as to what those costs should be, some or all or none.

MR. DAY: Thank you.

DR. ELLIOTT: I had two questions, Mr. Chairman. One has just been answered. The other one is that I'm concerned about how well this current situation is known or understood by Members of the Legislative Assembly. Is this material in its present form out there for all to understand? Like, the Speaker just made reference to the fact that he, too, discovered something new in doing his research. I think the important thing out of this topic is to make sure the members of the Assembly know where they stand on it. Otherwise, I feel the present arrangement is acceptable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For this two-page document prepared by Mr. Clegg, the only circulation I'm aware of is that it has been given to this committee. So what this committee wants to do with it in terms of having it sent back to each caucus to distribute, or if you want more work done on it or whatever – you know, then we await the decision of the committee. I think the committee has had a bit of difficulty not knowing what the specifics are, and we have a bit more of an indication of that perhaps now from Mr. Wickman. Perhaps in terms of the next number of weeks or so, Mr. Wickman and both legal counsels could meet together to see if there are some other areas that need to be further defined.

I would say that the two documents given to us today, the first by Mr. Clegg, the document Members in Civil Litigation, will certainly be added to our file binder and as part of the minutes of the day, because it's like a filing, if you will, and the same

thing with Mr. Wickman, the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, being gracious enough to give us a copy of the letter which was sent by Pelletier to Michael Henry.

Any other comments or questions? Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Just one, Mr. Chairman. I hate to see an issue kicked around and kicked around if there isn't a feeling in the Members' Services Committee that this matter should be pursued. The comments made by Mr. Day, for example; if that's reflective, then I would prefer just to kind of drop the matter rather than keep pursuing it and pursuing it. So if somebody wants to make a motion giving that direction . . . Certainly I'll be glad to do it. But to just chase more paper really doesn't make sense to me.

MR. McINNIS: Percy, I'm not sure that it isn't the other way around. I mean, you brought the matter forward. Is there something you'd like us to decide on: a proposition perhaps?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. I would like to see, specifically, this matter being referred to our legal counsel and to develop a set of guidelines for the consideration of this committee. We don't really have any guidelines here. But if members are satisfied with the status quo, then there isn't any sense in doing that. I'd like to see, as I indicated earlier, a system similar to what we see in the House of Commons, where an individual - in that particular case, the Speaker - makes that decision and says, "Yes, this does involve an incident where you were acting in your role or your status as a member of the House." At least then the individual MLA involved has somewhere to go to and say: "Does this meet your guidelines? Can I be reimbursed for legal costs?"

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate Mr. Wickman's comments about not wanting to chase paper around and around, and I'm trying to be sensitive to that request. I wouldn't have a problem putting forward a motion asking that subject to the correct wording, the status quo in terms of the present legal assistance for MLAs be accepted as acceptable. If you want to craft that differently, I don't have a problem with that. I think it would answer Mr. Wickman's concern about the continual paper chase on that issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can one make a . . . I think if one withdrew . . . Procedurally, if one just moves that the item be removed from our agenda, that . . .

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, I believe there isn't a motion on this matter at present, so if no further motion is made, there's nothing further, procedurally, which needs to be done.

MR. DAY: In that case, I withdraw the motion.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, to resolve the matter, I'll make a motion. I'll move that this matter be referred to the office of our legal counsel to develop a set of guidelines to bring back to this particular committee for its consideration.

And speaking to it, Mr. Chairman, that would at least allow some thought to be given as to what incidents, what situations, can be covered which aren't and, at the same time, develop a procedure within those guidelines as to how a member would go about seeking reimbursement for legal costs in those particular incidents.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Red Deer-North, speaking to the motion.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Wickman. I think the difficulty with the motion is that he worded it, "to develop a set of guidelines." If the motion was to say something along the lines of "other than the guidelines we already have" . . . I think the motion right now suggests there are no guidelines, and there are very clear guidelines, which may or may not be acceptable to some members. That's why I have difficulty with the motion worded as it is.

MR. WICKMAN: Just throw in the term "expanded guidelines" then.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hold on a moment.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We might get some other members who want to get in on the whole thing.

All right. Thank you. I apologize, Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: If you just throw in the term "expanded guidelines," that would imply there are guidelines in place and it would be an expansion of the current guidelines.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Is that agreeable to folks, to have the motion expanded to include "expanded"? Thank you. Further discussion? Call for the question. All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed, please signify. Motion fails. Thank you.

Next item on the agenda is 4(b): Approval, EDP Strategic Plan. Clerk?

DR. McNEIL: Yes. Under tab 4(b) there's a decision item dated December 7, 1989, requesting that the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services adopt the proposed five-year EDP strategic plan, or the '89-90 edition. This plan, after it was tabled at the last meeting, has been discussed with the EDP management committee, and I believe the caucus chiefs of staff have discussed it with their members.

Adoption of the plan doesn't involve approving any specific financial expenditures. What it does is indicate acceptance of a strategy of moving ahead with further development of EDP capabilities in the Legislative Assembly, basically dealing with five issues: the need to replace obsolete computer equipment throughout the Assembly, in the caucus offices and in the administration offices; to handle movement of information among all locations of the Legislative Assembly, including constituency offices, caucus offices, and the Legislative Assembly Office itself; the training and support of members and staff to ensure that they're utilizing the technology effectively; dealing with strategies to finance the acquisition and maintenance of new technology; and to maintain the security and confidentiality of data. The essence of the proposal in the long term is to equip constituency offices, caucus offices, and the Legislative Assembly Office with a standard package of a microcomputer, printer, and software, and to link those computers up via local area networks to enable members and staff to communicate throughout the province via computer, and to have the capability of computers in constituencies as well as here in Edmonton.

The essence of the basic strategy is to have a fixed amount allocated to EDP resources every year which will go towards the

replacement and maintenance of equipment and, hopefully, eliminate in the long run the need to expend significant amounts of extra money in particular years to upgrade or update the technology; to try to make it a continuing process so we won't be faced in the future with the situations that we've faced the last couple of years where the Assembly has had to expend significant extra amounts of money because our equipment has become obsolete.

MS BARRETT: My favourite subject, Mr. Chairman. David, did you mention to me – and I don't want to put words in your mouth – that NBI doesn't make their hardware anymore?

DR. McNEIL: Yes. I was going to add that, that NBI advised us at the beginning of November that they were going out of the hardware business. This, I think, makes it more critical. This plan deals with that in a broad sense; it doesn't deal with it specifically in terms of dollars. Other items today and in the budget discussion will deal specifically with that problem in terms of replacing the existing NBI technology. We do have a concern that because they've gone out of the hardware business, their ability to maintain the present equipment will likely decline, and the equipment that they do sell which is still available is really out-of-date equipment. So we've in effect stopped investing in NBI equipment. The problem now is to not get caught in the short to medium term depending on equipment that we don't know whether we will be able to maintain in that period of time.

MS BARRETT: So then the advice of the EDP committee is really suggesting that if you go with an industry standard, like an IBM compatible which ain't gonna go out of style – in other words, which is going to be around for a long time – then all future updates would relate strictly to software.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct. Well, to software, and there's the possibility with the equipment that we have purchased to upgrade it in terms of its speed and power without having to replace the standard equipment, by just replacing the computer chips. And this particular equipment that we have is upwardly compatible with newer technology. So part of the broad strategy is to be as flexible as we can so that we don't get in the same box that we are in now, where we have equipment that has served our needs but it has to be in effect thrown out completely because it's no longer available on the market and it's out of date in terms of its technology.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I understand that there were meetings between the caucus chiefs of staff on this document.

MS BARRETT: Extensively.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So it's brought it to this point today.

DR. McNEIL: We've had probably four or five meetings since August with the chiefs of staff and the EDP management committee of the Assembly.

MR. McINNIS: I think it's a really good system. I like the upward expandability. Any idea how long these should be around? Secondly, what's the five-year cost approximately? I know that's a separate budget item. What would be the five-year cost of these?

DR. McNEIL: Well, we've just got detailed costs out to, I guess, '90, '91, '92. In terms of what we've addressed, I think we're talking between \$400,000 and \$500,000 over three years.

MRS. MIROSH: Four to five hundred dollars?

DR. McNEIL: Four to five hundred thousand dollars. But given our approach, and we'll discuss that later, we would see that as coming out of existing budgeted moneys, assuming that we budget the same moneys for EDP next year as we have done this year, to be able to handle that within existing resources and not have to have a significant lump of money – for example, \$200,000 – extra in the budget next year to handle this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Chairman, my feeling is that the overall policy direction of government is to accomplish more with less in terms of expense. Looking at this, I think the overall perspective and the bottom line is going to be greater service to the people of Alberta at less cost and more efficiency; that's how it is striking me. Acquisition costs alone, co-ordination: different items like that would suggest that that'll be the net result. So this seems positive in my view.

MRS. MIROSH: I agree that this is a positive plan. If we adopt this, though, over five years, are we adopting the budget at a later date? You say there's no cost right now, but there is, because you've got it written in here that "Funds will be allocated each year to replenish the pool." So I'm just a little confused as to why you would say at this point that there's no cost when you've got in here that funds will be allocated. The two would go hand in hand.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. What we're proposing here is a strategy. We're saying that this is the way we think we should go, the direction we think we should go. You can adopt the strategy but not necessarily adopt the proposed timing that will be contained in the budget doc. So in other words . . .

MS BARRETT: You still have flexibility.

DR. McNEIL: There's flexibility. You can say that we really believe in this approach but we don't want to do this aspect of it this year. We want to delay this aspect till next year.

So there are still decisions that have to be made with respect to the allocation of resources. I guess what we're asking for is support of the principles here, of the general direction that we're proposing that the Assembly go in handling its EDP resources. In terms of the specifics in savings, by incorporating and consolidating the EDP budget and looking at how we allocated our dollars over the past couple of years, we've managed this year to effect savings of about \$120,000 in maintenance costs, because in the past each section of the Assembly was dealing with NBI and separate maintenance contracts, and when you put them all together and looked at the total cost and the service that we were receiving for those dollars, we were astounded.

MRS. MIROSH: You could have replaced the equipment for our maintenance costs.

DR. McNEIL: Over three or four years we can do that, yes. That's where we see the savings being applied, to replacement

of equipment. And if we adopt that strategy on an ongoing basis, then we don't have to have large sums of money in the budget in a particular year to replace equipment. So that's an important principle in the plan.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, a lot of the equipment is becoming cheaper and better because far more people are buying it.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, to David. If we were to adopt the principles in this strategy and if members of this committee felt we wanted to complete the process as soon as possible, what type of budget implications are we talking about? You're talking in terms, for example, of a five-year time frame. Let's say we wanted to achieve it sooner.

DR. McNEIL: Well, we haven't - we've looked ahead three years in terms of specific dollars, and our judgment is that if we allocate the same amount of money next year as we have this year for EDP resources, we should be able to accomplish the computerization of all the constituency offices, all the caucus offices, and the Legislative Assembly Office.

MR. WICKMAN: In what period of time?

DR. McNEIL: By the end of 1990-91.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry, the end of '90?

DR. McNEIL: Ninety-one.

MR. WICKMAN: By the calendar year '91?

DR. McNEIL: The fiscal year, so March 31, 1991; by the end of the next budget year.

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, you can do it that soon? By 1991, a year from . . .

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. That's providing the basic equipment. Now, there may be applications after that in terms of using the technology, in terms of software and developing special programs and so on, that we haven't considered as yet.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, the computerization of the constituency offices, that's all in place; that'll all be completed by the end of the next fiscal period in any case.

DR. McNEIL: No, that's not the case, because the money has not yet been allocated for next year for computerization. The plan is to do that, but the committee still has to face that decision in this year's budget discussion.

MR. WICKMAN: But based on the original recommendations that were made, based on that original strategy if that strategy holds, it would be completed during the next fiscal period, unless there's a change in direction?

DR. McNEIL: That's correct. As I said, with this strategic plan, though, we can say that this is the direction we want to go in, but the committee still has to make the specific decisions to allocate those dollars to follow through on that plan, and that's . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I just kind of assumed, David, that, you know, when the committee gives approval of a strategy, they realize the budget implications and then they're going to back that strategy up. You know, I'm just making that assumption. Okay. So what type of motion do you need at this time, then, to get this plan under way?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you'd look ahead of your tab C, 4(c) there, Mr. Wickman, there are about five or six white pages stapled together, and on the front page of that you'll see item B, Decision Requested.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry. In where? Item (c) . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Four (c) . . .

DR. McNEIL: Four (b), actually.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. Just in front of 4(c).

DR. McNEIL: And it's the page dated on the top "7 December, 1989, Members' Services Committee Decision Item."

MR. CHAIRMAN: If someone would be kind enough to move item (b), that would look after . . .

MR. WICKMAN: You're talking about Appendix II? Mine's marked Appendix II.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Chairman, I would with absolute pleasure move that this committee adopt the proposed Legislative Assembly five-year EDP strategic plan, 1989-90 edition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Taber-Warner, to the motion?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, yes. Through you to Dr. McNeil, I would like to express - and I think I'm speaking for all members of the committee - our deep appreciation for the way Dr. McNeil has worked with the chiefs of staff in the three caucuses in developing this plan. This is an excellent example of how caucuses can work with the Leg. Assembly in ensuring that there's an approach to developing long-term strategic plans that is consistent with the objectives of the caucuses and the Assembly staff. We're very appreciative of that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: I'd just add kudos to Bill Gano and Sheila Unger and Sharon, who also have done really good work on this project.

MR. WICKMAN: Could I hear the motion again?

MS BARRETT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's written there that the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services adopt the proposed Legislative Assembly five-year EDP strategic plan, 1989-90 edition.

MR. McINNIS: I'm not understanding the budget figures very well. While the overall cost is \$400,000 or \$500,000 over three

years, David, the estimates show \$472,000 in one year. Am I comparing apples and oranges?

DR. McNEIL: Yes. When we come into the budget discussion, some of that money is already allocated.

MR. McINNIS: So you're talking about marginal costs.

DR. McNEIL: I'm talking about marginal costs.

MR. BOGLE: Further to that comment, Mr. Chairman, it's important that the committee recognize that we're adopting a plan, and the dollar figures for each year will be dealt with in that year. We may find that circumstances allow us to accelerate the plan, or we may be forced to spread it out over a longer period. So by approving this motion, we're not locking ourselves into any dollar figures on a yearly basis.

MR. DAY: We still control the costs.

MR. BOGLE: We control the costs as a committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And you have the document there that gives everyone the overview of where the whole thing is headed. Okay?

MR. WICKMAN: Why do we call it the five-year plan? Why don't we just call it the EDP strategic plan? Because a five-year plan leaves the impression that we're aiming to achieve it over five years, and my understanding is that we're aiming to achieve it in a much quicker period.

DR. McNEIL: Our planning horizon is five years. Some of the things that are contained in the specifics of the five-year plan are right now quite abstract and need a lot more development. We try to make sure that we're looking ahead that far so that we don't make any tactical errors in decisions now. Typically in a five-year plan, the first two or three years will be fairly well defined; the last couple will be more general and abstract. Each year we will produce another five-year plan, but we'll add another year on and drop, obviously, the past year. So it's just an approach to planning to make sure that we're looking far enough ahead to make sure we take advantage of any developments that we see out there. One of the problems I think the Assembly's had in the past with this is that we haven't looked far enough ahead and have gotten ourselves into problems because of that.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, just based on this sentence, "Funds will be allocated each year to replenish the pool," it makes it sound like we're going to fund it every year, irrespective of our budget. I'm wondering if maybe through a motion we could have that . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's not part of the motion?

MRS. MIROSH: That's not part of the motion.

MS BARRETT: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. On that same page, note that the adoption of the proposed plan does not involve any specific financial commitments.

All right. Call for the question?

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Carried unanimously.

I'd like to add my thanks to all concerned, because when I became Speaker in '86, one of the first things we were involved in in those days when we were looking at long-range planning for the department was this whole matter of the electronic office. In the fall of that year when I went to West Germany, it was one of the areas that I was asking them about, assuming that they would be on the leading edge of technology and would have fully computerized all of their operations. We are now quantum leaps ahead of them. So what we're developing here is one of the best technologies for the service of members or their constituents in all of Canada. And from my visits to the United States recently, it's even better than some of theirs. Thank you.

If we might go on to the next item on the agenda, which seems to follow right along, 4(c). Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: Yes. Under tab 4(c)(i) is just an update as to the constituency office computerization project which indicates that computer packages have been installed in 43 constituency offices, and one office has rent-to-purchase equipment. At the present time we're conducting on-site visits to ensure that people, once they've received the training, are implementing the training appropriately and trying to solve any problems that particular constituency staff have with using the equipment. We've found that those visits are quite valuable. Among some individuals there's a fair amount of anxiety about having this new machine in their office, and I think this has helped them quite a bit. We also have the capability of phoning up the office and seeing on our screen here what they have on their screen and troubleshooting with the staff on a minute-by-minute basis if necessary.

The next decision item relates to the issue of installing data lines in offices. But that's an update on the constituency computerization process.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions with regard to item 4(c)(i)? Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: To David. In the preparation of the budget for the 1990-91 period are there sufficient dollars incorporated in the draft budget to cover the computerization of the remaining constituency offices?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Item 4(c)(ii).

DR. McNEIL: There's a memo from Mr. Kowalski to the Speaker. At the last meeting he indicated that he wanted his staff to do an analysis of the situation with respect to the installation of RITE lines in the remaining constituency offices outside of Edmonton. Their cost analysis confirms what we had concluded at the last meeting, that it's cost-effective to install RITE lines in those offices in terms of the long-distance charge savings realized from it.

So what I think I would like the committee to do is approve what Mr. Kowalski is recommending in his letter: that the Members' Services Committee approve installation of RITE lines in the remaining constituency offices and that we proceed with that apace.

MS BARRETT: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Moved by Edmonton-Highlands. Discussion? Questions? Call for the question?

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of RITE line installation, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Item 4(d). As a matter of fact, before we do item 4(d), perhaps we could have a five-minute stretch. Recharge your cups and glasses and we'll go right back at it.

[The committee recessed from 11:13 a.m. to 11:25 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps we could reconvene, folks.

Okay. One of the items of business that occurred, and I suppose it's almost Business Arising from the Minutes, was that in Calgary I took receipt of a petition circulated by a Mr. Patrick. At that time I said I would bring those forms to the committee for filing, and therefore I so do. Any other filings at this time? Other business arising? Okay.

Perhaps we could deal with item 4(d), Transportation and Administration Services Orders. On here I have the Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Yes. I'll re-move the motion that was tabled on August 28. Mr. Chairman, I just remind members of the committee that prior to 1987 there were no restrictions on regular flights taken by MLAs within Alberta and that a rule was approved in 1987, an order from this committee, to restrict the number of flights for non Executive Council members to five flights per year. As you can imagine, this has had a terrific impact on MLAs in terms of meeting speaking engagements around the province, to which I know we are all invited, and therefore it seems to me reasonable to propose to bring the figure back up to at least 12 flights per year. I think if it's fair enough to amend at this point - can I do that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: First I need to find the previous motion. Here it is. Okay. The previous motion is the blue sheet, which is 4(d) up to 12. Since you're the mover of the motion, do you want to just change a number in there?

MS BARRETT: No, it's not that, Mr. Chairman. What I'd like to do is suggest that each caucus be allowed to pool the trips to which their individual members are entitled. I think that's the obvious thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Then I think I'll see that as a separate motion: that we could have it reviewed.

MS BARRETT: Oh, all right. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to make the comments, or do you want to wait for a motion? The motion is to pool, okay?

MS BARRETT: No. The motion, then, is to allow MLAs up to 12 return air trips in a fiscal year to any point in Alberta.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh. That's the motion you wish to carry forward?

MS BARRETT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. All right.

Speaking to the motion, Taber-Warner, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that items 4(d) and (e) are interwoven, and while we have separate motions, I'd like to, with permission of the Chair, address both.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a request that . . .

MS BARRETT: It's fine with me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed?

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, then.

MR. BOGLE: The committee over the years has spent considerable time addressing the question of travel by MLAs, both those who do not have their primary residence in Edmonton as well as to allow members of the opposition parties and the government to travel around the province. I would like to see us strike a subcommittee to look at both (d) and (e) in a little more detail and then report back to our committee at the earliest opportunity. I think the subcommittee should obtain from the Clerk's office actual usage. Let's find out if the current system on air travel is not working; i.e., the maximum five trips per year. Let's see how many members are bumped up against the maximum; let's see how many are not at the maximum, both government and opposition. Let's also look at the mileage usage. I think then the subcommittee would be in a position to make some recommendations back to our full committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I expect I'll have a motion to that effect from Taber-Warner shortly.
Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. I have a question on this. Would this information be accessible today, David? Any chance?

DR. McNEIL: No, it's not. We have to do some research on that particular kind of information, because it's not . . .

MS BARRETT: Okay. Could I make a friendly amendment then? I'm assuming that you moved a motion. Might I amend it to . . .

MR. BOGLE: Actually, I didn't.

MS BARRETT: Okay. Well, I would like to suggest that your motion incorporate a notion of having the subcommittee report back tomorrow if at all possible, because not all of the information you're suggesting might be imperative to making a decision but the committee can sort of decide that itself. Is that all right?

Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, let's hold on here. We're going to have a subcommittee, about to be formed.

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. BOGLE: All right. I'll move that a subcommittee be struck and that the committee deal with items (d) and (e) and report back at the earliest opportunity, preferably tomorrow; obtain whatever information is readily available from the Clerk's office to assist; and that each caucus name its members to the subcommittee. I propose that it be a subcommittee of four, with one from each of the opposition parties and two from the government party.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We have a procedural thing here for the moment. The first part would be with regard to Edmonton-Highlands' motion, which is still there. Perhaps somebody might wish to table that till tomorrow?

MS BARRETT: Can the mover do that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think so. Yeah.

MS BARRETT: All right; sure. I'll move that the motion under consideration be tabled for tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. All those in favour of the tabling motion? Carried unanimously. Thank you.
Now the motion from Taber-Warner.

MS BARRETT: You have to repeat it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

That there be a subcommittee of four members, one from the New Democrats, one from the Liberals, two from the government, and report back tomorrow.

That's the motion now before us.

MR. WICKMAN: Just two questions prior to dealing with the motion, Mr. Chairman. The question of travel at the present time: travel in Alberta and, let's say, travel out of Alberta, and travel out of Alberta specifically for the CPA activities. Rather than being designated specifically for trips involving CPA, can those dollars be transferred for other purposes? Or is it restricted?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry, Edmonton-Whitemud, that issue is on the agenda under New Business, item 5(b).

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Well, the reason why I raise it at this time – and maybe I'll have to make a motion to bring this item forward – is that it's a transportation item that falls in line with what Pam is doing, and if we're going to have this subcommittee, I'd like to have them look at that particular item too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With respect, it does not.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm talking about item 5(d); 5(d) really involves . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's correct. If the committee decides in its wisdom it wants to make it part of it, that's fine, but . . .

MR. WICKMAN: It involves transportation, but flights outside of province rather than in-province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, to Percy. It is the prerogative of the Speaker of the House to ask members of the Assembly if they would like to attend various CPA conferences. That should not in any way be viewed as part of the caucus responsibilities or travel arrangements made. They are two very separate and distinct items.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Mr. Chairman, when we come to item 5(d), my only concern is that, you know, we may not come to it today, and that way I can't have it as part of this subcommittee that's going to meet later today. That's why I'd like to have the item moved forward and simply refer it to that same subcommittee with no discussion at this time.

MS BARRETT: Well, I don't even know – you see, the thing is there's nothing in 5(d), if you look in your book. So if we could have clarification from Percy on this, maybe we could consider it. I don't know.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, there should have been an enclosure, and that enclosure should have referred specifically to a request made for a member of the Liberal caucus to go to an agricultural conference in Ottawa, which he ended up going to and paying for himself. And a member of our caucus did the same thing. Just in these particular matters, when you have a national conference set up by, say, the federal government, there should be representation considered for members from any of these caucuses.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, hon. member. With due respect, that's parliamentary. The topic is – and you've raised it; you're trying two different ways. One is with regard to the Parliamentary Association. The Agriculture Canada conference has nothing to do at all with Parliamentary Association business. The item is on the agenda to be dealt with, and as soon as we've disposed of this motion, if you'd like to then bring forward a motion to bring forward that item, that's quite fine.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, I'll do it that way, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.
Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Just a comment or two, perhaps, by way of guidance for the committee. The two questions that were put forward relate to travel throughout areas of the province aside from travel to and from Edmonton. The Assembly makes excellent provision for rural members to be able to travel throughout the province in pursuit of their responsibilities: trips to and from Edmonton, and that sort of thing. I think there is a problem, though, that urban members have, because the reality is that not all legislative business gets done in the city of Edmonton. I know my constituents do appreciate the fact that people are able to come to the capital city and spend time here, but I think we should look at the perspective that not all legislative business happens in the capital city.

The reality is that the allowances that are available to urban

members are not sufficient, in many cases, to provide for those travel costs. So you have one group of members who do the bulk of their travel on expense account and another group who have to do the bulk of theirs out of their own pockets, in effect. It's really that imbalance that this is directed at. It doesn't require anybody to do anything. It's if you travel on business, then you have the capability of accessing this. You don't get it if you don't travel, and you can't claim it – or you shouldn't claim it – if you don't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Other discussion?

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, this is with respect to the subcommittee. If it carries, then we will try to get as much information as possible going so the subcommittee can work, somehow, before tomorrow. Okay?

All those in favour of that motion, please signify. Carried unanimously. Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: Now could I ask, Mr. Chairman, that item 5(d) be moved up at this time?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, indeed. A motion by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud to do that. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? We have a tie vote, folks.

MS BARRETT: Call it again.

MR. WICKMAN: Aren't people obligated to vote on this committee?

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the House you are; in the committee they are as well.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I think some of the people missed the question.

MRS. MIROSH: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: The motion was that we move up item 5(d) to deal with at this time.

MR. DAY: I think some people missed the call for the question, with respect, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right then. All those in favour of moving that agenda item forward?

MRS. MIROSH: We fell asleep.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Carried unanimously. All right.

For half a moment I'd like to adjourn so that we can get the Clerk's office working on this other item. So it'll just be three minutes.

[The committee adjourned from 11:39 a.m. to 11:44 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. With respect to this next item, the letter that was referred to from the leader of the Liberal Party to myself is being brought over from my office because it was my understanding that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was

going to bring the letter with him. Anyway, let's continue with that, please, now that we have item 5 . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Five (d).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, first of all I apologize for not having the letter here, but in discussions with your former executive assistant he assured me that it would be included as part of the agenda and not to worry about it. Of course, he's no longer in your office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's on the agenda here.

MR. WICKMAN: His failure to put the letter on the agenda has nothing to do with his removal from your office, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, not at all. And the item is on the agenda.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, this pertains specifically to conference attendance other than the parliamentary conferences, and the example cited in the letter was a request by Laurence Decore to be allowed to go to an agricultural conference in Ottawa hosted by the federal government. He turned around and went, and Nick Taylor went, and they looked after their arrangements themselves. But it was very, very beneficial; it would have been beneficial for members of the New Democrat caucus to be there and the Progressive Conservative caucus to be there. The letter basically suggested that the Speaker be allowed to consider and approve those types of requests. In other words, they wouldn't be mandatory, but in the same fashion you now approve the CPA conferences, you could also approve those types.

I would like to have this referred to this subcommittee that's been established, because it is transportation related. Even though it may be outside of the province, it's still transportation related. I'm not sure if I can refer one of my own items. There isn't a motion on the floor, so I assume I can. So if nobody objects, I'll move that this item be referred to the subcommittee that was established to look at the other two transportation items.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's a motion by Edmonton-Whitemud. Grande Prairie?

DR. ELLIOTT: Reference was made to the different caucuses having representation at this meeting in Ottawa. Is this going to come at us, to this committee, then, from all the political parties?

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry. Is the question directed to me?

DR. ELLIOTT: Well, I'm asking if anybody knows. You made reference to the fact that each caucus had representation at that meeting in Ottawa?

MR. WICKMAN: No, no. What I'm saying is that there are situations where each caucus may want to consider a national conference as being significant to them and making a request to the Speaker's office. However, some caucuses may not. As it

turned out, at this particular one, yes, there were two members of our caucus; there were a number of members of the Progressive Conservative caucus. According to Laurence there were no members of the New Democrat caucus there, but that's their right to choose which conferences they want to attend. You can't assume that all caucuses are going to want to send members to the same conference. It's just to establish a mechanism where a caucus may feel: this is an important conference that impacts on Alberta – which agriculture does, of course – we would like to have somebody there; we're going to make a request to the Speaker's office. Then the Speaker would give that type a consideration.

MR. BOGLE: Well, I have a question I wanted to ask for clarification. As I understand it, Percy is using the leader of his party, who attended a conference in Ottawa, as an example, and he's looking for some way to pay the transportation.

MR. WICKMAN: Not that one. That's gone; that's forgotten.

MR. BOGLE: Well, that's the example.

MR. WICKMAN: That's just an example. He's paid for that. He's gone. I'm talking about in the future.

MR. BOGLE: Well, okay. All right; we'll deal with the future. I have another question then.

On August 28, Percy, you made a motion to increase the salary of the leader of the third party by some \$13,669. Did your leader take that increase?

MR. WICKMAN: Pardon me?

MR. BOGLE: Did your leader take the \$13,669?

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, just 5 percent of it.

MR. BOGLE: As leader of the party?

MR. WICKMAN: Five percent of it.

MR. BOGLE: You're saying that he took 5 percent of the \$13,669?

MR. WICKMAN: No, he took 5 percent of the increase.

MR. BOGLE: No; I'm asking a specific question. Set aside the MLA increase.

MR. WICKMAN: Right.

MR. BOGLE: I'm asking if . . . And we were already advised that all MLAs have taken the full increase.

MR. WICKMAN: Right.

MR. BOGLE: The full increase.

What I'm asking now is: the dollars that are set aside for the leader of the third party – and that was to tie the salary of the third party leader to that of a minister without portfolio; you made the motion to increase the salary by some \$13,669 – is your leader taking that amount of money?

MR. WICKMAN: With the exception of 5 percent more than he had previously in his MLA and his leader's portion, the rest of it he's already returned, for this particular fiscal period.

MR. BOGLE: You're certain of that?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes.

MS BARRETT: Five percent of \$13,000 only comes to \$675.

MR. WICKMAN: And I believe that rather than directing it . . . I'm not sure of the exact – if the cheque has been made out. Let's put it that way.

MR. BOGLE: Well, possibly we should . . .

MR. WICKMAN: But our caucus has discussed that. At the last meeting all four of them agreed that they were doing it. The four that I refer to I think we all know.

MR. BOGLE: No, I don't.

MR. WICKMAN: That's been done.

MR. BOGLE: Who are the other three?

MR. WICKMAN: Bettie Hewes . . .

MR. BOGLE: Okay. Are you now speaking of Bettie Hewes as an MLA or Bettie Hewes as your Whip, and is she also your House leader?

MR. WICKMAN: Bettie Hewes is only taking a 5 percent increase in her MLA allowance.

MR. BOGLE: All right.

MR. WICKMAN: Yolande Gagnon and Sheldon Chumir are returning everything other than the 5 percent increase. As far as the special allowances for the Whip and for the House leader – Bettie Hewes has been designated as both – those dollars have gone into the caucus budget.

MR. BOGLE: Now, just to make sure I'm clear. What you're saying is that the dollars that have been approved for your Whip and your House leader – and I don't see the exact amounts here, but does someone have the figure: the Whip and the House leader for the third party?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was 10 and five.

AN HON. MEMBER: Five thousand for Whip.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, I believe it's five and three.

MR. BOGLE: Five and three? So are you saying, then, that Mrs. Hewes is taking 5 percent of that amount, or is she taking the entire amount?

MR. WICKMAN: Well, she's taking the entire amount, and then turning it over to her caucus.

MR. BOGLE: Well, what you do with it after is immaterial.

My question merely was whether the caucus – or back to the government, back to the Treasurer?

MR. WICKMAN: It's not going back to the Treasurer.

MR. BOGLE: Oh, I see. So the full amount is being taken.

MR. WICKMAN: It's being taken, and then Bettie is donating it to the caucus.

MR. BOGLE: All right. Into the caucus, is it?

Now, back to the leader's allowance of some \$13,669. My question was: is it all being taken or not? If you're not sure, you might wish to just have this matter tabled until tomorrow so you can verify it.

MR. WICKMAN: But, Bob, I'm not sure how you're relating it to the item we're talking about. You've brought up a whole new subject.

MR. BOGLE: What I'm saying is that this committee provided the largest single percentage increase to the leader of the third party.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes.

MR. BOGLE: And to argue that we should provide even more moneys for travel, you're using as an example the leader of the third party, who attended a conference in Ottawa. I'm merely trying to find out whether the leader of your party is using the entire \$13,669, whether he's using 5 percent of it after paying income tax and protecting his pension plan, or what's happening. All I want to do is find out the facts.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, with the exception of the 5 percent increase, everything else is being returned. That applies to the basic MLA; that applies to the extra dollars for leader and such. In other words, his remuneration will be 5 percent more than it was previously in both categories. And the car: he has refused it.

MR. BOGLE: Well, Percy, you just said that your House leader and your Whip, one and the same, is returning the extra funds to the caucus, which is very different from returning it to general revenue.

MR. WICKMAN: I thought you were talking about the leader now: Laurence. Who are you talking about?

MR. BOGLE: I am now, and that's why I asked if you wanted to clarify it.

MR. WICKMAN: No, no; I know what the information is, Bob.

MR. BOGLE: Well, then, I'll ask, through the chairman of the committee, that we verify it with the Clerk's office for tomorrow's meeting.

MR. WICKMAN: Verify what?

MR. BOGLE: Verify an answer to the question.

MR. WICKMAN: To which question?

MR. BOGLE: The question about the \$13,669. Is it all winding up in your leader's pocket?

MR. WICKMAN: No, Bob. And I resent what's happening here, Mr. Chairman. This has been brought forward, and it's not even related to the item. If we want to get into the whole question of the salary increase, I'm game to do that at any time. What the leader of the party does with his increase – he's directed what he's going to do, and I don't think he's accountable to this committee, quite frankly. I don't think Bettie Hewes is accountable to this committee. If you have a question of Laurence, Bob, go talk to him. If you have a question of Bettie, go talk to her. If you want to ask me about what I did with my increase, I kept it. Okay?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are a lot of confusing issues starting to develop here. The line of questioning was allowed to proceed because of the fact that it had ramifications as to what was the use of funds in the Liberal caucus that could be designated for travel purposes. Leading to that, it was a question of, you know, what funds were being accepted and so forth. In the conversation some other points have arisen, including one that I'm going to have to talk to the legal counsel about as to whether or not it is indeed correct to have been allowed to carry on. That's the matter of the designation of funds headed to a caucus Whip: can that indeed be turned over somewhere else? There's going to be a question. The payment is made to a member, and it's going to be a taxable benefit, and that in turn is going to have to throw over to the committee. So I'd like to have a little consultation on that with legal counsel in a moment. The real problems in these other discussions as to the benefits and so forth, that can indeed be brought up later on in the agenda.

The question we're dealing with here is the matter of travel out of province on conferences and what's the type of conference they're going to. Within the caucus budgets, when they're approved, there is indeed money allowed for travel to conferences. The Speaker's budget, as it has been approved to date, has not allowed that we are able to disburse funds to allow travel to conferences other than anything that is CPA.

The case in point that was brought forward was an agriculture conference. In the opinion of the Speaker's office that means that it's up to the individual caucuses to fund that out of their own funds in the way that an individual caucus determines the disposition of its funds: is it, indeed, within its own prerogative? So there has to be very clear designation between what is a parliamentary thing and what is a conference which has, indeed, a lot of general interest.

So we'll come back to what the main issue is here, and in that regard we had a motion.

Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems to me that this committee is looking at defining rules for fair and equitable travel within the province for members in pursuit of their public duties. Travel beyond that has always been funded through the caucus budgets. My leader, the Leader of the Opposition, has traveled extensively on public business, sometimes to conferences, other times to meetings that have been arranged privately to research issues of public policy, and our caucus budget has always borne those expenses over the years. That's the way it's been financed. There was a bit of a suggestion there that somebody was not attending meetings. That's basically the way the game has been played all along, and budgets have been done

in that way. Now we obviously have a limited capability to do that. There is a check on it. That travel has to be approved by the Speaker in advance and in addition to the funds being designated out of the caucus budget. So perhaps it's in order to point out that that's the way this matter has been handled, at least to my knowledge.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Whitemud. Will we see this as concluding debate on this motion?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, to conclude on the referral motion, I want to make it quite clear that the intent of it is not to provide additional dollars to allow the leaders of the two opposition parties or the leader of the PC caucus to travel. The purpose of it is to allow that type of, let's say, travel fund to allow caucuses to decide whether they want to make a request to have a representative sent to a significant conference - a representative from their caucus, not to imply it would be the leader. In the instance I referred to that I used as an example, there's no request that has come forward asking for Laurence Decore and Nick Taylor to be reimbursed for that. A request was made prior; it was turned down. Laurence accepted that, but we're looking down the road. I simply used that as an example, and I didn't want to imply that this is aimed for the benefit of the leader. It's aimed for the benefit of the three caucuses.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Louise, could we have the wording of the motion, please?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes, certainly. Motion by Mr. Wickman: That the item Conference Attendance Other Than Parliamentary Conferences be referred to the subcommittee for study.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of that motion, please signify. Opposed? Defeated. Thank you.

The information is being started in motion with the Clerk's office, so the subcommittee should be able to function. Thank you.

Our next item of business is 4(f): Revisions, Constituency Office Contract.

DR. McNEIL: It's really an information item just providing you in the committee with copies of the contracts reflecting the decision at the last Members' Services meeting to include the option of certain benefits to constituency office staff. As you know, each of you has received a letter with a fair amount of supporting material from the personnel director to assist you in making a decision as to whether or not you wish to change the situation with respect to constituency staff and give them the option of benefits. She has worked with a number of members in terms of developing specific costing information for members in relation to their staff. I guess the other thing to note here is that all costs are borne by the constituency office allowance and not by the Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Edmonton-Highlands, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MS BARRETT: Thank you very much for the information. I just wonder if any motion is necessary, or is this just for information?

DR. McNEIL: Just provided for information, yes.

MS BARRETT: Great.

MR. McINNIS: It's charged back to the appropriations, both the employer's share and the employee's share of the benefit?

DR. McNEIL: No. It would be the employer's share that would be charged back to the constituency office allowance, not the employee's share.

DR. ELLIOTT: A question for clarification on the present system versus the one that's being suggested. I think we enjoy considerable freedom now in our constituency offices to bring on help, let help off, have two people, nobody, et cetera. If we become more entangled in the various benefits available to employees under a society of ours, would that start to restrict our mobility or capability for staff up, staff down, take on, let off?

DR. McNEIL: No. All the options are still there in terms of a fee-for-service contract for people whom you want to employ on an irregular basis, to bring them in for a short time and then that's it. There's the option of the contract with benefits, but it's at your option as to which benefits you provide.

DR. ELLIOTT: And which staff.

DR. McNEIL: And which staff. In fact, I guess your flexibility's enhanced, because if you want to keep somebody on for a long term and provide them with the same kind of benefit opportunities that the staff in the caucus office have, for example, you have that option. So I think your flexibility's increased in that regard. But I think it's very important to discuss what you want to achieve with a particular employee with the personnel director and reach some kind of agreement as to, given your objectives, if this is the best way to approach it and not get locked in in a kind of contract that's not best for the situation that you have.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.
Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. One particular term was used by Dr. McNeil: flexibility, in terms of short term. I would want to have the assurance that long-term flexibility is still the reality in some, depending how a person runs their constituency office. Mine is truly operated by an office manager. She truly manages the office in every conceivable definition of the word, and I'd be willing to say I'd match her with any office manager in the province in terms of her abilities and capabilities. But we find our situation in terms of remuneration, a strict contract-for-fee basis, is the way that's most pleasing to both parties. I would not want to see that option minimized in any way.

DR. McNEIL: No, and we haven't. We're trying to give all the options and to maintain all those options so that each member has the flexibility that he or she desires. We're not advocating elimination of any option.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It gives them better protection.
Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Two points. First of all, so I'm abundantly clear,

it is still the member's option whether the member chooses the contract approach or the staff approach with benefits.

MR. McINNIS: Or without them.

MR. BOGLE: Or without benefits.

DR. McNEIL: Just a point of clarification. They're all contracts - it just depends on the kind of contract they are - because, as with caucus employees, we can only employ constituency staff up until the next election, whenever that is. So there's not a permanent employment option.

MR. BOGLE: The next point: there's no impact on the budget of the Leg. Assembly as a result of this?

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. BOGLE: And any costs associated with the benefits package are covered by the members' services allowance.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional comment? Okay. That was for information. Thank you.

If we might go on to item 4(g): Review of Former Members' Travel Program.

DR. McNEIL: The motion that was passed last December with respect to former members' travel was requesting a review of the program in one year's time to ascertain what's happened. On the second page of 4(g) there's a summary of the travel, the number of trips, the number of MLAs involved up until today, the cost per trip, and so on. Following that there are a number of copies of letters from former MLAs with respect to their reaction to the implementation of this particular policy. This is provided as information.

MR. BOGLE: The matter is here, as I recall, because Pam moved that we review the program after we'd had a year of operation. It appears that we have had 24 former MLAs make use of the program, with a total of 35 trips. We've also got letters from some of the former MLAs from several political parties: Liberal, Social Credit, possibly the CCF. In my view the program is working well. We'd budgeted \$25,000 for '89-90; it appears that to date we've got \$14,000. That's not a projected cost to the end of the fiscal year.

DR. McNEIL: No, it's not; it's an actual cost.

MR. BOGLE: That's a total to December 21. So even if we see some additional trips in the first quarter of 1990, we should be well within budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional comments?

MR. BOGLE: One other question, Mr. Chairman. Have we had any concern with usage?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. As you see in the second letter there from Mr. Benoit, the question is could he use one of his days on a trip in a city other than Edmonton, because his wife is - you know, he has to break the trip up if they're driving. If we could

sort of agree with that or look at it for the next meeting when you review this, that would be helpful in the case where . . . A lot of the members are very elderly, and that would help them when they come. The response has been very good, and as you say with Mr. Roper, he says, "It is about thirty years too late for me!" That's a sad comment in one sense.

But I think all the way around the people who've come through and end up visiting in the office of the Speaker - really, it's interesting to see how appreciated it really is. In many respects it's a small thing in terms of dollars, but it's been a great thing in terms of people. All of us here know that we're forgotten about five minutes after we've been defeated or resigned or dropped dead. But for those members who continue to live into their retirement, it's meant a very interesting connection back with the Legislature.

Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I want to speak in opposition to this program continuing, and in doing so, I recognize I'll be a voice in the wilderness, certainly with my own colleagues and possibly other members here. I speak my concerns in deference to a couple of different areas. First to you, Mr. Chairman: in your position as Speaker you probably more than anyone are more acutely and intimately aware of the pressures, the concerns, the tribulations of members over the years. The public is probably not aware that for a member even to be absent over a certain number of days, they have to get clearance with you, and you're very personally and intimately involved with members, probably more so than anybody else and are most acutely aware of all the unique pressures. So it is with deference to your considered compassion for members that I make my remarks and also in deference to former members. Looking at these figures here, this is a program that is very obviously not being abused in any way, shape, or form and is appreciated by members.

Having said all that, I feel it is difficult for me to reconcile how this is a continuing service to the taxpayers of the province. This is conjecture, but I guess I would reflect some of that question on their part, and I hope that former or present members will not be overly upset with me taking this view. That is simply how I see it, and I'd like to put forward a motion that the program be discontinued.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Speaking to the motion or opposed to the motion; comments, whatever.

DR. ELLIOTT: Dickens wrote a story about you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No comments? Call for the question?

MR. BOGLE: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed? Defeated.

The hour is almost 12:15. Do you just wish to continue a bit longer? Or I think we can adjourn.

MR. BOGLE: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We should probably adjourn. I know there's a Legislative Offices Committee meeting due in here sometime, so I need a bit of advice as to about what time we can reconvene this meeting.

MS BARRETT: What time is *Leg. Offices* meeting in here?

MR. BOGLE: It's tentatively set for 1 p.m. We have to receive the report by the search committee on the Ombudsman.

MS BARRETT: How long will that take?

MR. BOGLE: Well, they are working this morning. Assuming that they are here on time, we could deal with the matter, I'm assuming, in half an hour, three-quarters of an hour. We have two other small budgetary matters to deal with as a committee as well, but not a lengthy . . .

MS BARRETT: Well, why don't we go till 12:30 and then come back at quarter to 2? How does that sound?

DR. ELLIOTT: Good.

MS BARRETT: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Lunch is being provided here, physically, in the members' lounge, and we're trying to get that moved up for 12:30, 1 o'clock. Those of you who don't have other commitments with your staff or another committee meeting, the lunch will be back here.

MS BARRETT: Great.

MR. DAY: At 12:30?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're trying to get it for 12:30.

All right. Item 5(a) in the booklet: Remote Constituency Designation - Orders Amendments. Okay, the Clerk's speaking to this correspondence with the Member for Chinook.

DR. McNEIL: We have a request from the Member for Chinook to be included among those constituencies denoted as remote constituencies. In looking at the second page of this insert, my interpretation of this request is that it appears as though she has misinterpreted the intent of that particular Members' Services order in that the information she's provided indicates she's concerned about the distance from Edmonton. The order deals specifically with chartered aircraft service within the constituency. I think it would be appropriate for me to clarify with her first, before considering this item, as to whether or not that is the case, whether it's just a question of misinterpretation of the order. If it isn't, then we could deal with this issue tomorrow or at the next meeting. But to be fair to the Member for Chinook, I think it's appropriate to approach it that way rather than have the committee deal with the issue now.

MS BARRETT: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Then that's a tabling for tomorrow. Those in favour of tabling this till tomorrow - would somebody please make a motion, since the Chairman can't do it?

MS BARRETT: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Edmonton-Highlands. All those in favour, signify again, please. Opposed? Carried. Thank you. All right, the next item takes us to the forms, 5(b). Clerk?

DR. McNEIL: We've implemented two forms on an interim basis, pending approval by this committee, to capture the information from the members' Legislature committee service and parliamentary meetings. I guess any feedback that members have at this stage would be useful.

We proposed one modification to the parliamentary meetings form. In almost every instance, on the back part of the sheet we've just put the note, "Please forward expense claim on a 'Personal Expense Claim' form." Because of the nature of parliamentary meetings, members are usually away or traveling somewhere. Therefore, it's more appropriate that an expense claim form be used to provide information on expenses in comparison to what we've provided on the back page of the Legislature committee service form. That's the only change we've made from the forms that were initially sent out.

It appears as though this is helping us capture the information from the committee meetings that the old form, which is also attached, did not do.

MS BARRETT: They look good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other comments or questions on it?

MR. McINNIS: I think it would be helpful as well. I'm just wondering what you need the social insurance number for on each of the forms?

DR. McNEIL: Just to code the various things to the payroll system. It's a tax issue. I mean, we have it in the system; it's just a matter of coding it without having to look it up when we code it into the payroll system.

MR. McINNIS: So then our computer goes on this SIN number? That's the way our system is?

MS BARRETT: And employee or payroll number.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, as you recollect, in some of our previous meetings we did complicate things slightly in limiting the payment per hours, but that's okay. The only comment I'd make is that my eyes are getting older - the size of the print.

MRS. MIROSH: Yeah, I agree.

MS BARRETT: Memorize it.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's a good point.

MRS. MIROSH: Even the newsprint's going to have to get bigger, because we baby boomers are moving into those years.

MS BARRETT: Listen, nobody here is as blind as me, and I can read it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyway, it seems good, and we'll continue on. If we develop any glitches with it in the work-up period, then we can go from there. Motion to approve the forms?

DR. ELLIOTT: Yes.

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Grande Prairie this time. All those in favour of approval as to the form. Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Item 5(e) having . . . Well, actually now we're at (d) in the technical sense, because the previous motion was to move it.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. What happened to 5(c)?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. That's where we are. I was jumping ahead here. I ticked off the wrong item. So nothing has happened to it. It's now about to be revealed to us by the Clerk. Thank you.

DR. McNEIL: There's no information provided in this item. I have, I guess, a question of the committee based on some experiences we're having in the Legislative Assembly Office. On an occasional basis difficulties in interpretation have arisen among members, the Legislative Assembly Office, and Alberta Treasury as to what constitutes appropriate expenditures under both caucus and members' constituency allowance expenditures. As an example, under caucus expenditures there have been questions about whether tickets to certain community events that a member or a leader has attended are appropriate expenditures under the caucus budget.

Under members' services allowance, on a number of occasions questions have arisen as to whether or not the content of constituency newsletters is appropriate given that what's defined in the Members' Services order is appropriate and whether or not members have enough information or sufficient guidelines to be able to interpret what they should or shouldn't put in constituency newsletters. I guess the question I have: would the committee like the Legislative Assembly Office to attempt to develop some guidelines with the assistance of Treasury to assist members and the caucuses in interpreting what are appropriate caucus expenditures and constituency office expenditures? It's just a question I lay on the table because of some of the difficulties that have arisen.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, if I'm not mistaken, we dealt with this issue a couple of years ago and, by way of meetings between chiefs of staff and this committee, established certain guidelines. I think what we decided is that, you know, at a certain point we're not going to be able to predefine everything or define the parameters for everything and that if a dispute arises, it goes through the appropriate channels. I'm not convinced that there's much more that can be done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There was a draft thing, was there not, David?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MS BARRETT: Yeah?

DR. McNEIL: Well, I was just going to ask the question as to whether or not those guidelines that chiefs of staff had agreed upon were ever published or written, because I haven't seen anything about that.

MS BARRETT: I thought they were approved by this committee, weren't they?

MR. McINNIS: I believe what the Member for Edmonton-Highlands is referring to is the actual wording of the Members' Services order itself, which underwent extensive redrafting within the last couple of years. I think the problem is probably one of interpretation of what's there in the Standing Orders, and the members do have to have some knowledge of what type of interpretation is being placed on the Members' Services order before they incur expenditures. That would be rather more convenient than doing anything about it after the fact. I think probably the suggestion from the Clerk is a good one if the wording of the order is not clear – and I guess it's not – that we have some idea of what type of actual guidelines are in use so the members can judge for themselves.

I just want to say one other thing. My understanding is that a lot of these issues are handled in other jurisdictions by having things looked at ahead of time. I'm not sure we especially want to go that way. I don't envision that as being a good idea in itself. I think more clarity would be more to the point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Red Deer-North, and then perhaps Parliamentary Counsel wants to make a comment about that issue.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I guess just reflecting our British common law jurisprudence approach to various matters, if there are guidelines, we should not get into trying to say all the things that can be done, which I think are an infinite number, but rather what are very specific areas which should not be moved upon and entered into. That would help the process, and it would get away from quite an extensive list, I think, of what might be acceptable to various MLAs in various situations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Parliamentary Counsel.

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr Chairman, the matter was brought up before. My recollection is that I was asked to provide a draft set of guidelines to your office, which was then discussed with the chiefs of staff. My recollection again is that nothing was ever finalized on that, and I don't think it's been brought back to this committee.

It's difficult to detail all the possible circumstances. I certainly agree with the Member for Red Deer-North that there is a danger of specifying what can be included. There was a principal interpretation that says if you specify something, you exclude whatever is not on the list. In Latin it sounds even more impressive. It's better to say what you can't do. It is difficult to produce good guidelines, but I think the exercise might have helped the members.

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if work has been done and for some reason it was not dealt with by the committee. I do recall lengthy discussions. I thought we had agreed to it. Can the matter not come back this afternoon? Obviously, there must be a list of the recommendations from Parliamentary Counsel. Let our chiefs of staff have a look at it and we deal with it this afternoon.

MS BARRETT: Fine with me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. Those in favour of the tabling motion by Taber-Warner? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Just before we break, I wonder if you would take one copy of each of these letters, please. I think we'll go the same way and then we know where . . . It will allow us to deal with the other item.

Okay. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. We'll be back here at quarter to 2, God willing. The lunch is supposedly in the members' lounge.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I heard you correctly, somebody else is taking over this table for a while. So we should remove all our stuff, eh?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think if you just close the documents . . .

MR. BOGLE: The Leg. Offices Committee won't disturb anything if we just close our books.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And I'll make sure somebody's around to keep an eye on things in the interim.

MR. BOGLE: Okay.

[The committee recessed from 12:27 p.m. to 2:05 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, we're now back in business here. Before the break we mentioned advertising guidelines, communication allowance, so we've had some material run off, if you'd like to take these copies away to peruse.

My understanding is that we're at item 5(d), Conference Attendance Other Than Parliamentary Conferences.

MR. WICKMAN: That was defeated, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And we defeated that in terms of what was there. What was defeated was the motion to defer it to the subcommittee, and correspondence was circulated earlier on that. Does that look after it for the moment? Okay.

Item 5(e), Parliamentary Exchange with regard to Australia.

DR. McNEIL: You have a letter in your binder from the Speaker in Western Australia that deals with two issues: the exchange of a system for public servants and an exchange system for politicians. Most of the information there relates to exchange of public servants, and I've obtained from the Public Service Commissioner a copy of the correspondence they've had in that regard. This is something that's really being handled by government. I guess the question remains for the committee as to whether or not the committee or the Assembly wants to pursue the issue further with respect to exchange for elected members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With regard to this item, I think we're really bringing it forward to you for information that perhaps will come up on a future agenda. It's certainly not of overwhelming urgency.

MR. WICKMAN: I move the item as information, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Carried. Thank you.

Okay, then, item 5(f), EDP equipment. Clerk, you have 5(f).

DR. McNEIL: Arising from the discussion in the EDP management committee on the strategic plan was a more specific analysis of the present situation with respect to allocation of equipment to caucuses. The existing policy up to this point has been allocating one workstation per two members to be purchased by the Legislative Assembly Office. When we analyzed the situation with respect to the actual situation in caucuses overall, in terms of equipment that was bought by the Assembly and equipment that was bought using caucus funds, it turned out there's almost a 1 to 1 ratio of equipment per member, one computer or one workstation per member. The committee analyzed the situation, tried to look at the long-term requirements for workstations in each caucus, and came up with the attached recommendation, that there be one workstation per caucus office for general administrative purposes, one workstation for every two members for clerical staff, one workstation for every two members for research staff, and one workstation for every four members for their own use, as a standard to be applied to allocation of equipment to the caucuses.

MS BARRETT: So moved.

DR. McNEIL: Again, this is a proposed standard, and in terms of its implementation, it would have to be considered in the context of the budget as well for next year.

MR. WICKMAN: I'll move the recommendation, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. That's very good, hon. member. Would you like to waive in this case and let the Member for Edmonton . . .

MS BARRETT: I don't know. Do you know how to use a computer, Percy? I take this subject personally.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Moved by Edmonton-Whitemud in this case. That's the B part on that page. Discussion? Call for the question?

MS BARRETT: Right on.

MR. BOGLE: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously. My goodness gracious, breaks are very constructive.

Item 5(g), Cost Recovery. Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: No. We've got one more item.

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, we've got another one on there.

DR. McNEIL: There are two decision items here.

MS BARRETT: The cost recovery one.

DR. McNEIL: No. There are two decision items under 5(f), the second page. What this decision item is requesting is authorization from the committee to use any further financial savings we can realize this fiscal year for EDP equipment conversion purposes. I've had discussion with some members, and I mentioned earlier today that we've been able to reallocate approximately \$100,000 during this fiscal year to date for replacement of caucus equipment, consistent with the broad strategies of the EDP plan. What we're asking for here is that if we are able to have any further savings, we would like to allocate those savings to the purchase of additional equipment. What we believe this will do is enable us to complete the conversion of the caucuses by the end of next year and not then have an additional expenditure amount in the budget for next year for this purpose.

MS BARRETT: Hear, hear.

DR. ELLIOTT: I have a question on that, Mr. Chairman. Does this involve building up an inventory which is going to come back to haunt us sometime later with respect to replacement or repair?

DR. McNEIL: An inventory in . . .

DR. ELLIOTT: Like equipment.

DR. McNEIL: The proposal involves a small inventory of equipment in the long run so that we don't have to deprive any particular member or staff for short-term periods of equipment. So if your computer breaks down in your constituency office, for example, we can have a few on the shelf that we can then ship out the same day, replace it with that piece we have on the shelf and then bring yours in to be repaired. So there is a small proportion that we haven't really determined yet as to how much that is, but it would be a very small proportion of the total amount of equipment for that purpose.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, to David. Does this mean that you were out on your estimates basically? Were the estimates too high?

DR. McNEIL: In terms of . . .

MRS. MIROSH: The initial estimates with regard to the purchasing of this equipment.

DR. McNEIL: No. It was related to the money we had budgeted last year for maintenance related to the NBI equipment.

MRS. MIROSH: Just maintenance?

DR. McNEIL: Yeah, maintenance. We consolidated all the budgets from the different areas of the Assembly into one budget and had Bill Gano look at that whole situation and say, "Can we realize any savings here?" What we did is cancel all these contracts, which we had the ability to do, which were sort of total maintenance contracts, and went to time and materials from maintenance.

MRS. MIROSH: Since the last year's budget.

DR. McNEIL: Since the last year's budget; that's correct. And that's where we've realized those savings to this point.

MRS. MIROSH: That's significant savings.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah.

MRS. MIROSH: Just for maintenance?

DR. McNEIL: Yes. Our maintenance budget for equipment was over \$200,000.

MRS. MIROSH: So then you just contract it as needed.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct. And because we're trying to replace this equipment, the faster we go, the less money we're going to spend on maintenance. In doing so, we're trying to accelerate the process if we can, if you can find those funds.

MS BARRETT: Well, I have a question about this, sort of related as well. When we're on the ideal compatible PC system throughout, do you have any estimate of what sort of money is needed for maintenance? I mean, it's not the same type of deal where you've got to buy this big, \$200,000-a-year package, right?

DR. McNEIL: I can't do that off the top of my head, but in going through the budget in the next period of time, we'll deal specifically with those kinds of questions. But it's not nearly on the level we're talking about.

MS BARRETT: No, that's what I was checking for actually.

DR. McNEIL: They're warranted for one year, so in the first year we're not paying any maintenance on them. Subsequent to that it will again be time and materials, and we're not going to get into that same situation where we're paying a lot of money for a maintenance contract with a particular firm.

MR. DAY: I think it's also safe to say that the chiefs of staff are agreed on this application?

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

DR. McNEIL: Oh, yeah. There's no doubt about that.

MR. DAY: Can I move this authorization?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Call for the question?

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously. Thank you.
Now, 5(g).

DR. McNEIL: I guess 5(g) is an accounting, financial issue. It's not a big one, but it will facilitate our being able to operate the way we have been for quite a while. In a recent audit, Treasury officials indicated that we hadn't been granted an exemption from depositing back into our own budget the money we received from departments for the number of Bills they want

printed, because we don't budget for those departments' printing costs for Bills. We want to do all the ordering for the Bills so that the Legislative Assembly is, in effect, in control of the production of these Bills and the Bills don't get shuffled out to those departments that ordered them before they're even introduced. So what this decision item is requesting is to grant us an exemption from the general policy that any cost recoveries we receive be deposited in the General Revenue Fund. We're saying that for ease of administration, we will budget for what we need, we will get orders from other departments for the Bills they need, combine that in an overall order, and then they pay us back. In other words, they pay us and we pay the printer for the total Bills that are ordered.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This allows us to regularize what we've been doing to satisfy some people in another department.

MS BARRETT: Fine by me; so moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Call for the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Carried unanimously. Thank you.

I think what we'll do here is vary from our agenda, and we'll move on now to item 5(i), Correspondence from former member Greg Stevens. Within the body of this letter, you'll see there's a request with respect to members' benefits.

DR. McNEIL: Yes. The third paragraph requests that the committee re-examine the provision which terminates a former member's benefits five years after ceasing to be a member and proposes a minimum number of years of service. If a member has more than five years of service, why can't the benefits continue till age 65?

Just a piece of information here with respect to the policy adopted. When this policy was implemented, it was based on the early retirement program for the public service, which allowed public servants to continue their benefits for five years after taking their early retirement. So that was the basis on which the same policy was adopted for members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What's the present situation with regard to public servants?

DR. McNEIL: It's still five in this case.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. WICKMAN: Two questions, Mr. Chairman. First of all, my understanding, dealing with, for example, the group life insurance . . . What is that? Is it Crown Life? Well, whatever life insurance company it is, it would be in the agreement that one would be allowed to continue those benefits for five years for that policy, that protection. To change that I would assume would mean going back to the insurance company and trying to renegotiate, and it could in fact affect the rates. The older you are, the more they like to charge.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct. Also, it makes a financial commitment for a longer term on behalf of the Assembly.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah. But my second question was: if this is being done on the assumption that the member would be prepared to cover the total cost himself – in other words, no cost to the government – I wouldn't see anything wrong with it if he can utilize the group basis purchasing power on things like the life insurance. With a lot of companies, Mr. Chairman, when you leave, you can carry on that life insurance indefinitely, but you pay for it. You don't expect your employer to pay for it; you pay for it. A change like that, I think, can be desirable. As we fade off into our twilight years, insurance becomes harder to get.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Some of us have already faded into our twilights.

DR. McNEIL: Again, that may have implications with respect to the cost of that coverage.

MR. WICKMAN: Overall group. Yeah.

DR. McNEIL: Over the whole group.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, couldn't we refer this to the administration, to Members' Services, to do a report on and come back with the cost implications, looking at the options that may be open?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we could indeed. The question, if you do go that way: are there other issues you want to have addressed, or just leave it for the time being?

Okay. Taber-Warner.

Excuse me. I have Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Edmonton-Highlands, then Taber-Warner. Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. Does the Assembly pick up part of the tab for the first five years that's cost shared?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MS BARRETT: That was consistent with senior staff, et cetera, et cetera, in the public service. Okay. Is he asking here for the former MLA, after that five-year period, to pay the whole shot herself or himself so that no cost could be incurred by the Assembly? That's the way I read it.

DR. McNEIL: I don't think that's clear in the letter.

MS BARRETT: Well, he says "at the member's choice and cost, until age 65, death or discontinuance, whichever first occurs." Why could the benefits not continue at the member's choice and cost until age 65, death or discontinuance? Is there an answer to that question that you know of right now?

DR. McNEIL: As to whether that is what he means?

MS BARRETT: No. As to whether or not that's possible.

DR. McNEIL: Well, no, I don't have an answer at this point in time.

MS BARRETT: Okay. Well, I support any motion to refer, then, for a report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: I want to express one caution. I understand the point Percy is making about asking administration to do some further verification, but I feel very strongly that we've got a program which is based on what is done for retiring members of the public service in Alberta. It was paralleled on that, or piggybacked on it. It should in no way be richer than, and it should not in any way affect the premiums paid by the government for the existing program.

MS BARRETT: Hear, hear.

MR. BOGLE: Now, having said all that, if there's an answer to Percy's question that a member could indeed continue on after the five-year period has lapsed paying the entire premium, and there's a benefit for the member, and it's causing no added cost to the government, I think that would be helpful. But put it under those tight parameters.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, we have a motion that's going to refer the matter back to the administration to make some inquiries.

Along the same line, I wonder if the committee might bear with me. I think another issue that perhaps could be raised at the same time might be the matter: is there any possibility of raising the amount of insurance for a spouse? I know that would indeed perhaps have some cost ramifications to the plan. At the moment it's only \$10,000. Would the committee be favourable to that or not, or shoot me down, because we're only going on an information hunt?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Okay. Those in favour of the motion to refer?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, in that referral and what you've raised there, that \$10,000 that you refer to, if I recall correctly, that's covered by the government budget. In other words, it doesn't cost a member anything. Maybe there should be an option like there is in the plan, you know, where you can take out additional at a minimal cost. The cost isn't that great, really, so if that could be looked at as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Could the Clerk look at that? The key thing about it is that it means people can enter into a plan without having to undergo a medical.

All right. Those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Item 5(j) we did earlier in the day. Item 6, then, Other Business. Notification from Grande Prairie with regard to constituency office space within the home.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A short preamble to this motion. As a rural MLA I find myself removed a considerable distance from the constituency office, and I find I'm doing an immense amount of constituency work in my office in my residence, which is not open to the public as such but is an office in which I do a lot of my constituency work. I have two pieces of equipment in that office at present. I have a portable dictating device which I carry in my briefcase, which is part of the constituency office equipment, and the Legislature has very

generously wired a telephone to that desk in my home, which has proven to be extremely useful. A couple of items I find I miss in that office space would be something like a fax machine or the smallest possible photocopier, because I find I'm sending work in two directions, one to my constituency office in Grande Prairie and one to my Legislature office, my MLA office, in Edmonton. So that has caused me to ask if there is some way in which certain pieces of equipment could be placed in an office which in fact would be in an MLA's residence in a rural constituency when he is some 30 to 50 miles or wherever from his constituency office.

So a draft of the motion would read:

To amend the Members' Services Order 6/87 with respect to supplies and equipment, including electronic equipment such as fax and photocopying equipment generally available to constituency offices, to have items made available to offices in members' residences where the residence is considerably removed from the constituency office and where there is no constituency office other than the office in the member's residence.

I believe that displays the intent of my concern, Mr. Chairman, if there are any questions. That electronic equipment included a fax, photocopying, and audiovisual, for purposes of record, Mr. Chairman.

MS BARRETT: Have you already moved the motion, or are you just suggesting it at this point?

DR. ELLIOTT: I'm offering that as my motion, so we can speak to it, yes.

MS BARRETT: So it is moved. Yeah. Well, I speak in favour of it. I think it's just obvious. I mean, it's common sense, but I think you might want to remove the reference to "a considerable distance" so we don't have any of this nonsense challenging, "Oh, well, you're only 10 miles away."

MR. BOGLE: Why don't you amend it?

DR. ELLIOTT: I can see that.

MS BARRETT: The thing is that all these devices are numbered; they're all serialized. The government knows exactly where they are at all times, and if they don't, Oscar does. I don't think we have to get carried away on that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, are you then not listing the equipment, just leave it?

MS BARRETT: Oh, no, you list it. No, no. You see, what Oscar does is keep an inventory. Well, actually it's centrally kept by public works as well, through Leg. records. But if you want to move stuff around - like, one of my computers from the constituency office is here at the Leg., right? - you're allowed to do that as long as public works or Leg. Assembly knows about it. What I'm saying is don't lock yourself into X number of miles away from any given constituency office. The stuff is all accounted for. If you don't hand it back the day you're no longer an MLA, you're responsible, and that's already by agreement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: First off, let the Legislative Assembly Office know where it is, because that's where we're keeping the

master record, and it's from that that Oscar, when he does these journeys to constituency offices, has the record to be able to go into your/our constituency office to check and make sure the things are there.

I'll recognize Edmonton-Jasper Place, but before we pass the motion, I would hope that Grande Prairie and Michael Clegg can have a look at the exact wording of it so it's going to fit within that Members' Services order without any complications, that's all.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes.

MR. McINNIS: That was actually the suggestion I wanted to make as well. It seems to me that what's important is the use to which the equipment is being put. If it's being used in the service of the constituent, it actually could be taken to their residence or place of business as well. But if we are making lists, I think in the application you mentioned, telephone answering equipment should be included as well.

MR. M. CLEGG: It's in there.

MR. McINNIS: Oh, it is, eh? Okay, I didn't hear it. It might be just as easy if they sort of could bring a draft to us.

MR. M. CLEGG: But fax isn't.

MR. McINNIS: Oh?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Might we do that so we could have overnight to get the precise wording and then deal with the matter tomorrow morning?

MR. BOGLE: So we'll just table it; a motion to table.

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, I'll bring back the proposal for an order for tomorrow morning.

MR. BOGLE: With Bob. It's his motion.

MR. M. CLEGG: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, we'll do the formality of the motion to table.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I'll move it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Edmonton-Highlands, until tomorrow.

MS BARRETT: Until tomorrow, yeah.

MR. BOGLE: Pardon me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I haven't heard the tabling motion, then, if there's further comment on this.

DR. ELLIOTT: I wish to table that motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. We got it moved from over here.

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. BOGLE: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the tabling motion, until tomorrow morning, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you.

Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: I have one other matter to bring up under Other Business. Members will recall that in August we dealt with the question of whether or not the committee should meet with a former Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Aalborg, and it was over the specific issue of indexing of pensions of retired employees of the government. I believe we decided that we wouldn't meet with Mr. Aalborg as a committee. Did someone meet with him? I'd forgotten the process we did follow. In any event, I had the opportunity to meet a group of retired public employees including Mr. Bill Broad, the president of the provincial association. It was my understanding that while there is a yearly meeting between Mr. Broad and the executive of the association with the Provincial Treasurer, they do not have an opportunity to meet with other legislators.

What I would like to put on the table for consideration today so it can be discussed at a later time is whether or not we wish to reopen that issue and meet with a group of retired employees. I was convinced by some of the things they said that there are facts all of us may not have. I'm not suggesting that's going to change things overnight, but I do think there may be some reconsideration given to this committee's position in light of the fact that the retired employees have no place else to go. So I'm merely making it as a point of information today to be brought back at some future meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, at the time I was very, very sympathetic towards Mr. Aalborg, but it was clearly pointed out – and after it was clearly pointed out, I could no longer be sympathetic to having him heard at this committee. What was pointed out – and I believe it was pointed out by you yourself – is that this committee has absolutely no jurisdiction over the setting of pensions and such. That is done out of the Provincial Treasurer's office, so I don't see what purpose it would serve them and us to hear from them if we can't even recommend to the Provincial Treasurer on those matters. Or am I wrong?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Parliamentary Counsel's sitting here.

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, this committee could not make an order with respect to pensions, of course, but it could always communicate a comment to the Treasurer if it was of the opinion that something should be looked at by the Treasurer which is within his jurisdiction to examine and introduce amendments in the House. We wouldn't be precluded from debating it, but we couldn't actually carry out his wishes if we agreed.

MR. WICKMAN: But we could recommend to the Provincial Treasurer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Communicate.

MR. M. CLEGG: We could communicate that we've had under

discussion something, and we could recommend it for his consideration, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Jasper Place, followed by Taber-Warner.

MR. McINNIS: Bob, is it your intent that we would deal with all the pension issues or just the MLA pension plan, all of them across the board?

MR. BOGLE: No. There was one specific issue, and it was the indexing question that was raised. I have to admit that when we discussed the issue several months ago, I was on the other side of the case. I was compelled by the arguments that unlike groups such as the provincial chamber of commerce or the Edmonton Social Planning Council, all of whom find their ways to various committees of government, the representatives of retired employees of the province have an annual meeting with the Treasurer, and that's it.

I do recall that this committee made a recommendation to the Provincial Treasurer and the government that there be a change in our own pension plan, and that was the age 55 factor, and government did act upon our recommendation. It's not a motion today. It's just for information's sake so that members can think about it, and we can discuss it more fully at a later time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the way the Chair views the matter. Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. One of the other items we dealt with this morning initially or that was referred from this morning to this afternoon was 5(c), Caucus and Constituency Allowance Expenditures. Is it the wish of the committee to have that brought forward now?

MR. WICKMAN: I'll move that the material that has been presented be received as information, and if you accept that, if I can speak to it, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. As soon as I find it.

MR. WICKMAN: I think, Mr. Chairman, an attempt to place guidelines other than what we already have there - you enter into so many gray areas that it becomes questionable. I can look at some of the material I've received in the past as a mail drop by the former member, and without question there are references made to a political party. To comply fully with what's being said in this documentation would be impossible, and I don't know who could even start to watchdog that type of thing, who would be the guardian to decide that this is political, this is nonpolitical. I don't see a problem at the present time.

MR. DAY: The guidelines as have been circulated, and I refer to this memo of September 17, 1987, do give some general guidelines. I don't think I'd go as far as the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud and say we don't need any. I think there has to be some accommodation for a judgment call when it's perceived or if a complaint was to come forward that material was specifically promoting one party over another. I think the September 17 memo is good. It's probably as good as can be,

and it does show that there are indeed some guidelines; it's not just a wide-open situation. So I'd recommend, if this committee has the power to do so, that this be distributed to all the members for their information and not just the information of this particular committee. But I wouldn't go so far as to say that there be no guidelines at all. This could serve as an effective point of reference.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I find, then, that I have the first motion to take this as information, and then a second motion, which could still follow after that, which would be to have this distributed. So if we can still deal with the first motion to accept it as information.

MS BARRETT: Agreed.

MR. WICKMAN: And for the record, Mr. Chairman, I made reference to no additional guidelines over and above what is here. So I agree with what Stockwell is saying, that the guidelines mentioned in '87 are sufficient, and I agree with his motion that it be distributed to all MLAs, so they can use it as a guideline.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there a call for the question with regard to the first motion by Edmonton-Whitemud, which is to take it as information?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously.

Now, the motion by Red Deer-North: that the information be circulated to all members.

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. McINNIS: That's the Michael Ritter memo of September 17, 1987, or both?

MR. DAY: Both of them, and the one of May 6, '88.

MR. McINNIS: May 6, '88?

MR. DAY: From Mr. Clegg to Rod Scarlett: Draft Guidelines - Use of Communication Allowances.

MR. M. CLEGG: Do you have a copy of that, John?

MR. McINNIS: No, I don't.

MR. M. CLEGG: Yeah, there you are.

MR. DAY: This is just sent as information.

AN HON. MEMBER: Now you've got two of them, John. As I said, they came around twice.

MR. M. CLEGG: They're two documents that may or not be consistent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You'll find what happened here is that we were trying to give you so much information that we gave you one copy of a letter dated May 6, '88, which has those draft

guidelines in it – and you've got it there, John – and then also when we handed out the other letter from Ritter to Scarlett, at the same time we then gave you the back pages from the Clegg letter. So that's why we've got three documents instead of two.

MR. McINNIS: With due respect to the mover, I think we're sort of putting the cart ahead of the horse. I just got this in front of me this second. This hasn't been examined by the committee at all. I wondered why we would circulate it to members before we'd read it.

MR. DAY: I assumed everybody had read it, Mr. Chairman.

MRS. MIROSH: It's been circulated. You were late.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Continue, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Frankly, I have difficulty with some of these words and their meaning. For example, what was the definition of "propaganda"? There are also questions that deal with comparison of political parties. I'm certain this thing has merit, but I don't favour circulating it before I've had a chance to read it.

MS BARRETT: Well, it even says, "identifies problem areas, not a recommendation as such."

MR. McINNIS: If we are going to prepare guidelines, then I think the committee should take its job seriously in preparing guidelines.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would I take this, then, as a motion to table until tomorrow at the very least, or to a future meeting?

MR. McINNIS: With the intent that we deal with these guidelines tomorrow?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Or at another date.

MR. McINNIS: Well, I'd actually like to move another motion to refer these guidelines somewhere else rather than . . . The motion is to circulate, right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, but I can't . . .

MR. McINNIS: Then I'm speaking against the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you.
The motion is to circulate. Discussion?

DR. ELLIOTT: Yes, Mr. Chairman. This one said guidelines are identified as a draft. Would it be circulated as a draft? Is that what we're talking about? Which means they aren't the final?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That could be done, if the motion were to carry, but I think the other item . . . It has merit, that we've only had them today, to give a little more time to it. So I'm . . .

MR. HYLAND: I move we table till tomorrow so we have a chance to look at it overnight.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. There's a motion to table till tomorrow at the very least. Those in favour of the tabling motion to add it to tomorrow's agenda, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

MS BARRETT: We've got people who'll look over our shoulders, eh?

MR. FOX: It's a public meeting.

MS BARRETT: You're only – what? – an hour or an hour and a half late.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not communicate with strangers in the gallery.

The Chair believes that some things seem to be moving along here. Is there a motion to adjourn? Until when?

MS BARRETT: Please say 10 o'clock, because I've got a 9 o'clock appointment.

MR. BOGLE: Nine-thirty.

MRS. MIROSH: Nine-thirty?

MR. BOGLE: That's what it's advertised at.

MS BARRETT: Oh, is that right?

MR. BOGLE: Better stay with that so we can get away by noon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The chairman will be gone at noon as well, because I've got another parliamentary commitment.

MR. BOGLE: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is to adjourn this meeting until tomorrow morning at 9:30.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you very much, everyone.

[The meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.]