

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

[9:37 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, ladies and gentlemen, it's the assumption of the Chair that we'll be working till about 11:59. There's another commitment in the Speaker's suite of the parliamentary essay winners' luncheon, but if you need to carry on beyond that, I'm sure you can look after yourselves very well. Having said that, if we are indeed finished with our business at that time and any of you would like to come up to the Speaker's suite for a brief lunch, please feel free to do so.

I think perhaps we might just take a moment to mark the passing of Grant Salmon, the former Sergeant-at-Arms, who died yesterday and will be buried tomorrow.

[The committee observed a few moments of silence]

MR. CHAIRMAN: May he rest in peace. Amen.

As you know, Grant served the Legislature very well. He was the one who tried to get Sergeants-at-Arms to be somewhat stern in spite of the fact they might have been, and are, marshmallows underneath it all.

MR. BOGLE: Well, he certainly succeeded with our present Sergeant-at-Arms.

MRS. MIROSH: What, the marshmallow part?

MR. BOGLE: By the time he says "Order," we all wake up.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, what period was he Sergeant? Do you know offhand?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He was Sergeant when I came in in '79.

MR. HYLAND: He was Sergeant when we came in in '75.

MR. CHAIRMAN: At least '75 to '82.

All right, ladies and gentlemen. Perhaps we could go back to some items that were left from yesterday. According to the list we have here, the first would be items 4(d) and (e). First, I should ask the committee: do you want to go back to the tidy-up items, or are we going to go on to the budget estimates?

MR. BOGLE: Tidy up.

MS BARRETT: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The first item, then, is a combination of items 4(d) and (e), Transportation and Administrative Services Orders, members' air trips, plus Members' Automobile Allowance. There was a subcommittee, I understand. Is there a motion determination?

MRS. MIROSH: Well, I'll go. Mr. Chairman . . .

DR. ELLIOTT: We didn't designate a speaker.

MRS. MIROSH: We didn't designate a chairman. I don't know, David, if you have this to circulate.

DR. McNEIL: Yes, I do.

MRS. MIROSH: Okay. We'll circulate the paper and go

through it.

If you review the first page and look under the fiscal year '88 and '89, the urban travel claimed allowable kilometres is five; rural is six. Claimed partial allowable kilometres is 33 for the urban and rural is 32. Claimed zero kilometres are four and three respectively.

Under the '89-90 budget, the urban claimed total allowable kilometres is zero, and so is the rural.

MR. McINNIS: To date, right?

DR. McNEIL: To date. Yes.

MRS. MIROSH: To date.

Claimed partial allowable kilometres: 31, 35. Then claimed zero is 11 and six.

The next page, air travel trips for '88-89: again, it does show Edmonton MLAs and non-Edmonton MLAs and 11 members versus zero and so on. You can read for yourself: a total of 21. Non-Edmonton MLAs: 59 versus zero. The last page is probably the most telling, with air travel trips for '89 and '90. The Edmonton MLAs: eight members took zero trips, six members took one, two members took two, one member took three, a total of 17. Non-Edmonton MLAs: there are 62 that took zero, two that took one, and two that took two. So a total of 70 MLAs did not travel at all.

Mr. Chairman, we just don't see any justification for increasing it when no one is even using their maximum number, which is five trips per year out of their constituency. So the report is that there is no justification to increase it.

DR. ELLIOTT: In connection with the report just given by the other member, I have to say that I think this information came to the committee last night and left us with new information. Because of a time constraint, our committee dissolved without really coming up with a firm committee recommendation. We were still in a discussion mode at that time. Where that leaves us with respect to where we go from here is in my mind still uncertain. The information is there for us to consider now as a committee, but we did run out of time at our meeting last night. Some members had to leave, and I think it's only fair, Mr. Chairman, that you know the committee dissolved without having a unified position on a report to bring back this morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Edmonton-Whitemud, then Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, these figures certainly throw a different light on the situation than I understood yesterday. Possibly the solution to accommodating the travel part of it - because there are some members in some caucuses that obviously don't feel a need to use their air trips, if we left the number of air trips as is but simply allowed for pooling by caucuses, that could resolve individual concerns where somebody may feel a need, because they're critic of a portfolio, that takes them out of the city a lot. They may feel that in fact may satisfy that concern. For example, in our caucus obviously not all of us utilize the five full trips, but there are some that would probably want to utilize more than five if they had the opportunity.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, in principle I would disagree with that observation. I think what has happened is that those

who realize they have only five trips are very careful in using them so they always have a spare; for instance, should an emergency arise or a last minute request they want to respond to. But under the circumstances . . .

If you just wait a moment, are my motions back on the table or are we just doing the committee report at this time?

MR. BOGLE: Just the committee report, I think.

MS BARRETT: I had to leave for a 4:30 meeting – and I left late for it – which is why the meeting dissolved. It seems to me that there was an enormous amount of disagreement. Percy, Bob, and I had met at lunchtime to assess where Percy's position would be on the issue, which I reported to the meeting at 4 o'clock. So at that point it would have looked like a sort of hung jury. Perhaps what we could do – and this is bringing the committee work back to the table right now – is rather than proceed with the motion I had prepared on this subject and raised in August, substitute it with a new motion, at least a temporary motion, to allow each caucus to pool their collective flying trips and leave it at that for now until the committee has time to work on any other recommendations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, there's a request to withdraw the motion which is there behind your tab 4D. The mover wishes to withdraw it. Does the committee concur?

MS BARRETT: We could table it and I could just proceed with a different motion, because I would like this subject to come back, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. There's a motion to table. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. It's tabled.

MS BARRETT: May I proceed? While the wording may not be appropriate – I guess Parliamentary Counsel could probably help out here – I move, under Transportation and Administrative Services, that each caucus be entitled to five flights per year per MLA, which could be pooled by the caucus and transferred from one member to another as the caucus decides.

MR. CHAIRMAN: My concern about it would be that at least you will make sure you're letting the Legislative Assembly Office know what's transpiring, because it sounds to me like a bit of an administrative nightmare.

MS BARRETT: If I could explain, I think it would be relatively easy. For instance, if you have a caucus of eight, because the leader is always exempted from this, actually it would entitle you to seven people times five flights, 35 maximum. For instance, if admin sees that 33 have been taken, a notice could go to the House leader advising that only two trips are left for that caucus. Similarly for each other caucus, where you'd exempt the leader or members of Executive Council. Does that help clarify?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would, but they'd still have to work out some details on it.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah, I think we can work out the administrative details. The other thing, though, is that the cost of those flights would be charged, in terms of the public accounts, to the individual member who took that trip, so it's not a matter of it being charged to the caucus generally. It would still be a charge

to that individual member in terms of the accounting in public accounts.

MS BARRETT: Oh.

DR. McNEIL: That's just for your information.

MS BARRETT: Is that a problem?

DR. McNEIL: I don't see it as a problem necessarily. I'm just saying that's a fact.

MS BARRETT: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So you won't be surprised when members see they've got a whopping figure beside them in public accounts.

MR. WICKMAN: It would sure single out the high flyers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: The public accounts have to show what actually happened, not some administrative fiction.

MS BARRETT: That's right.

MR. McINNIS: I think it will be up to the caucuses to figure out how they're going to do the allocation. The administration needs to know the global maximum for each caucus and not fund any that are beyond the maximum. It's as simple as that. If somebody makes a mistake, then they're going to have to pay for it in some other way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. For the record, let's underline that loud and clear: they will then have to pay for it themselves. Because they'd be going out there and booking these trips not knowing that the rest of the caucus has already got them up to within two of the limit. Four people go out and book flights and then they get mad at – who? Okay.

DR. McNEIL: I think it's probably important that the chief of staff administer that budget, if you will, for that purpose, assuming that motion is passed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Back in '86, '87, it might have been – I can't remember the exact date, Mr. Chairman – travel for MLAs was substantially more liberal, if I can use that term in its clinical sense. All MLAs, then, through their representation on Members' Services made a tough but I think fiscally responsible decision to cut back the travel budget, which is an impairment on all of us and makes it more challenging for us to represent our various areas of interest. But it was, I believe, a fiscally responsible move.

The Member for Edmonton-Highlands' comments were interesting in that when we each have five trips only instead of unlimited travel, we are very careful about the use of said trips. I would think that this pooling motion would mitigate that caution about taxpayers' dollars for those who are very cautious about their travel and only choose the best and the optimum opportunities to travel. Those choices would be mitigated by

members of any caucus who are less careful, and therefore there is no possibility even at the five trips per member to cut back even on that by individual, responsible choices. That potential of cutting back even more is mitigated by the fact that other members who choose to travel more frequently would use up restrained amounts, and that's my concern along the fiscal line.

MR. McINNIS: I would like to respond to the Member for Red Deer-North. The issue isn't a question of fiscal restraint. I mean, if fiscal restraint remains in place, it's a question of who travels on what authority and who pays. At this point in time, people who are cabinet ministers have virtually unlimited travel and people who are members of government caucus have all kinds of other ways to finance travel. People who chair committees have travel benefits. The issue doesn't come down to irresponsible use of taxpayers' funds on the part of some people; it comes to how travel dollars which are budgeted are allocated. I think it makes some sense to shift the locus of responsibility in this way so the caucuses can plan their travel.

I also want to comment on these numbers on constituency travel. I think some conclusions are being jumped to that are a little bit difficult for me to swallow anyway. The fact is that because the urban allowance is set at a level which is low in relation to the rural members, it doesn't have any bearing, doesn't have any relationship, to the amount of kilometres traveled. Therefore, the billing doesn't have any correspondence to the amount of distance traveled either. Most people in my experience bill on a quarterly or monthly basis in some convenient period of time, so the fact that at this point in time you don't see all the kilometres used up doesn't mean that people haven't traveled a good deal more than 15,000 kilometres in a year. I happen to know that for a fact. It's a question of how the billing is actually done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. On that point, could we hold that for when we're dealing with the car travel, because we're on the air at the moment.

MR. McINNIS: I'm sorry. Back to the other point. I think it's a question of who gets to travel and on what authority.

MR. DAY: I just want a correction, Mr. Chairman, not to belabour the point but to correct Mr. McInnis. Private government members do not have unlimited access to travel about the province. If there is a specific committee one might find oneself on, I think the record will show that even air travel related to that committee is very limited. So I just wanted to correct that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that if the motion passes, from an administrative point of view, even though you have chiefs of staff involved, perhaps since now there's this extra allocation of money to Whips and House leaders, the Whip and House leader or one or the other could be involved in the allocation of these in a particular caucus so you have more input about who's going where so they don't . . .

MR. HYLAND: Why wouldn't it be the Whips so it's the same in every caucus?

MS BARRETT: I'm not sure it needs to be part of the motion, but that's the obvious, I think.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, I have found the new informa-

tion that came to us as a subcommittee just late yesterday afternoon extremely interesting. As one member pointed out, it's quite easy to jump to conclusions on it. The whole topic to me is an important one because there are some very strong arguments being presented. I also agree that the data is not as complete as it could be because of the particular time of year and for the reasons that have already been mentioned, the way in which people bill. I'd like to suggest that we consider leaving this topic until the end of the fiscal year. Being one who likes to work with data that's believable and understandable, I'm going to suggest that we leave this until after the fiscal year, where we have one full fiscal term of data that we can work with, Mr. Chairman.

MS BARRETT: There is last year's.

MRS. MIROSH: We have '88-89.

MS BARRETT: You have that.

DR. ELLIOTT: Yes, but we've had an election since then.

MS BARRETT: That's irrelevant.

MRS. MIROSH: That's irrelevant. We're talking . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hold on, folks.

DR. ELLIOTT: That's my recommendation, that we consider it. If people wish to comment on it and it leads to a motion, I'm prepared to make a motion.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, there are two issues here. The one issue is the issue that has already been tabled. I concur that shouldn't come back until after the end of the fiscal period to get a true assessment of the mileage used and such. However, the issue that we're dealing with, the motion in front of us, does not relate directly to those stats. It's simply a question of allowing caucuses to pool. You have to be very careful in separating the two issues as we deal with this. I have no problems dealing with this issue, with the concept of pooling, today. However, I'd feel more comfortable – and I agree with Bob that the other item shouldn't come back until after the end of the fiscal period.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to point out that we do have an '88-89 full fiscal year, which reflects more accurately the number of travel a full year, which has not changed with the current '89-90. The pattern remains basically the same, that 70 members did not take any trips in '88-89, and the election wouldn't have reflected that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okey doke. Do we have a motion? Is there a call for the question?

MR. WICKMAN: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify.

DR. ELLIOTT: Would you repeat the motion, sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. Louise, please.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Motion by Ms Barrett:

That under the transportation administration orders each caucus be entitled to five flights per year per MLA, which could be pooled by the caucus and transferred from member to member within that caucus to be used by the caucus as it decides.

MS BARRETT: I think that's exact. I think you got it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? It fails 4 to 3.

MS BARRETT: Surprise.

MR. McINNIS: I'm not surprised.

MS BARRETT: I'm not either.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next item on the agenda.

MS BARRETT: You might as well skip it, Mr. Chairman. Just move to table.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This motion to table is with respect to the kilometres. Those in favour of the motion to table? Opposed? Carried. One opposed.

With respect to item 5(a), Remote Constituency Designation, a conversation has taken place with the Member for Chinook and the request is withdrawn. I was under a misunderstanding with respect to the way the Members' Services order did read.

Okay. We did 5(b), Committee Service Allowance Claim Form. That's been done.

The next item I have is with respect to the motion being brought forward by the Member for Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My motion has to do with using constituency office supplies, materials, and equipment in private residences in connection with the job of an MLA. The motion being circulated says that the following is added after section 4:

4.01 Anything paid for out of the allowance or provided to a member pursuant to section 4 may be used by the member in his or her constituency office or in the member's residence.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Moved by the Member for Grande Prairie.

Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, I just have a question, Mr. Chairman. I wasn't fully sure of the intent of the motion yesterday. Would the intent of the motion be such that one would be allowed to charge rent?

DR. ELLIOTT: No. This is referring only to those items and supplies provided for in supplies.

MR. WICKMAN: Such as the computer and all that stuff?

DR. ELLIOTT: Photocopier, fax, camera, telephone answering device.

MR. WICKMAN: But there's no rental charge at all.

DR. ELLIOTT: No rental charge.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I don't have any problems with this. I think it's of great benefit to the rural members in particular. To some degree, possibly even urban members may prefer to have a computer within their home linked to their constituency office.

MR. McINNIS: I'm always happy to be of aid to a rural member, but I think the motion as drafted is just a tiny bit too broad. I would like to add the words "in respect of his or her official duties" just to try to focus it on business. The way it's worded, I could see potentially – not that anybody around this table would do it – television sets and VCRs and things like that which have no bearing. The request was in respect to office equipment, and I think that's basically . . .

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, to John, just for clarification. Televisions and VCRs are on the approved list. Some members do use the television and VCR so they can pick up the news when they're not home.

MR. McINNIS: In their residences?

MR. BOGLE: Yes.

MR. McINNIS: Paid for from public funds?

MR. BOGLE: If you have a separate television set.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And that says a taping on the VCR?

MR. BOGLE: A taping.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, so you've got the news when you go back.

MR. BOGLE: So you can tape the local news when you're not home.

MS BARRETT: Presumably that's related to your official duties.

MR. BOGLE: It's been there.

MR. McINNIS: So you guys don't want to let me travel around the province, but you want to have VCRs and television sets in your homes.

MR. BOGLE: I'm telling you what has been approved in the past.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that as an amendment, "in respect of his or her official duties."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, we have an amendment. Speaking to the amendment, Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: I think it's good that that is reiterated. I am supportive of that amendment, Mr. Chairman. I think it's just a misunderstanding here. For the sake of public concern, whether it's a television or VCR or fax machine, the public should be reassured that this would only be used for official business. I think members are all concurring with that, and I think that includes the taping of a news broadcast or a particular

documentary the member himself or herself might even be involved in. So I think the concerns are shared by the covering of that amendment.

MR. WICKMAN: I think, Mr. Chairman, each of us as an individual has to assume responsibility and maturity in the sense that we're going to exercise reason. I don't see any problem with a television or VCR being purchased and put in one's home for the purposes of aiding his or her particular role as an MLA. It is government property. When that member is no longer a member, that property is returned to the government. I guess it's no different from the cellular phone I have, paid for by the constituency fund, that I take home and happen to have there. I just carry that phone around with me. I can justify that because I'm using it strictly for business, for filling my role as an MLA.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any comment on the amendment? If not, is there a call for the question with regard to the amendment, basically as it pertains to the member's duties? Those in favour of that amendment, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously.

Further discussion on the main motion as amended, Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, Edmonton-Whitemud raised a question that could be very important 20 years down the road. It was never intended in my original motion to have rent included, and I'm wondering if another group of people around this table another time could see rent in that motion. That was not my intent, so I would ask that the appropriate people take a hard look at that because if rent's included from the way it's worded, I don't like it.

MR. DAY: Could we have further explanation of that, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, legal counsel helped draft it. I think that around the table you're picking up the message that that's not the intent; it's not the wish of the committee.

MS BARRETT: I don't understand what you're talking about.

DR. ELLIOTT: Well, it says, "Anything paid for out of the Allowance." Today the allowance is paying rent for an office. It's not my intention to have people charge rent for space in their homes.

MS BARRETT: Oh, I see. Okay.

DR. ELLIOTT: I'm talking equipment. I don't want rent included in the "anything." But maybe another group of people around this table a hundred years from now might see rent in there, and it's not my intention to have rent for the home in there.

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, I can see that it might be viewed out of the context of this meeting that perhaps it may have referred to rent, and I would suggest, therefore, that we might use the words "any supplies or equipment paid for out of the allowance, or provided to a Member," et cetera.

MS BARRETT: Very good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do we all agree on "any supplies or equipment"?

Would you like to put that in?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. M. CLEGG: Again, Mr. Chairman, that will make sure it is not extended, that it wouldn't then cover services paid for by way of wages and that kind of thing.

DR. ELLIOTT: For janitorial work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, it's taken as accepted by the mover of the motion and by the committee as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

MR. McINNIS: Just a question. The wording appears to specify two and only two places where supplies can be used. That doesn't preclude things you take with you on the road or . . .

MS BARRETT: Oh, no.

MR. McINNIS: I wouldn't think so. It's just permissive.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Item 5(c). You recall that we had two items for distribution. One was a letter from Parliamentary Counsel Ritter which showed a joint comment together with Parliamentary Counsel Clegg, and it also had attached to it some draft guidelines with respect to constituency allowance expenditures mainly in the area of communications. That was moved to be tabled till today.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I was pretty sure we had dealt with this subject at some point in the past and looked up in the large members' handbook, eight and a half by 11 sheets, and found under Constituency Services Order, Communication, section 3(2):

An item may be paid for under subsection (1) only if it does not contain any political party logo or promote political party activities, the soliciting of party funds, or sale of party memberships.

It is noted that this was added by Members' Services Committee Order 16/88, effective December 5, 1988, and it's the MSC Minute 88.192.

It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that what we should do is recognize that this particular policy is already in place and forward to the chiefs of staff of each caucus the three memoranda that were distributed yesterday for further consideration and recommendation, to be brought back to the members of this committee after they've been worked through by the chiefs of staff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could we pick up the Clerk in your motion as well?

MS BARRETT: I'm sorry. Yes, that's a very good idea.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If we have to administer it, we need to . . .

MS BARRETT: Yes, I would include the Clerk in those discussions and in helping recommend suggestions to this committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. This is a motion of referral for additional study.

MR. HYLAND: Question.

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

Item 5(h), Preliminary Discussion, Special Standing Committee on Members' Services Budget Estimates. Clerk, please, 5(h). This is our own committee's guesstimate.

DR. McNEIL: The budget as presented reflects the increases to members' committee allowances, and that is offset by reduction in travel expenses. Looking at last year's travel and this year's travel to date, our judgment is that you would not expend the \$14,627 that's allocated this year, and therefore we propose that the travel for next year be reduced to \$8,750, which brings in the total budget as, in effect, a no growth budget for next year for the committee.

I might also add that the request for a special warrant has gone in for that amount, \$14,811, to cover anticipated costs of the increase in allowances for this committee for this year as a result of the committee fee increases.

MS BARRETT: Is this for information, Mr. Chairman, or does it need a motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's for information, and then we will, indeed, follow on with a motion so that then we can put it into our own budget document that we're going to next. Let's have a motion, please.

MS BARRETT: Sure. What would the motion be?

MR. CHAIRMAN: For approval.

MS BARRETT: Just a motion to approve? Yeah, so moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Further discussion? Call for the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. McINNIS: Just a minute. May I?

With this motion is this the last time we will see these estimates?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

MS BARRETT: It's a motion approving them and putting them here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: John, may I see the front cover of your book for a moment? No, sorry, it's the other booklet. It's section 5(h).

MR. McINNIS: It's the Members' Services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, we're acting as Members' Services

almost like a subcommittee or overview committee.

DR. McNEIL: I wish it were the case, John.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is a section where we're just one committee amongst a bunch of others in terms of our estimates. Okay.

MR. McINNIS: The primary change is the increase in fee for members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MS BARRETT: And a decrease in travel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Plus the decrease in travel.

MS BARRETT: Because it's not used; it was overestimated.

DR. McNEIL: Just for specifics, last year we spent about \$7,000; this year to date we've spent only \$624.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Motion to approve?

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Just a little reminder that everybody's supposed to vote in this committee one way or the other. The Chair will see it as unanimous.

MS BARRETT: Now, does this get moved, or is it already in the estimates book?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's already in the estimates.

MRS. MIROSH: Didn't you see our feet up?

MR. DAY: We're voting with our feet, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I could see a quick one eyebrow, and Dianne flipped her toe or something or other.

Maybe just pause for half a moment to check.

All right. I've just checked through a number of things here that are on our agenda; various things have been picked up. To tidy up, Edmonton-Whitemud, from the minutes of the August 28 meeting we were to hear from you. Has the Clerk's office had it in writing as to who the Liberal opposition party Whip is?

MR. WICKMAN: Bettie Hewes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the House leader for the Liberal Party is also . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Bettie Hewes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: Double duty.

MR. BOGLE: Double pay.

MRS. MIROSH: Double duty, double pay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

Now, the other document . . .

MR. McINNIS: Does Laurence trust him with this job?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You know what just happened – what was the name of the country that just changed its government?

AN HON. MEMBER: Romania.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In Romania there was a one-party, one-family operation.

Okay dokey. Five, the other budget document. Clerk, why don't we start in with you, this fistful of dollars here.

DR. McNEIL: Let me first give you the updates to your binders.

MR. BOGLE: While the Clerk is doing that, can I ask a question? It's based on the assumption that we're going to follow a similar practice this year as we have in past years. What's happening now, Mr. Chairman, is that you and Dr. McNeil are going to lead us through the budget document, a document which with the exception of the three caucus budgets has been prepared by your staff, approved by yourself, and the committee is now seeing it for the first time. So today we should be focusing our questions for information through you, Mr. Chairman, and when we come back at our next meeting in January, we'll be going into the budget on a detailed basis. Is that correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's correct, with a minor addition to that. There's been some input from the chairmen of the other committees as to their budgets in that section.

MR. BOGLE: That's right. Thank you. In the Legislature Committees section?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Okay.

DR. McNEIL: Now, in terms of what I've handed out, the first page, the summary, goes under the tab called Estimates Summary in your budget binder. It's the first page of the additional information that I handed out. It goes under the tab Estimates Summary. Of the three other pages the first goes under the Government Members' Office, tab 5; the Official Opposition goes under tab 6, the Official Opposition tab; and the Liberal opposition budget goes under tab 7, Liberal Opposition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. All members, if you'll turn your binders sideways for a moment, you can see where we're going to end up going. David will give you the overview and the summary, but there you can see that we will indeed get through General Administration, MLA Administration, House Services, Speaker's Office, Government Members' Office, Official Opposition, Liberal Opposition, Legislature Committees, Legislative Interns, *Alberta Hansard*, and the Legislature Library. So you know there is a bit of a journey yet to be taken.

Okay. Clerk, please.

DR. McNEIL: Okay. From an overview perspective the projected overall increase of 2 percent in 1991 over money that will be appropriated in 1989-90 – the '89-90 figures that are

included in this binder include the special warrant amounts that we've applied for – primarily relates to the compensation decisions made on August 28. So the increase in members' indemnities and allowances that will be appropriated sometime this fiscal year are included in the '89-90 figures, just so it's clear to you that those numbers are there.

Except in a few instances where demands are such that in our view increases are necessary, our target in terms of the administration budget was a no growth, maintenance kind of budget, and there are some factors that are out of our control. Increases in the salaries, wages, and benefits areas are applied across most of the budget. For example, management increases in the public service this year: there was an allocation of a 7 percent increase for managers as a pool of funds. The Legislative Assembly overall allocated about 6 percent. In terms of the nonmanagement increases, the general increases counting merit and market adjustments were between 5 and 6 percent. There was also a new classification system implemented for administrative support staff which added another 2 to 3 percent to the nonmanagement increases for those particular categories, and there was a fair amount of information around relating to those increases for the administrative support class.

There were benefit increases in the dental plan, the Blue Cross Plan, and, surprisingly enough, a decrease in the long-term disability insurance premiums as a result of experience with the plan.

Under Supplies and Services the general trend was slight increases, although as it turns out, our printing tenders for 1990 came in under what they were last year because of increased competition in the marketplace, in our view.

In terms of payments to members, increases reflect the increases in the indemnities and allowances, as I indicated. The calculation of the members' services allowance was based on last year's allocation of \$36,000 per member and an increase in the promotional allowance because of an increase in the number of electors from the 1989 census figures. That, therefore, increases the promotional allowance calculation. So those numbers are, again, reflected in the budget.

So those are the things I'd like to highlight in terms of the general things that are built in across the board in the budget.

DR. ELLIOTT: I just want to make sure that I was following the discussion with one of the pages in the book. Were you speaking specifically to one of the numbers?

DR. McNEIL: No. I'm speaking in a broad sense right now. I haven't got into the specifics of any particular section. I'm just saying that these are things that apply across the board.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, just in terms of process. As we look at these estimates today, assuming we're going to work our way through them, there is a mechanism or a time, is there not, for bringing back more questions in light of the fact that these were delivered to us yesterday and we probably haven't had the opportunity to memorize this booklet yet. I just want to determine that in terms of the process.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The process is such that we work our way through this more than once, to say the least.

MR. DAY: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As mentioned, the document was there, and the idea this morning is to get ourselves on the whole a general review. Some specific questions – hopefully we'll be able to get all the way through this so that at the next meeting we can come back to it in even more detail, if you wish, as well as then dealing with the caucus budgets.

MR. BOGLE: And, Mr. Chairman, as questions arise, some of which the Clerk will want to take as notice, he can then go back and do further research so that when we next meet in January, we'll be able to go through it line by line and hopefully make some decisions as we go.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. DAY: The comments just made by Dr. McNeil: are you now taking questions under General Administration, or were those just general comments?

DR. McNEIL: Those were just general comments.

MR. DAY: Okay.

DR. McNEIL: Just as an overview. Most of those comments applied to more than one section. For example, the management and nonmanagement salary increases, the benefits changes, and so on apply generally across most of the sections, if not all.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The other thing that occurs here is that this committee goes through this with such a fine-tooth comb that the tradition has been that when the estimates of the Legislative Assembly come to the House, we don't need to go through all the kind of detail that usually transpires there, even though it is an opportunity to do so. But it works on the theory that members here are able to communicate well with their own caucuses as to what has transpired here in this committee. Okay?

DR. McNEIL: Okay. Now I'd like to take you through section by section and just talk about the overview and respond to any questions you have generally.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, just one question before we start the process. I imagine at this particular point it's just going to be very, very light and quick on each division within the section. We're aiming for a 12 o'clock adjournment, are we not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Because I would like the opportunity to get right through number 11 even if it's just a quick summary of each one.

DR. McNEIL: That would be my objective.

MR. HYLAND: Can I ask you a question before you get started?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. HYLAND: In looking at this, basically this morning a

quick look at it, we see '90-91 estimate and '89-90 estimate. Is there a way we can put the actual in there?

DR. McNEIL: Yes. We can put in the . . .

MR. HYLAND: Because I think we did last year, didn't we?

DR. McNEIL: No, we didn't last year.

MR. HYLAND: We didn't last year. Okay.

DR. McNEIL: But the reason we didn't last year is because we significantly changed the account codes, so the data we had the previous year was organized totally differently than it was last year. So that's the reason we didn't do it. I would assume that you would like the '88-89 actuals; in other words, the totals for the previous fiscal year. Am I correct in that, or are you asking for '89-90 to date?

MR. BOGLE: For '89-90.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. That's the max you could do.

DR. McNEIL: So it's '89-90 to date that you'd like?

MR. HYLAND: The three officers that report to Leg. Offices did a projection on theirs, and it was actual to a certain date and then projected for the remainder.

DR. McNEIL: Okay. You'd like a projection for it. Yes, we can do that.

MS BARRETT: For every estimate?

MR. HYLAND: They had it broken down, yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, but it's easier for them to break that down than it is to break down this whole department.

MS BARRETT: You bet.

DR. McNEIL: What we can do, if you look on the third page on each, the summary for administration, is give you a projection for '89-90 for each of those codes. That's what you would get, and we can provide you with that.

MR. HYLAND: Oh, sorry. I didn't mean down . . .

DR. McNEIL: Not in terms of each detail page, because I think that would be . . .

MR. HYLAND: No. Just where it's all added up.

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

MR. HYLAND: Is that tough to do?

MRS. MIROSH: Well, I don't think so.

MR. BOGLE: Just a minute.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, we're now on page 1, Legislative Assembly - Administration. Let's use it as an example. Can we not deal in January under Salaries - Permanent? We know what the estimate is for '89-90; we know the proposed figure for '90-91. Can we not put a projected figure in for '89-90 which shows how much of the \$278,134 will be used for the fiscal year? I think that's what Alan is asking.

MR. HYLAND: That's what I'm looking for.

DR. McNEIL: Yes, that was my understanding, and for each section we would do that.

MR. BOGLE: But if we do it on a projection basis, it can be done for each element.

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, are you saying, though, that you can't itemize each one?

MR. BOGLE: No. That's just what we dealt with. They can.

MRS. MIROSH: Oh, you can. Just for clarification.

DR. McNEIL: My concern: if you wanted to itemize on each of the supplementary pages, it would be difficult on some of them to break it down, that's all.

MR. BOGLE: Well now, what do you mean? I just used an example. Give us an example on the same page.

DR. McNEIL: Well, there's no problem on that same page, not at all.

MR. HYLAND: He's talking, for example, on page 9.

MS BARRETT: Did you want to replace every single page?

DR. McNEIL: I'm saying that if you wanted those projections in each one of these elements on subsequent pages, that might be difficult in some areas. But in terms of the projection on the summary page, that's not difficult.

MR. HYLAND: But if we have it on the summary page, we can look back at it.

DR. McNEIL: Exactly.

MS BARRETT: That's good enough.

DR. McNEIL: In each of those budget categories we can give you the projected expenditure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And in a year from now we're in better shape to be able to do this information because of the changes that have taken place in the coding and the computerization and stuff.

DR. McNEIL: That's right. The way we can accumulate the data a lot more often.

MR. HYLAND: So we're looking at a three-month projection and a nine-month actual or something like that.

MR. DAY: Just a general question that would affect each of these areas. In the estimates was there factored in either a 7 or 9 percent factor allowing for GST?

DR. McNEIL: No.

MR. BOGLE: I hope not.

MS BARRETT: Are you a pessimist?

MR. DAY: A realist.

DR. McNEIL: We'd be exempt from that in most of our activities anyway, as we are from the sales and excise tax at the present time.

MR. DAY: Under services you would be?

DR. McNEIL: Well, under services I'm not sure. Under goods we have been up to this point. I would think we would want to maintain that position. Maybe Parliamentary Counsel could comment on that, in terms of whether or not we would take the position that we would be exempt from GST with respect to services to the Assembly.

MR. DAY: It might be a question for the Treasurer. Okay, I just wondered if it was factored in.

DR. McNEIL: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. The first page behind General Administration, which gives you the overview.

DR. McNEIL: This budget's projected to increase 19.5 percent, primarily in the salary, wages, and benefits area. We are requesting about \$25,000 in wage funds to handle excessive workloads in both personnel and administration, administration primarily due to the fact that this year we were required to go on remote data entry by Treasury, and instead of Treasury entering all the data into the accounting system, our staff now have to do it. This was something that when it was implemented, they said the resources that were then in Treasury would be allocated out to departments, but as far as I know, that hasn't happened. Sylvia may be able to comment on that too, but we didn't receive any resources from Treasury to perform this task. It's of benefit to the members and to the office because it speeds up the processing, but it requires us to do the work now, which wasn't involved before.

In the personnel area, because of the high number of contracts that we administer and the large activity in payroll, we've had to bring work experience people and people from the priority employment program into the personnel office to handle this extra workload.

So those are the main increases in the general admin area. Otherwise, it's pretty well a no growth . . . When we go through this in detail, I can provide you with statistics and further information on the increase in activities in those two areas on which we're basing this request.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Let's hold the questions. David,

let's go through the first page of each of these sections; then we've satisfied that we've gone through the whole thing. Then we'll come back to this.

MS BARRETT: Good idea.

MR. DAY: That's good.

MR. BOGLE: Maybe after we've gone through each summary page of each section, we could have a short seven and a half minute coffee break.

MR. CHAIRMAN: After we've done the overview.

MS BARRETT: Seven and a half minutes; not seven and three-quarters; not seven and one-quarter. Gotcha.

DR. McNEIL: Okay; the MLA Administration. This incorporates all the resources that are primarily devoted to supporting the MLAs, including indemnities and allowances and so on. This year, as I indicated in our discussion yesterday, we consolidated the EDP budget. The EDP budget was in this section last year, but we've moved some other funds into this area from the other sections as well this year so we'd have an overview of the EDP budget. This budget is projected to increase 1.9 percent. It's fairly straightforward. I don't think there's anything of particular note given the size of the increase. Again this incorporates the special warrant request relating to the members' indemnities, allowances, fees, and so on, and it's in this budget that the \$36,000 per member constituency office allowance is included.

House Services. This budget is projected to decrease by 2.1 percent. That may be a little deceiving in that we're requesting two nonpermanent positions be approved – well, one nonpermanent position and funds for one contract for an additional security staff. I feel there's one area of the House that's not well protected. In discussions with Oscar and the Speaker, I feel this is a necessity to cover that one particular area. We're requesting funds for a Bills and Journals clerk. The Assembly has worked for a number of years with the Clerk Assistant working, in my view, two jobs, working 12 to 16 hours a day to produce the House documents, with the attendant stresses that has caused. We believe we've reached a point where we need to have somebody perform that role separately.

The Supplies and Services budget is decreasing by 28.5 percent as a result of not hosting anything other than a small conference this year, the Sergeant-at-Arms conference, whereas last year we had \$175,000 in the budget for the CPA conference. The other expenditure portion of the budget is increasing by 34 percent as a result of an increase in the rate for attendance at parliamentary meetings. We're going from \$100 to \$260 a day.

Speaker's Office. We're projecting a 7.6 percent increase primarily due to merit and market adjustments and the classification adjustment to the support series in the Speaker's office and the Deputy Speaker's office. As well, there's a provision for an automobile and mobile for the Deputy Chairman of Committees; again, something that reflects the committee's decision.

I won't comment on the next three votes. That would be number 8, the . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, on that point. I'd like to know how he arrived at those figures.

DR. McNEIL: Which figures?

MR. WICKMAN: On the amounts per member in the different budgets.

DR. McNEIL: These were figures that were supplied by each caucus.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay.

DR. McNEIL: And as I indicated yesterday, we would put in the bottom-line numbers. We've never revealed in this budget document the breakdown of the caucus budgets.

MR. HYLAND: And I hope we stay with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll traditionally come back to that when we've done with the department side.

Number 8, thank you.

DR. McNEIL: Committees budget, projecting an increase of 6.3 percent, a result of increases in fees paid to members and the provision of vehicles for class A committee chairmen.

The interns budget: an increase of .1 percent. Basically a no growth budget; that small growth relates to increase in benefit costs.

MR. WICKMAN: Could I ask at this point, Mr. Chairman – there was a question as to whether the intern program was going to continue. Does this indicate that the decision has been made that it's going to continue?

MR. CHAIRMAN: When this committee approves this estimate later on, if this committee approves it later on or modifies it in any direction.

MR. WICKMAN: We don't need a separate motion dealing with the question of interns if the budget is sufficient?

MS BARRETT: That's correct.

DR. McNEIL: *Alberta Hansard*: projecting a 3 percent increase. This is primarily in relation to Salaries, Wages and Employee Benefits, reflecting management and nonmanagement increases and benefits increases. A decrease in Supplies and Services related to primarily decreased printing costs for 1990, when we project an increase in the last three months of the fiscal year.

The Legislature Library: projecting a 2.9 percent increase. The primary area where that increase comes is in relation to the Salaries, Wages and Benefits. There's also built in a requirement for additional shelving to store library materials and funds to continue the microfilming of Alberta newspapers, which we've done over the past number of years.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, let's take ourselves a seven and a half minute coffee break, and then we'll come back to General Administration.

[The committee recessed from 10:45 a.m. to 11:03 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, ladies and gentlemen. We'll get back, then, to the General Administration part of the budget.

We've done that very brief overview. David, do you have additional comments on the general administration before I take questions on this?

DR. McNEIL: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions generally, with regard to the first page on General Administration or any of this plus 19.5 percent projection?

As you can see throughout the Salaries, Wages and Employee Benefits, reclassification is a familiar theme throughout each of these sections, taking into account some necessary adjustments.

All right. On the second page in there you can see what all is involved in terms of General Administration, and then you go all through the various page-by-page breakdowns. On almost every page you'll find over on the right-hand side the reasons for the variance. One of the important things that David mentioned earlier was with regard to finding someone as a backup to Karen South. It looks like the title here is accounts and records . . .

DR. McNEIL: No, Bills and Journals.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bills and Journals. This has been a very vulnerable part of our operation for many years, so this will be able to set that right, thank goodness.

DR. ELLIOTT: Page number, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under House Services. That one comes later.

DR. McNEIL: But under General Administration there's a major focus on the increase as well, on having wage funds available. Our operation, in terms of the amount of processing it does, is probably comparable to a department of about 500 people, because we've got so many with all the caucus staff on contract; we have all the constituency office staff on contract of one sort or another. Every time there has to be a change in the terms and conditions of employment, then there are documents that have to be produced and payroll records that have to be generated. So there's a lot of activity in that area. What we need is some continuity, so that we can bring in a person or persons - at times this year we've had two extra people brought in just to handle the workload. That's why we need the funds in that area.

MS BARRETT: Sounds good to me.

DR. McNEIL: As I say, it's wage funds. It's not a permanent position or a nonpermanent position; it's wage funds.

MS BARRETT: So if I can ask: what kind of hourly rate does that come to, about?

DR. McNEIL: Well, you're talking about a clerk III. I don't even know what . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Seven bucks an hour, isn't it, or \$7.50?

DR. McNEIL: It might be a little more than that.

MRS. AINSLEY: It's more than that. It'd be more like \$10.

DR. McNEIL: Ten dollars, I would say. Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm thinking of a temp summer student. That was \$7.75.

DR. McNEIL: Any other General Administration questions, so to speak?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Over to the MLA Administration section, then, 2.

MR. McINNIS: Just before we leave the other, you said you have basically nine permanent staff, three nonpermanent, and two equivalent on wages?

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Section 2, MLA Administration.

In the last year, with picking up Bill Gano in that position, we find that in this budget it starts to reflect some consolidation of electronic data processing over into that area. In the consolidation, as mentioned yesterday, we've started to effect significant savings not only in dollars but, I think, significant savings in efficiencies.

Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, when we go in this particular area here of MLA Administration, under Code 712K00 - or 712 "koo," I guess you would call that, eh? - the constituency offices . . . Now, I'm trying to get a reading on that. It's page 14 in that section. It reflects constituency staff on contract basis. Through you, Mr. Chairman, to David: is that based on the identical budget as last year?

DR. McNEIL: Yes. What we've done there is transferred some of those funds. They all used to be under Supplies and Services, under that Professional, Tech, and Labour Services. Because of the number of employees that are on employment contracts now as opposed to fee-for-service contracts, that money is paid through the payroll system. So if you look on page 1 of that section, you'll see now that under 711D, Contract Employees, there's a \$768,000 allocation which used to be under the Professional, Tech, and Labour Services. So it just means we've transferred funds from one category to another, reflecting how people are being paid now.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would have hoped that this particular budget would have come in to reflect what I would call a cost of living increase for the constituency offices, something equal to the cost-of-living index, because there are staff people involved; there are other expenses that increase. To operate on the same basis as last year, there would be some difficulty. I would be ready to see another 5 percent added to those budgets to allow for a cost-of-living increase.

DR. McNEIL: I mentioned in my opening remarks that this budget was based on the existing allocation of \$36,000 per member per constituency office. That doesn't mean that this committee can't decide to change that, but in terms of our original base for the budget, we use the existing numbers because we, I guess, don't feel it's within our prerogative to change that on speculation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's up to each individual member dealing with the staff in his or her constituency office to make that adjustment within the funds that you have available, not to this committee to do an overall increase. I mean, we can give you more money for that whole envelope, but in terms of dealing with your employee, who technically is also our employee, you're our designate to deal with them in terms of what you're paying them.

MR. WICKMAN: I realize that, Mr. Chairman. What I'm asking for is some guidance – and I'm prepared to move such a motion – as to when it's appropriate to move an increase of 5 percent in these budgets. I realize that as individual members we're responsible for our own constituency office and how we allocate those dollars and what increases we see as being reasonable. But to accommodate that, we have to have some increase in the overall budgets available to the constituencies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't, but . . . Clerk?

DR. McNEIL: Any increase in terms of reflecting on this budget would in most cases have to be to the constituency office allowance, because a lot of the funds under this particular budget relate to that \$36,000 per member allocation.

MR. HYLAND: Can you vet it? Isn't that a Members' Services order?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. HYLAND: We'd have to change the Members' Services order.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, but it's not a separate item under these estimates, is it? It would have to come from a motion distinct from these.

MR. HYLAND: And a motion to change the Members' Services order which would direct the administration to change . . .

MS BARRETT: Correct.

MR. WICKMAN: And when would it be appropriate to do that, Mr. Chairman? That's my question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, how would you like to make yourself a note that when we finish going through this section, then you can make your case and attempt to make a motion at that stage.

DR. McNEIL: Excuse me; I was incorrect. I'm confused. The allocation to constituency offices is \$34,500 per office. I was getting confused with the other caucus formula last year. If you look on page 14, you can see at the top of page 14 the total sums allocated under that code initially. Then it's reallocated to various other areas to reflect our experience as to where those funds are expended.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, I've got you down for notice at the end of this section.

MRS. MIROSH: I'm just confused as to where these funds are being transferred, these codes. How do we know what these

codes stand for?

DR. McNEIL: Okay. The codes are the codes that you see on the summary page.

MRS. MIROSH: They're on the summary page?

DR. McNEIL: Yeah.

MRS. MIROSH: On this particular page, page 14, is this where it's difficult for you to give us what was actually spent in detail?

DR. McNEIL: Yes; exactly.

MRS. MIROSH: It would be interesting to know actual versus estimate. On page 1, can you just tell me why there's such a large percentage, 627.1 percent? Or are we getting into that kind of detail today?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure. What's it under?

MRS. MIROSH: Page 1 under MLA Administration. I mean, it seems to be so out of whack here.

DR. McNEIL: Yes, for the reason I mentioned earlier. Because of the number of members who are putting their staff on employment contracts, we've transferred \$768,000 from primarily Professional, Technical, and Labour Services under Supplies and Services up into the code 711D, Contract Employees. So that's where your big increase is there. That money is not an increase in anything. It's just a transfer from one category to another to reflect how members have chosen to pay their employees.

MRS. MIROSH: I mean, that percentage, that 627 percent increase, just looks so . . .

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. Well, that's on a fairly small base last year, whereas if you look at the base under Supplies and Services, you're talking about \$6 million.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to go back to Dianne's earlier comment, where she was asking on page 14. I assume that where the administration have indicated there should be an increase or a decrease, based on actual cost, the cost can be mentioned behind . . . In other words, if we're looking at MLA budget address, you've got a decrease there of 12 percent, and then you've got "based on actual cost." Well, surely we can put the actual cost in.

DR. McNEIL: Uh huh.

MR. BOGLE: Okay? That might help, back to Dianne's question.

MRS. MIROSH: Why have we got some that say "based on actual cost" and some that don't? Just me prodding here. You were able to get "based on actual cost" for some of them, but you said you couldn't do it for the others.

DR. McNEIL: Well, some were one-time items, and we know. You know, we've got one invoice.

MRS. MIROSH: Oh, I see.

DR. McNEIL: For others we'd have to do a heck of a lot of research in terms of pulling together all the invoices over the year to find out what the total cost is, because the accounting system doesn't capture down to this fine detail, but we know . . . For example, budget address: we can go to one place and say there's what we paid.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The other thing that's occurring on page 14, of course, is that there's no change at all in most of those items.

MRS. MIROSH: I see, yeah. Well, minus 28.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So you're only explaining an increase or a decrease. But as mentioned earlier, now for the second time people will get the actuals in for the overview page for each section for the next meeting.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. We'll put in the projected expenditure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For that matter, if we have them available beforehand, we could ship them to their offices.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. We'll do that as soon as we can.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And we should be able to have them beforehand.

Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: I have a few quick questions. Yesterday I was trying to relate the expenditure on data processing equipment to the five-year plan, and I got it all mixed up in my brain. Maybe it could be straightened out today. We've got a figure of \$472,000 this year for purchase of equipment.

DR. McNEIL: Where in the report?

MR. McINNIS: It's broken down on page 20.

DR. McNEIL: Okay.

MR. McINNIS: Now, I take it not all of that relates to the five-year plan. Some of it must relate to something else.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct, yeah. A good half of that is for the constituency office automation as opposed to the caucus expenditures which we were discussing yesterday.

MR. McINNIS: Oh, okay.

DR. McNEIL: In terms of that \$100,000, \$120,000 that I talked about yesterday, that maintenance pool is the funds that we're talking about allocating to replace caucus equipment.

MR. McINNIS: But basically do you expect this will be the approximate level of acquisition costs over the next five years for everybody, or . . .

DR. McNEIL: Well, you see, I think it will probably go down the year after next, because we won't have the constituency office computerization; we'll have had all the equipment installed there. So you're talking about \$233,000 less in '91-92.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Or a large portion thereof, because you still have a few offices that haven't come on that might want to come on.

DR. McNEIL: There are still, you know, some maintenance dollars and so on that'll have to be allocated to that, whereas for the first year we're not allocating maintenance dollars to that equipment because it's under warranty.

MR. McINNIS: I have some questions on page 8, Supplies and Services. The 52 return trips between the capital and the constituency currently apply to non-Edmonton members, right?

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. McINNIS: And they can travel either by vehicle or by air or whatever? They have the option, I assume.

DR. McNEIL: This is the car mileage.

MR. McINNIS: Mileage?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it depends which part of page 8 you are . . .

DR. McNEIL: Yeah, under MLA mileage program. The MLA airline credit card use, up above, deals with the . . .

MR. McINNIS: It would have some portion of that.

DR. McNEIL: It will have some portion of that. Just for your information, last year we budgeted this MLA mileage program. That figure there is based on just what it would cost to fund the constituency travel for all members. Because it's not all used up, the remaining, in effect, goes under the 52 return trips.

MR. McINNIS: There are a couple here that I'm not familiar with: MLA constituency staff travel and MLA spousal/guest travel. How are those accessed and by whom?

DR. McNEIL: Well, MLA constituency staff travel is for travel to and from Edmonton - usually Edmonton or constituencies. That comes out of the constituency office allowance.

MR. McINNIS: Oh; that's a transfer.

DR. McNEIL: That's a transfer. The spousal/guest travel is allowed under a Members' Services order for four trips per year, and budgeted as such.

MR. McINNIS: Four trips where?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it's usually to the capital; it can be anywhere in the province. But the point of that four trips per year for your husband, wife - whatever - was a thing done by the committee to try to keep a few more of these marriages together. Again, it's that pressure for people who are outside of about an hour's driving time to Edmonton - being away from home so much and all of the committee workloads - that at least four times a year, hopefully, the spouse would come up here and not feel totally alienated from what's going on here. And in my personal opinion I think really it should be higher, but that's beside the point at this stage.

With regard to the constituency office staff, the vast amount of practice in this – in the case of my constituency secretary, she may come up here twice a year so she's in contact with the office staff here. That's where that travel mostly occurs. But I agree that it's not much use to an Edmonton constituency.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you.

MR. HYLAND: Doesn't that thing also have the ability of a member, if he's going on Legislature business, to take his wife elsewhere in the province four times? Or is it just . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. As long as it's related to the Legislature, it can happen anywhere in the province. But, as I mentioned, the bulk of it is that they come here for, say, the opening. That's where a lot of it occurs.

MR. McINNIS: So that that might be related to the five trips that could be taken elsewhere in the province?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Five trips per year is for the MLA.

MR. McINNIS: The issue we dealt with or didn't deal with earlier today: MLAs are allowed to travel five times in a year to a destination other than the capital city.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, that's right.

MR. McINNIS: My curiosity was whether that spousal travel applies to that or not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've interpreted it that you can do that. If, for example, there was a government thing in Fort McMurray or in our Legislature, the spouse is automatically . . .

MR. BOGLE: On that point, to those who have their permanent residence in Edmonton, it gives them an opportunity to go to other parts of the province if there's a function that the spouse would be involved in.

MS BARRETT: I didn't know that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But you can't transfer your spousal one to you.

MS BARRETT: Aw, come on. Jeez, you guys. You're anticipating my every move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And you can't pool it. But it's there so that, indeed, John could take his wife, say, to wherever if there's some event goodness knows where in the province.

MR. McINNIS: I'm tempted to ask if he could take another MLA as his daughter.

MS BARRETT: I tried that. Guest is allowed, that's true.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Only if you're cohabiting in some form or other, or you're . . .

MS BARRETT: Well, you never gave me that restriction before.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, that's for him. As for you . . .

MS BARRETT: Okay.

MR. McINNIS: Do people with government cars claim mileage on trips to the capital?

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the government vehicle?

DR. McNEIL: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: I've about four questions tumbling out at once here, Mr. Chairman. You're going to be hearing from me at some future time with respect to this spousal/guest travel. I'll be looking for clarification on that because I tried it once and I was denied payment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many years ago?

DR. ELLIOTT: Last spring. I'll bring that up under another topic another time. The reason I'm just raising it now is that clarification is required on its use.

The other thing with respect to page 8: as an MLA that can both fly and drive my 511 kilometres, these budgets would show me as doing both all year long. We're budgeting for me to fly once a week and drive once a week.

DR. McNEIL: No, we're not. As I said earlier, we're just budgeting for you to drive once a week. History has been that that amount, doing budgeting on that basis, covers the cost of both flying and driving.

DR. ELLIOTT: I'm sorry. I misunderstood the MLA airline credit card use – there's an item there, \$217,142 – MLA gasoline credit card, and then MLA mileage: 52 return trips a year. I can see the MLA for Grande Prairie in there about four times, and I was wondering how you juggle those kinds of numbers. I can only travel once. But I'll have you clarify it for me later.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's based on the average.

DR. McNEIL: As I say, that number is based on a calculation of 42 members times 25,000 kilometres – that's what the urban members' is – times 21 cents a kilometre, plus 41 members times 45,000 kilometres times 21 cents a kilometre. It's pretty close to \$607,950.

MR. HYLAND: Didn't we correct that two years ago?

DR. McNEIL: Yes, we did correct it two years ago.

MR. HYLAND: Remember? We had the same argument two years ago. We corrected it to show the actual, because indeed then it was 52 trips a year flying and 52 trips a year driving, and it was a distortion.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you.

MS BARRETT: One day out of three traveling. Oh, goody.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A good way to go to the cemetery, too.

MS BARRETT: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Okay. Just to be clear then. Using the MLA mileage program, 52 trips between capital and constituency and travel within the province, the figure \$607,950 is based on our actual experience with members traveling; it is not based on the maximum possible usage. Is that not right?

DR. McNEIL: That's correct. We fine-tuned this about a year or two years ago and came to the conclusion that the estimate we use for that, in comparison to the actual expenditures, would be to base the calculation on just what the car travel would cost. That was an approximation as to what the actual costs were.

MR. BOGLE: But if we were to see the actual appearing as a column here – and we haven't asked for that breakdown, but if we were to see it – it would show that on a projected basis by the end of the fiscal year we'd be fairly close to the \$600,000 mark.

DR. McNEIL: Exactly. Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: That was my question too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

Are there any questions generally in here? Grande Prairie, perhaps you could meet with the Clerk and myself right after the meeting about that issue that you raised.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Calgary-Glenmore and then Edmonton-Whitemud.

MRS. MIROSH: On page 11, you have MLA constituency offices rental of office space. You're not estimating any rent increases?

DR. McNEIL: Well, again, what we've done here is reallocate part of that constituency . . .

MRS. MIROSH: To what? A constituency . . .

DR. McNEIL: A portion of the constituency office allowance we've reallocated under this budget category. Most of the funds here are based on the \$34,500 per member. If there's an increase in that allocation per member, then what we would do is we would increase our allocation to the rental area.

MRS. MIROSH: But it's under the 34 – whatever.

DR. McNEIL: The \$34,500. Right.

MRS. MIROSH: Right. This is separate from that?

AN HON. MEMBER: No. It's part of it.

MRS. MIROSH: Oh, I see. It's part of it.

DR. McNEIL: It's just that portion that, through experience, we've paid more rent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Taber-Warner on this point.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, back to Dianne. Unfortunately, Treasury requires of the administration a breakdown. You know, it would be so neat if we could put in constituency services allowance as a figure, but there's a requirement that it be broken down into various elements, which scatters it around on different pages and it makes it difficult for us as members to keep track of what we're doing. What we need to do is keep sight of the global figures that we approve, recognizing that a member has maximum flexibility within those global figures.

MRS. MIROSH: I see.

DR. McNEIL: One thing we can do, though, for the next meeting is – we'll change page 14, for example. Instead of saying "transfer to" a number, we'll say what that particular code is, so that it's easier for you to understand. Because on page 14 now that \$382,045 says "transfer to 712G00," which is the rentals.

MRS. MIROSH: Oh, okay. I see.

DR. McNEIL: As I say, you've got that big pool of money, \$2,863,500, and we're allocating that money to various categories, reflecting the experience: how much is used for rent, how much is used for paying staff, and so on. I appreciate that it is a bit confusing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your concern no doubt is related to the fact of the higher cost for renting within the Calgary market, which is very hot. But you have a similar difficulty, as was raised earlier by Mr. Wickman with regard to the motion about a 5 percent increase that's waiting here yet to come, that it relates in the constituency office allowance, that operation: that we can't take into account here the increase, for example, in the realty market in Calgary. It has to go back to changing a Members' Services order to give you a higher rate in terms of our individual allowance breakdown there, and then you, in turn, have to factor that into how you disseminate the money within your control, in your envelope.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, on that point: that's a problem because of the hot market. I may have to move out of my constituency office because it's just getting above and beyond, whereas other constituencies have an advantage because they can get lower rent.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. Not mine. I know; it's a real problem.

MRS. MIROSH: It's becoming a serious problem, particularly in the large urbans.

MS BARRETT: Exactly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I've got Edmonton-Whitemud, Cypress-Redcliff, Taber-Warner.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, first I'm becoming a bit

concerned about the time, because I have a number of specific questions on 6, 7, and 8 that I would like to ask before we adjourn today, so they can come back in January while we deal with the budget for those areas.

But on this particular one, is it now appropriate for me to make my motion to address the concern that Dianne has and the concern I have?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. I said when we got to the end of this, and I've got you still noted here right at the top of the list. You're the first motion. Okay? But I still recognize you with the issues you want to raise on pages – what was it? – 6, 7, and 8.

MR. WICKMAN: No, no; the sections 6, 7, and 8. I have a number of questions I want to ask today so the administration can bring that information back in January.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. Well, we'll try. Cypress-Redcliff, then Taber-Warner.

MR. HYLAND: Just a question. I notice, for example, fax machines. That's for the office, not for constituency offices. Is it for constituency office – and then, again, that's a transfer.

DR. McNEIL: Which page are we on?

MR. HYLAND: Eleven.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 11, section 2.

MR. HYLAND: I just wondered if that was an actual expenditure or another one of those transfers that . . .

DR. McNEIL: I'll have to check on that just to make sure. That's rental of fax machines. I'll check on that again and answer that when I'm talking to you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to ask committee members to give some consideration to striking a subcommittee prior to the end of today's meeting, so that we could look specifically at the question of rental accommodation space in offices. You know, as a committee, we've adjusted the mileage program to reflect rural constituencies and the need for rural members to travel longer distances. It may be there's a need to adjust to find a way to help those MLAs in urban centres where the rental costs have gone up very dramatically. I don't know what the solution is. I just think that rather than debating it around this table we may wish to have a subcommittee look at it and report back in January.

MS BARRETT: Hear, hear.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Has that got our agreement?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. In this case can we take one from each caucus?

MS BARRETT: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Mirosh, Wickman, and which one of your two? John? Okay. Thank you. If you'll take that under your wing, please. Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: Who's the chairman?

MS BARRETT: It doesn't really matter. If you pick up one from each party, it doesn't really matter.

MR. McINNIS: I'd just like to have somebody call it.

MRS. MIROSH: We'll call it. We'll set it.

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm not sure what the terms of that subcommittee were, it happened so fast, Mr. Chairman. Are you anticipating that there would be different rental allowances for different areas of the province?

MS BARRETT: Don't predetermine that.

MRS. MIROSH: The committee is to determine that.

MR. WICKMAN: I know. But why did you set up a committee if it doesn't have a mandate?

MS BARRETT: It does.

MR. WICKMAN: What's the mandate?

MS BARRETT: It's to look at the issue and make recommendations to the January meeting. You'll figure it out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You'll have the minutes. What I hear happening is from a rural member saying that since on the mileage/kilometre side extra consideration has been given to the rural members, in the case of this the subcommittee can go off and examine the fact that perhaps it's time to do it for the urban members with regard to this rental thing. Okay?

Other comments in general of this section? All right.

The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud wishes to put forward a motion with regard to one of these sections, which will have ramifications for a Members' Services order if indeed it is able to pass. The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the simplest way to put forward the motion rather than deal with individual portions of the budget here is that there be a 5 percent increase in the global constituency budget for each MLA. Speaking to that, Mr. Chairman, for example, in Edmonton-Whitemud I have a budget of roughly \$53,000. A 5 percent increase would be roughly . . . [interjection] That's counting all aspects of it, Dianne. The budget increase would be roughly \$2,500. As the member for that constituency, then, I would have to decide what portion of it I would use for salary increases for the staff and what portion to accommodate the rental increase. I know Calgary has a problem. My rent is going up 7.6 percent; I've already been told that. That's the terms of the lease. But the easiest way, rather than to start dealing with each component – and there are about three different components in the overall global budget and

because of that flexibility now in transferring the different aspects within that global budget, it's just simpler to pass a global motion that would apply to all components of the constituency budget. Then the Clerk could do the appropriate budgetary changes to reflect that increase.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, your motion, as it reads, is out of order.

MR. WICKMAN: May I ask why, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Because one of those components works on the basis of electors and formulas such as that. The best you could do would be to bring it to deal with your constituency office allowance, that portion of it, which is \$34,500 at the moment, because there are other factors in here that you cannot just determine with a 5 percent increase.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I realize that, though. But if the formula right now is \$2.40 per eligible voter for promotional items, for example, you would increase that \$2.40 by 5 percent. In other words . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, hon. member, I'll invite Parliamentary Counsel to . . .

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, just while we're doing that, I wonder if the member might be interested in referring that matter to the subcommittee that we just struck to look at the rents, because it is in the same area as the constituency office budgets.

AN HON. MEMBER: Five percent may not be enough if the rents are high.

MS BARRETT: That's right. Exactly.

MR. McINNIS: There's some complexity, because you've got the three elements in the budget, to try to work a package and bring it back.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, what the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is saying makes some sense, because I don't think you'll want to take one component . . .

MS BARRETT: Hallelujah.

MR. WICKMAN: Pardon me?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's all right. Carry on.

MR. WICKMAN: I don't think you'll want to take one component of an overall global budget and just deal with that in isolation. The rental situation, of course, varies between the urban centres. It even varies a lot between the rural and the urban. I think we have to look at the overall constituency budget, because simply increasing a rental cost, you know, isn't going to satisfy the concerns I have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So does the Chair take it that the member withdraws the motion, and then there would be an agreement of the group that that will be diverted to the subcommittee to reflect upon?

MS BARRETT: On that subject, may I say . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: First, will the Member withdraw the motion?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, I'll withdraw the motion. But in fairness to the other members here, I think you might want to reconsider the structure of the subcommittee, because we're going way beyond just a rental situation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. First off, agreement to withdraw the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The second issue. With regard to the subcommittee, perhaps we should go on . . .

MR. WICKMAN: I think it should consist of four people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Then in our normal subcommittee style it'd be two government members and one member from each of the other two parties. Agreed? Thank you.

MS BARRETT: Can I get in here on this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: In fact, that's exactly what I was going to suggest. Because the current structure is three city MLAs, might I suggest we make sure the additional government MLA is a rural MLA? I think that's important. Bob?

MRS. MIROSH: Is Bob rural?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Which Bob? Bob-bob? Bob-o-link? One of the Bobs.

MRS. MIROSH: Bob Elliott's rural?

MS BARRETT: Well, Bob, I think your experience would be better reflected on this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Taber-Warner? Okay. Because you're right; Grande Prairie is not rural even though it has a lot of mileage, acreage, within it. All right.

MS BARRETT: Good. So is that agreed to, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It seems agreed.

MS BARRETT: Good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair takes it that way. Then in that case the Chair will invite Taber-Warner to chair it, so you've got some . . .

Okay. Now, are we prepared to go on to House Services, item 3?

MS BARRETT: Please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clerk, are there any other comments with regard to House Services? This is where I jumped in about the

comment there.

DR. McNEIL: No, I don't think so. Are there any questions? Do you want to reiterate on that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, we've already mentioned that twice: hosting of the conference, down. As mentioned, the conference for Sergeants-at-Arms will be held in Edmonton in August, but that doesn't involve a large number of people. Okay?

MS BARRETT: Is this the section, Mr. Chairman, where the new person for Bills and Journals is added?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MS BARRETT: I'd just like to support that new position. I think it's more than needed and really appropriate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And long overdue.

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the one on page 3.

MS BARRETT: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right. Thank you.

Section 4, Speaker's Office. As pointed out, that's mainly due to the merit increase and reclassification in that area. Any questions at the moment with regard to section 4, Speaker's Office?

MR. McINNIS: This covers the deputy as well, right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. That's pages 7 and 8 in particular, where you pick up the rental of the vehicles for the three, the travel by presiding officers to a conference; for example, the Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chairman of Committees going with me to Toronto right after our next meeting for the annual meeting of the presiding officers. Then the additional funding for the Deputy Speaker, and that's in here too.

MS BARRETT: You must have some printer, if it only costs \$65. It's Panasonic; my goodness. What's that? Two pin?

DR. McNEIL: That's maintenance.

MS BARRETT: Oh, that's maintenance. Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, that's section 4.

Now, is it the wish of the committee to go to sections 5, 6, and 7 here, or are we going on to section 8? Anyone want . . .

MS BARRETT: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Section 5, Government Members. Comments? Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, would it maybe not be easier if we dealt with 5, 6, and 7 together or allowed the discussion to drift from one to the other?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't mind letting it drift between the

three.

MR. WICKMAN: Otherwise, I've got to ask the same question three times.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's a very cogent argument. Let's then let it drift. Okay.

MRS. MIROSH: Oh, terrible.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. I tried to figure out here . . . I tend to ignore all these little comments that are made very, very lightly, seeing they're coming from the good member there from Calgary.

Mr. Chairman, for the general caucus budget, can I get a breakdown - I don't need it today; it can come in January - for the three: the figure that is used per member, not only in '89-90 but also what's projected in '90-91, and then of course the figure per leader. In other words, I need a further breakdown to determine how these figures were arrived at. I've done some dividing, and if you look at the number of people in caucus, it doesn't match on that basis, even looking at the '89-90, which by rights I thought it should have, if I had taken into calculation one particular factor, which I did. So I'm not clear there.

Until I get that information, it's pretty hard to ask any additional questions, but one other point I would make - and this was raised yesterday, so I kind of feel an obligation to get it on the record - is the question of the third party House leader remuneration, which is shown here at a 188.8 percent increase. The increase of 188.8 percent referred to, with the exception of an allowance of 5 percent on top of the \$7,243, and of course the same 5 percent reflected in the basic MLA - Laurence Decore has issued a cheque to the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, which he gets a tax receipt for, but that's been taken into his calculations. In other words, the net benefit to him is the 5 percent, the same type of tax receipt that would be issued if a member were to return a cheque to the Provincial Treasurer. My understanding from questions I've asked is that if a member chooses to return dollars to the Provincial Treasurer, there is provision that that person can get an income tax receipt back. That's beside the point in the sense that Laurence Decore has taken into consideration the taxable benefit he would receive. So again I stress that the net benefit to him is 5 percent of the increase.

The second point that I want to clear up . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Whoa, whoa. I think, hon. member, you'd better stop and have a few other comments.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, that was raised, Mr. Chairman, so I want it on record as to what happened.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, maybe it is and maybe it isn't. You can't just give us 38 questions here at once and start rambling around. Can we come back to your first issue? We'll try to answer them one at a time.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, the question I asked . . . And I stated about the breakdown; I said I'm satisfied if I get that information at the January meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Questions on that point? First, I have Edmonton-Highlands, Cypress-Redcliff, then the Clerk.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not sure that that's going to be possible anymore, Percy. What happened last year is that Nick, your predecessor on this committee, sponsored a motion to not take a certain amount of increase on what was then called formula funding, the per MLA funding. That effectively skewed the process that had previously been in place. Since then you moved a motion, I believe in August, asking for the formula funding to be reinstated for the four new MLAs in your caucus but not for the four that had been returned to office. Because of that, the formula doesn't function anymore, so I'm not sure it would be relevant. As far I can see, technically, because of two motions within eight months from members of your caucus, that formula does not exist anymore and couldn't possibly show on the books. A formula is only a formula if it is applied consistently. When two motions from your caucus disrupted that concept, I think it became null.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I could respond, it was still my understanding that in a caucus budget a certain portion of that caucus budget is called the leader's budget.

MS BARRETT: It got axed. The concept was axed, Percy.

MR. WICKMAN: That is even axed?

MS BARRETT: Absolutely.

MRS. MIROSH: Your member made the motion.

MR. WICKMAN: When was that axed?

MS BARRETT: By Nick Taylor last year.

MR. WICKMAN: Going through the records and minutes of the Members' Services Committee, I didn't see any reference to him making a motion to axe that. What Nick Taylor did was he refused and voted against . . .

MS BARRETT: Might we suggest a lesson in logic? The logic is failing here. You either have a formula or you don't. In this case the concept was disrupted and then abandoned because of that. It was compounded by your own motion in August.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, that motion . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I've got a list here; sorry. Cypress-Redcliff; then I'll come back.

MR. HYLAND: I think the Member for Edmonton-Highlands made one of my points, so we don't need to go over that again. But my understanding here is that the numbers that appear, with the exception of the payments to members, the third party House leader - it all exists differently in each area - are the figures that were given by the caucus administration to the Legislative Assembly administration.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. HYLAND: They developed them themselves. That's what they wanted to operate the caucus budgets.

DR. McNEIL: Yes, and I have no knowledge of on what basis they were developed. That's up to the individual caucus, to develop those numbers and provide them to us to put in the book.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Clerk, you were up here. Does that answer what you were going to deal with?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

Back to Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Red Deer-North.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, in the discussion that took place in August, referring specifically to the *Hansard* translation, the \$16,000 is arrived at in conjunction with using a specific formula; in other words, a \$4,000 per member increase that had not been taken by the former Liberal caucus representative on this. So I'm not sure where the Member for Edmonton-Highlands is coming from when she's saying that there's no regard for formula anymore. Mr. Chairman, the letter I sent to David was done on the basis of recognition of a formula there of so much per member. I had that discussion with David ahead of time, and he's aware that that's the interpretation from my point of view. In my letter we were talking in terms of \$32,000 per member plus \$4,000 more for those four new members, and then hopefully having the budget come in with the \$4,000 more for each of the four members that Nick Taylor chose not to support an increase for. Now, where did this come from, I'd like to ask the Member for Edmonton-Highlands, that this whole process was scrapped? It certainly wasn't because of what I did in August.

MS BARRETT: I suppose it has to do with a certain logic, if I might answer, Mr. Chairman. The assumption and the debate, which by the way was very extensive, I can assure you, in 1986 and 1987 at this table, was that either you have a formula or you do not. You don't have several or even more than one formulae. You either have it or you don't. The concept itself was disrupted last February by your predecessor on this committee. We have effectively functioned, by request from your caucus, since then on the basis of request as opposed to a formula. The formula no longer applies. So I don't see how you can get the information that you want. Now, you could extrapolate it, Percy, but if you want that done - I mean, I've already done it for your section right now, for instance. I can do an extrapolation for you, but I think what you're asking this committee to do is to reinstate what your caucus asked us to abandon twice in a row. If that's the case, you may want to put that out as a separate motion, and that would be fine. But I think at this point we have operated on the assumption that the formula no longer applies.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, that's an assumption, Mr. Chairman, I think the member is making. I don't see what Nick Taylor did as throwing out the whole baby with the . . .

MS BARRETT: Why don't you test it, then, and see the will of the committee? See if, you know . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Well, I have to go by the *Hansard* recording. That's the official record, and there's no reference in there. In

any case, Mr. Chairman, yes, in January I do intend – I will make a motion that the allowance for each member be on a formula basis. That's the way it should be. You can't have a disparity in the basic allowance for members. It just isn't correct.

MS BARRETT: That's interesting. That's what we tried to tell you and you predecessor.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, you didn't try and tell me that.

MS BARRETT: Oh, we did.

MR. WICKMAN: No, you didn't. I fought to get that restored, if you recall correctly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, folks, that's enough. I'm not going to have this back and forth lead to a "yes, I did; no, I didn't" routine.

MS BARRETT: Sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Red Deer-North, followed by Taber-Warner.

MR. DAY: I'll pass, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: I just wanted to ask, Mr. Chairman, if, when we do come back in January, the Clerk would have a breakdown on a per member basis of the three budgets so we can see what it does work out to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right; taken. Thank you.

MR. DAY: Another point, then, that seems to have some movement. I just want to clarify the relevance of a member on this committee sharing with the rest of the committee what they do with their money. I don't know if that has any bearing whatsoever on our deliberations. Yesterday a question was asked, a pertinent question, in terms of a Liberal leader using his extra dollars to go to a certain conference. The suggestion was made that he's given a lot of his dollars away, yet there was a motion brought to this table, then, to try and get the Legislative Assembly to pay for certain elements of travel. I just find the whole line somewhat odious, and I just wonder, as a suggestion to members, if we could . . . We all give money to good causes, be it government or whatever, and if we could reserve that for people who might get excited about it – but I don't think it has any bearing on our deliberations here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: I agree. It was raised by somebody else yesterday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

As earlier noted, the Chair has to leave for another function. Before I do that, you may wish to continue indeed. In that case the vice-chairman can take over.

There was an item circulated in the break which is a slight

rewording of the motion which was proposed by the Member for Grande Prairie and carried by the table with regard to the use of supplies and equipment in a member's home residence. This was circulated by Parliamentary Counsel. It makes it quite clear as to the use of the equipment and supplies by the member or persons operating them on his behalf in connection with the member's official duties.

DR. ELLIOTT: I find it acceptable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Do we have agreement that this be the wording of the motion that was passed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? It's carried unanimously. Thank you.

MR. HYLAND: Now, we're sure we're not going to redraft one or two more times before we accept it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hope not. Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, just on the question of the meeting, the meeting was advertised to run from 9:30 a.m. until 12 noon. I don't know about others, but I do have a commitment at 12.

MRS. MIROSH: I do too.

MR. BOGLE: So I believe we should stay with the original schedule.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Might we also look at the date of the next meeting? We may now need two days to meet.

MR. McINNIS: I think it would be wise to have a backup date.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A number of hands are flying. Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: I have a point of privilege that I want to raise, too, when I get the chance, Mr. Chairman, just to clear the record on something.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You might not have anybody here to deal with it at this point.

MR. WICKMAN: No; simply to read something into the record.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you.

Could we deal with a date first then? Okay, the date proposed for the next meeting was Thursday, January 18, at 9:30 in the morning, all day. Is it the feeling of the committee that we can through all these budgets in one day?

MR. BOGLE: Better have a backup date.

MS BARRETT: How about the following day?

MR. BOGLE: I have a question about February 1. That was one day we had checked, February 1.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, February 1. Sounds distant; sounds good. That's what makes it sound good.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, that's right.

MR. BOGLE: Also 9:30 a.m.?

MR. CHAIRMAN: February 1, 9:30 a.m.

MS BARRETT: What day does that fall on?

MR. HYLAND: That's next year.

MR. BOGLE: Thursday. They're both Thursdays.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next decade. Thursday the first.

All right. [interjection] No, not quite. I suppose I have a matter of privilege that . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the other point that was raised yesterday was the question of Bettie Hewes being the House Whip and the House leader, and where that money is going to. I indicated that the money goes directly into the caucus. I was incorrect there, and I want to just have that corrected on the record. She turns that money over as a contribution to the Alberta Liberal Party, which is probably one of the best charitable causes in the province. In any case, then the Alberta Liberal Party makes a donation to the Liberal caucus; it does not go directly to the Liberal caucus from Bettie Hewes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But she still has to deal with the income tax department.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. She deals with that problem through an accountant.

MR. DAY: And the tax credit.

MR. WICKMAN: The whole bit.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Edmonton-Jasper Place, Red Deer-North. [interjections] Order please.

MR. McINNIS: I recall reading in the newspaper that the Liberal caucus, or some members, were refusing the increase. Yesterday I learned that they'd taken it and were giving it back to the Treasury. Today I learned one is giving it to a private foundation for a tax credit, and another is giving it to a political party where it goes back to the use and benefit of the members. Just an observation: I think this thing has come full circle.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Somebody else? I saw an arm. Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: In keeping with the season, Mr. Chairman, I think I would speak on behalf of all the members, and I'd like to put forward a motion of thanks to you for the better part of a decade, or close to half a decade, of supervising . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: It feels like a decade.

MRS. MIROSH: My, how time flies.

MR. DAY: We know it has probably felt longer to you at times. But just a motion of gratitude for being able to keep the reins on a multiparty committee as such and keep it in good shape.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. It helps to have a good committee and a really excellent support group.

MR. DAY: We didn't actually have a vote. Did you want to vote on it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm afraid to put some issues to a vote. Any other points that need . . . Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: I think you'd better get his point first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Clerk?

DR. McNEIL: I just wanted to say that if there are any questions between now and the 18th re the budget, please don't hesitate to contact me.

MRS. MIROSH: I will.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Except Christmas Day. Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: I move we adjourn till 9:30 a.m. on January 18.

MS BARRETT: All those in favour, leave.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. All those in favour, please rise. Oh, wait a minute. We've now voted; is there another point, Edmonton-Whitemud?

MR. WICKMAN: I'm just voting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, thank you. No more issues.

[The committee adjourned at 12:04 p.m.]

