

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

[9:44 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Good morning, Mr. Carter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Give us a break; give us a break. We're all in our places with sunshiny . . .

Okay. You've got the proposed agenda in front of you. In that regard, if we have, first off, errors or omissions or anything else you'd like to add under New Business . . . Nothing strikes you immediately?

MS BARRETT: It looks fine to me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Approval for the agenda?

MS BARRETT: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The next question is not on the agenda. According to *Beauchesne* a committee sets its own standards as to how it operates and so forth. In our previous existence - Members' Services Committee - we had agreed that on the day of the meeting the agenda, when approved, could be handed out to representatives of the media, who may or may not be here. Since this is a new Members' Services Committee and we haven't had to deal with this before, I'm open to the fact that perhaps we continue to do this.

MS BARRETT: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. Carried unanimously. Now we can hand out copies of agendas. [interjection]

MS BARRETT: So what? The majority rules, kiddo. If you don't stick your hand up to say no, he's got no choice but to interpret it that way.

MRS. BLACK: He didn't ask for the nays.

MS BARRETT: You're being told how to do your job.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So what's new?

MR. McINNIS: Let's have a ruling on whether it's unanimous or not.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you like to record the fact that the motion was not unanimous? Mrs. Black would like to signify that she was opposed to . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Would you sisters get your act together?

MS BARRETT: I have a badge to this effect downstairs. I'll get you one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right; now we'll find out. Was this serious? Was it passed unanimously?

MRS. BLACK: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. It was not passed unanimously. There was one opposed.

All right; item 3(a). Now, this is the approval of the minutes of our two meetings immediately prior to Christmas. First, I'd like to mention that because of changeover of equipment over the Christmas holiday period, plus the time of the holidays, we apologize that we weren't able to get all these minutes together until late yesterday. So the Chair would not feel it untoward if members of the committee did not want to make approval of the minutes until the next meeting, but I leave it to the pleasure of the committee.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have a question that does pertain to the minutes. That question is in reference to comments that were made at the last meeting about the formula for the allowances for members, that formula being broken or shot down by myself and Nick Taylor. My question is that I would like some information, if anyone has any information, as to when some specific action took place that would have seen that formula destroyed. Because my research of minutes, even going back to the days when Nick Taylor was here, is that there was no motion on the books that in fact took away that formula.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Which day are we dealing with? The 21st or the 22nd?

MR. WICKMAN: The 22nd.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Could we first deal with the 21st?

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I haven't seen the minutes at all at this point. I'm open to taking your offer to defer them until I've had a chance to look at them.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does that apply to both the 21st and the 22nd?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you. Any further discussion? Okay. Moved by Edmonton-Jasper Place that the approval of minutes of December 21 and 22 be held over until the next meeting, which is projected to be February 1 at this stage. Is there a call for the question?

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed, if any? This one is carried unanimously. Thank you.

With regard to the issue as raised by the Member for Edmon-

ton-Whitemud, does anyone care to respond, or do you want to hold that until the next meeting?

MS BARRETT: Well, I would be prepared to respond. Percy might be right; there might never have been a specific motion on the record. But I mean most of the members on this committee were also present last year when Nick moved to freeze the formula for his caucus at that time. It might not have been phrased that way, but it certainly had that effect. It was the understanding, I think, of everybody. I recognize that this is not an identical committee, but we in large measure have the same members. That was the understanding, you know: that if one caucus moves away from the formula, then the formula just didn't exist any more.

MR. BOGLE: Agreed.

MR. WICKMAN: You know, Mr. Chairman, I really object to what's happening. Going back, doing a bit of research: Nick Taylor did not move to freeze the formula; he simply moved to freeze the increase for that particular year. If we talk in terms of understanding, I clearly had an understanding that the budget would come in this year reflecting the equal amount per member for all MLAs in all three caucuses, with the exception, of course, of the cabinet ministers, who get their resources from other budgets. I don't think two members of this committee have the right to just announce that a formula is gone. If you're going to destroy the formula . . .

MS BARRETT: No, it wasn't just two members. I mean it really . . .

MR. WICKMAN: . . . put a motion on it.

MS BARRETT: Pardon me?

MR. WICKMAN: You're making an assumption that Nick Taylor meant to do something, to destroy a formula. I've talked with him. That was not his intent. The reference is made in the minutes that I assisted in destroying that formula, and I don't know how because I wasn't even here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Cypress-Redcliff, followed by Taber-Warner.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I think the formula that was there in days gone by was that once an amount was agreed to, that amount would be moved for each caucus budget. That's how the formula is arrived at. There was never saying that the formula shall be X. It was that once we agreed what the caucus budgets would be, it was multiplied out by the number of members in that caucus. The appropriate motion was made. The last time the budget was set, that was done for the Conservative caucus, it was done for the NDP caucus. Then Mr. Taylor chose to use a different number for his caucus.

MR. KOWALSKI: It was also done for the Representative Party caucus.

MR. HYLAND: Yes, and for the Representative caucus. Mr. Taylor chose to use a different number on a per capita basis to achieve his amount. That's where the formula fell. It maybe wasn't written by motion "it shall be," but the minutes say that

the amount per caucus would be whatever the dollar amount would be, and that was how that dollar amount was arrived at. The only way one would see why or how, and see the comment that we tried to talk Mr. Taylor out of that, would be in the transcripts and not in the motions.

MR. BOGLE: Well, the only other item I'd like to add to what Alan has said is that the committee went on to caution Nick. We asked the questions point blank. Are you here representing your three colleagues? Are they aware of what you're doing? Do they agree and concur in what you're doing? The answer was in the affirmative. We reluctantly accepted the motion put forward by Nick. That in effect killed the formula that we had been using because it was a formula that applied to all caucuses in the Assembly.

I really believe this item should be held until we get into the caucus budgets in the overall budget process, and we can then deal with it. Because, Percy, you will recall that I did ask the Clerk if he could provide us with information on what the proposed increases would mean on a per member basis for the three caucuses. But rather than getting into that right now, I move that we table the item and that it be brought back once we get into the three caucus budgets.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under item 5(c), motion to table those to later in the agenda. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. So on your agenda under 5(c): that's the area when we come to caucus budgets, where it would normally fall. Thank you.

Item 4(a), Transportation and Administrative Services Orders. The Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I move to table until this afternoon this item and the following one, as no discussion has taken place on the matters.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We'd better do them one at a time, just to keep it procedurally correct.

MS BARRETT: Okay, sure. I'll move to table it till this afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried.

Item 4(b). Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Similarly, I move to table till this afternoon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Okay.

Item 4(c). Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. The motion in the last meeting: that the cost implications of continuing benefits coverage for former Members at their choice and cost, as well as cost implications relevant to spousal insurance beyond the present \$10,000 be referred to the Administration office for research . . . In terms of the first issue there, the continuing benefits coverage, we're still exploring the implications of that. The most critical one relates to extending Blue Cross coverage or extended health care coverage in that the experience under the plan – if you have more and more members on it, it will likely increase the cost to members and former members the more members and the older the members there are on the plan. So we're

trying to get a little more detail on that particular issue. So that aspect of that research is still to be done.

With respect to the dependant life coverage, I have a handout here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, David. Any comments?

DR. McNEIL: The essence of the material is that the dependant life coverage can be increased only to a certain extent within the constraints of what would be considered reasonable by the insurer to cover final arrangements and still be included under the government plan. If there was a desire to increase it significantly beyond the present level, we'd have to explore that with the insurance company, because it would likely have to be under a separate plan. We haven't asked for a particular quotation as to what it would cost, for example, if we raised this coverage to, let's say, the spouse \$12,000 and the child \$6,000, or \$15,000 and the child \$10,000. We haven't explored specifics; we've just explored it in a general sense.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One of the significant paragraphs is that last one. This is something I have known, that this amount of \$10,000 coverage on the spouse and the \$5,000 for a child is really basically to cover final arrangements and funeral costs. It's not seen as being an insurance plan. So, hon. members, what's your pleasure, just to take it as information?

MR. WICKMAN: I'll move to take it as information, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Edmonton-Whitemud. Discussion? Question?

MS BARRETT: Question.

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

The other item carried forward on the minutes, 4(d). Again, information, I believe.

DR. McNEIL: Yes. Under tab 4(d) the second page just indicates the Treasury release related to the 1990 cost of living adjustments for public service pensioners and indicates the seven pension plans that will receive a cost of living adjustment of 3.25 percent.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I raised the question in light of, first, our decision on the request by Mr. Anders Aalborg, a former Treasurer of the province of Alberta, to meet with the committee, and we did make a decision at that time that it would not be proper to do so as questions of pension, and more specifically indexing of pensions, properly belong with the Provincial Treasurer.

I shared with the committee at our meeting of, I believe, December 21 that in a meeting I had with Mr. Bill Broad and members of the retired public employees' association, Lethbridge chapter, I realized that in terms of an appeal the former employees were dealing with the Provincial Treasurer and the Provincial Treasurer's department alone. There was no other group of elected members that they met with, either in terms of caucuses of the various political parties represented in the Assembly or standing or select committees of the Assembly. That shed some light on the situation which I wasn't aware of

when we made our decision on the Aalborg case, so I brought the matter back so members could think about whether or not they felt it appropriate for either the Members' Services Committee or a subcommittee of Members' Services to extend an invitation to Mr. Aalborg and Mr. Broad and hear them out, recognizing fully that we do not have a legislative mandate to make changes to the pension plan.

On the other hand, we do have the ability and right and responsibility to recommend changes where we believe changes are warranted. Members will recall we've done that in the past on at least one pension amendment which was subsequently approved by the government and, indeed, the Assembly. Therefore, I think we should address the issue now – we've had almost a month to think about it – and decide whether or not we wish to entertain the thought of either the full committee or at least a subcommittee meeting with representatives from the association and Mr. Aalborg to hear their concerns.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Discussion.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I have no objection to meeting with the delegation and hearing their concerns, but it's not quite the case that they had nowhere else to go. I know that our caucus has met with the retired employees' association on a number of occasions, probably preceding Mr. Broad's presidency. I think he's relatively recent in that particular post. The thing I think we should keep in mind, though, is that pension income is an element of compensation. It's part of pay. Now, there are a number of groups that are affected there. There are retired employees; there are present employees who are part of all seven plans. And in part this could be considered quite the bargaining matter between employees and the government, so I think we should be cautious about the extent to which this committee wants to get involved. The issue extends beyond the group we've met with, the already retired people. It extends to people who are presently in scope as well, so we should keep in mind that we are into a very big issue here. I have no objection to meeting with them; it's just that we should try to keep some perspective on the role of this committee in relation to the whole issue.

MR. BOGLE: That's a fair caution.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, when we're talking in terms of meeting with retired public employees, clearly we're dealing with a situation that is beyond the scope of this committee. We've had opportunity to meet with people who have expressed concern on the indexing of pensions in the past, but if we open this committee up to start hearing representation from the general public – if this is what we're talking in terms of here – there are all types of issues that members of the public may want to bring forth. I don't believe we're talking here in terms of the pensions as they apply to the MLAs. My interpretation of Mr. Bogle's remarks is that he's talking in terms of the pensions as they apply to retired public employees. So that's clearly beyond our jurisdiction.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: Well, just for clarification, Mr. Chairman, we're talking about retired employees who fall under one or several of the various pension plans administered by government. The MLA pension plan is one of them, public service pension plan

is another, management pension plan is a third, and so on.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Bogle, when I read the comments here, though, it specifically refers to public employees. I wasn't aware that you were . . .

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mr. Aalborg as a former Provincial Treasurer was here speaking on behalf of former MLAs.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm referring to the references to Bill Broad and . . .

MR. BOGLE: I used both. Are you not the member of the committee who brought forward the original request about Mr. Aalborg?

MR. WICKMAN: I brought it forward, but we didn't support it at that particular time because it was ruled at that time that this committee was not appropriate. If it's not appropriate for Mr. Aalborg, it certainly isn't appropriate for members of the public. I think we all agreed at that time that it's not within our jurisdiction to hear Mr. Aalborg.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, for clarification, to the Member for Taber-Warner. First of all, there is no indexing of pensions in the province of Alberta. There may be a series of isolated pension plans unrelated to one another, but we do not have indexing of pensions in the province of Alberta. There's a periodic review, usually done on an annual basis, to see if there will be an adjustment to those pensions, but it's not based on the premise, the theory, or the philosophy that there is a mandatory indexing of pensions in our province.

Secondly, and this is the specific. Mr. Bogle, in essence you're suggesting that a subcommittee of this committee meet with a group representing retired MLAs, the purpose of which would be to what, in your view? Have them petition? Or is this their position, that they want to petition this committee to have indexing of pensions or to have a . . .

MR. BOGLE: First of all, if I may, I'm well aware and I think the committee's aware that we don't index pensions in Alberta. The fact I was not aware of when we discussed Mr. Aalborg's request was that we are one of only three governments in Canada that does not index its pensions for retired employees and servants of the Assembly.

Secondly, as pointed out by John, the former public servants may have met with the New Democratic caucus in the past. Mr. Broad's information to me was they had nowhere else to go. They were dealing with Mr. Johnston as Provincial Treasurer. They were not dealing with a cabinet committee or a standing or a select committee of the Assembly. So the question I raised and put on the table was: given that new information, Percy – and that's why I had a change of heart from the earlier discussion on the Anders Aalborg request – would it be appropriate for the committee to hear them out, to listen to the arguments that are to be made, recognizing fully we are not a decision-making committee in this area. But as we have done in the past, we could certainly, if persuaded, make recommendations to those who are decision-makers regarding pensions; i.e., the Provincial Treasurer and the Cabinet.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Parliamentary Counsel, in your estimation it would be fine for this committee to have a subcommittee

struck if it wished to meet with either or both of these groups?

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, the question really has two parts. One is whether this committee can actually make a change. Of course, I'm sure all members appreciate that although we have authority to create benefits for former members, which Mr. Aalborg would be, because the pension aspect of benefits for former members has been occupied by legislation, we can't actually change legislation. However, I believe this committee could consider issues coming from this legislation and make recommendations to the Provincial Treasurer with respect to former members.

Whether the committee wishes to look at other aspects of pensioned indexing as background to this question is something for the committee to determine. The benefits which this committee can generally pass orders on or recommend on are clearly those relating to members and former members, and the committee also has the responsibility of dealing with benefits for public servants of the Assembly. But if the committee wished to look at and listen to representations on indexing as a general issue as a background to considering whether it will make a recommendation for former members, I think that's for the committee to determine. I think it could do that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For former members.

MR. M. CLEGG: It could do that for former members and for present members, and I think if it felt it necessary to brief itself on pension indexing in general, that would be something the committee could determine: whether or not they should go that far.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about for former members of the public service?

MR. M. CLEGG: I think anything which affects former members, whether they be MLAs or former members of the public service, is tied to the present plan and would be something which is part of the plan legislation. I think it's something which we could look at and recommend on if the committee decided that that was something they wanted to do, without, of course, being able to make any final resolution on the matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, if I understand it, basically this is being premised on a supposition that former employees have nowhere to go and, in this particular case, former Members of the Legislative Assembly, and this being a Members' Services Committee, presumably you could tie the two in and say, "Well, fine." If we're looking at current members' services, you might want to say, then, "Fine; all former MLAs, if somehow they were to get together, could come and make a submission to this particular committee." On the basis that if it's important to have former anybody have an opportunity to speak to somebody in the present, presumably then former MLAs could only speak with members who are currently part of a current Members' Services Committee. On that basis if the committee suggested that we should go and have a discussion with former MLAs, I have no difficulty with that at all, whether it be a formal meeting between the whole Members' Services Committee or a subcommittee.

But virtually every other group that would fall under a pension

plan in this province already has an outlet, has an opportunity to meet with someone. For former members of the public service there is a management cabinet committee that does exist that they certainly could talk to if they chose to. There are several ministers who would have an involvement in one way or another. The local authorities pension plan – there are local authorities. They have existing provincewide organizations today. Whether it be the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, the AUMA, the universities academic pension plan, the special forces pension plan, the public service management pension plan, or the judges and masters in chamber pension plan, there is an existing provincial outlet for them to deal with. The only group I can see that wouldn't have one would be those who would fall under the category of former MLAs. To my knowledge there is no such thing as a group that they have that represents the mass, so who would we be dealing with? Whoever comes forward would have to say that he or she represents the former MLAs, but there'd be several hundred, and we may just be listening to individual petitions. To me that would be part of the difficulty: determining who we are listening to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Member for Edmonton-Highlands, and then perhaps someone might formulate a motion, please.

MS BARRETT: Sorry, Pat had her hand up first, actually.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, as long as your seatmate agrees, because I didn't see her with her hand up.

MS BARRETT: Oh, I did.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you.

MRS. BLACK: I think, as Ken has said, there are a lot of groups to be dealt with here. I'm wondering if we could possibly table this item until the next meeting. We could have a little more chance to deal with exactly what groups we're potentially going to be looking at and deal with it at our next meeting. I'd like to make a motion to that effect.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion to table. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried.

The question arises: who is going to determine who we are going to be dealing with in this examination for the next meeting?

MS BARRETT: Well, I think that's the reason it was tabled, so we can talk about that, get some heads together, and then make a proposal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I'll work on the theory that there's going to be a representative from each caucus meeting with each other. Thank you.

MS BARRETT: Good assumption.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

At this time I would like to introduce to you all the new executive assistant, Robert Day. I'm sure you'll come to find him of some use to you in trying to be helpful with regard to the operation of the whole Assembly on a nonpartisan basis.

MRS. MIROSH: We have to teach him first, right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: To be nonpartisan? Interesting concept.

The other thing I would like to mention to each of you, and through you back to your caucuses: a word of appreciation from my mother and my sisters and myself for the expression of condolence on the death of my father and also for your cards and the flowers that were there on behalf of all the Assembly. We thank you very much for that. It was very meaningful. I know that my father was a great respecter of institutions, especially the parliamentary institution, having come from England himself, and he was very much in awe of this building and the people who work here. I know for a fact that he kept all of us, collective "all of us," in his daily prayers. So again, thank you very much for your support.

Item 4(e), Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: Due to the unavailability of the Clerk and chiefs of staff at various times over the past three weeks, we have not dealt with this, have not had the opportunity to meet and discuss this issue further, so it probably should be tabled for a subsequent meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's take it in the vein of ongoing.

MS BARRETT: So moved.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. What item is being tabled, specifically?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Four (e).

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, the caucus and constituency allowance expenditures?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The guidelines. It's just a matter of trying to get the various people together.

MR. WICKMAN: You're talking about the guidelines for the printed material sent out by MLAs?

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. WICKMAN: I thought the motion I had moved, that the draft guidelines were sufficient and be accepted as information, was carried. What more is there to deal with?

MS BARRETT: Well, that was as information. You'll see that the final motion on the matter from December 22 was mine, which was

that Parliamentary Counsels' memoranda distributed the previous day be forwarded to the chiefs of staff for further consideration and recommendation, with input from the Clerk.

The Clerk has just reported that because of holidays and other reasons for unavailability, the chiefs of staff and the Clerk have not been able to get together, and recommended a motion to table until they can do that to bring their recommendations forward. So I have moved to table.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There were two motions with regard to that material. The first one was indeed yours and was carried, as has been explained by Edmonton-Highlands, and you see that minute there, Edmonton-Whitemud, on the second page of section 3(d).

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, I see it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Tabling motion. Those in favour? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Item 4(f), Report from Subcommittee Studying Rental Accommodation Space for Constituency Offices. The Member for Taber-Warner was co-opted or volunteered or . . .

MRS. MIROSH: No, it was . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: However, I believe someone else was then able to pick it up and carry it.

MR. BOGLE: That's correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the subcommittee of myself, John McInnis, and Dianne Mirosh met and discussed the item. As a result of that subcommittee meeting, I have two recommendations which I will distribute. This is the first recommendation. I'll just pass it around here.

Just to explain briefly, Mr. Chairman. What the first recommendation does is make the adjustment to the fiscal budget as a result of a decision this committee made that would allow staff in constituency offices to tap into the employee benefit package that is available to all provincial employees. As a result of that, we were informed that the cost for constituencies based on an average salary of \$20,000 would run, I believe it was, roughly \$2,000. But the motion reflects the actual cost. Well, it's actually \$1,750. That's an average per constituency. There was no way of saying that one constituency should receive more than the other because their staff payroll may be higher. That's one motion that simply covers that cost, which is going to be charged back to the constituency office, not to any other budget.

In addition to that, a recommendation was made that constituency office budgets be increased by 5 percent in each of the three categories of office allowance, communications, promotions. In other words, the net increase is 5 percent, effective April 1. Now I'll pass these around.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We can distribute them, and then we're going to deal with the first one in its entirety before we go on to the second, so you'll have it there.

At the moment the Chair recognizes Edmonton-Jasper Place, followed by Cypress-Redcliff, on motion 1.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me half a moment; sorry.

Edmonton-Whitemud, you're moving that first motion?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

All right, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Members might think it a little bit odd at first that a committee struck to deal with office rents comes back with a recommendation on staff benefits, but I think the explanation is fairly simple. We looked at data on what various constituencies pay for office rent, we looked at average rents

between rural and urban in different markets in the province, and we tried to devise a formula that would equalize or in some way make those burdens equitable between both of them. We ran into a problem, which is not an unfamiliar one to me: I think everybody has different arrangements. It is true that rents are considerably higher in urban areas, but it's also true that rural members have larger areas to serve, and some of them rent multiple offices for that purpose. They have more than one office space, so it was difficult to compare that way. Others don't have an office; they have a number of personnel who operate offices out of their various residences throughout.

So I think we came to a point where it seemed unlikely we could come up with a formula that would be fair across the board in dealing with the question of rent. The formula we have in place is a per capita, per voter formula for the most part, with a basic office allowance, and I think we have enough things in our formula already and enough unfairness between urban and rural that the members of this committee don't want to create any further inequities in a formula, and maybe we can even deal with some of the others later on.

So this first motion reflects the fact that the committee in the last year made benefits available which weren't previously to the staff but no funding to provide for those benefits. Obviously the question of benefits and pay is negotiated between a member and his or her staff, but this at least makes the capability there to provide the benefits which were provided for in the previous motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, my question is on both motions. It seems to me that the motion we have before us is for 5 percent or thereabouts. The second motion is then on top of that motion? So we're looking at 10 then; it's the same motion?

MR. WICKMAN: No, there are two separate motions there, Mr. Chairman. Maybe you don't have both copies of them.

MR. HYLAND: I've got both copies, but I'm wondering what the total is. I'm trying to figure where the 5 percent is and if it's included in the \$36,000 or if this second motion is then on top of the \$36,000.

MR. WICKMAN: Let me explain again, Mr. Chairman. First of all, because we've got two separate decisions, the decision that was made in the current fiscal period allowing for the benefits to staff and constituency offices – that adjustment would first take place, the \$1,750 that would cover that. Then on top of that, for the next fiscal period the global budget for each constituency office which covers the three categories – office, communications, and promotions – would increase by 5 percent. If you want to get specific as to what the \$1,750 relates to in terms of a percentage on the existing budget, the average budgets run between \$45,000, maybe \$46,000, \$47,000. So if you did some calculation there, you're looking at – what? – 2.5, 3 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's clarification.

MR. WICKMAN: That's simply, though, to cover the cost of the decision that was made here several months ago.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Back to Cypress-Redcliff, then Edmonton-Highlands, Taber-Warner.

MR. HYLAND: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: I know I'm jumping the gun here, but there's usually a separate item, I think, that we deal with through the members' handbook related to postage. Is this correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

MS BARRETT: So this is separate from that. Okay, that answers my question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: I'd like to ask a couple of questions for clarification. Under our present staffing of constituency offices, members may opt for one of two plans. One is a contract plan and the other is a plan where the employee is treated more like an employee, with the benefits and so on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For hiring of the staff.

MR. BOGLE: For hiring of the staff. Do we know the approximate breakdown of members now and how many are on contract and how many are in . . .

DR. McNEIL: That's shifting quite drastically. I would say at this point it's probably around 50-50, but that's shifting. All the constituency office staff are on contracts, but some are on contracts of employment which give the member the option to provide them with some or all of the benefits or none of the benefits.

MR. BOGLE: I would like to correct one bit of information for Percy's benefit. When we expanded somewhat the benefits area for employees, the point was made very clearly at that time that it would be the member's responsibility to cover the extra benefits out of the constituency office allocation. That was not an expectation that would be hoisted onto the next budget. So it's clear that members have the right to do that for their employees, but it's also clear from the motion we made some months ago that the added costs be borne by the member through the existing allowance, not passed on to and in expectation that there be an increased benefit in the future.

MR. WICKMAN: I recognize that, Mr. Chairman. That's why I brought the motion forward to . . .

MR. BOGLE: Well, I'm commenting on the comments you made earlier about an expectation that we would address it now.

A final comment I'd make is that I do have some difficulty with the latter phrasing in your motion where you tie it specifically to office staff benefits. I'm not sure how that would relate to those members who use a contractual approach, and I think there could be some ambiguity. I think your motion would be clearer if you proposed an increase in the constituency office allowance portion of the members' services allowance.

MR. WICKMAN: I have no objection to that change, Mr. Chairman. In fact, those are words of wisdom.

MR. BOGLE: Okay. We'd stop, then, after "April 1, 1990."

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, could we not say "to reflect . . ." Okay. That's fine. Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. I take this is an amendment.

MR. WICKMAN: I have no objection to it being changed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to see whether the whole committee objects though. I'll take this as an amendment, Taber-Warner, to delete the words after "1990" in motion 1.

Speaking to that amendment, the deletion, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Yeah. I think that makes a lot of sense. With employees who are on contract, they're responsible for their own benefits and their own deductions and all the rest of it. Obviously, if they're going to have benefits, they have to take the money from somewhere, and some of the members may want to increase their allowance so they can go and purchase their own benefits. The amendment is essentially a friendly one. I support it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Question on the amendment.

MS BARRETT: Yup. Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the deletion, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Back to the main motion as amended, as truncated. Taber-Warner, followed by Barrhead.

MR. BOGLE: Well, one other question. I apologize I was unable to make the date that was convenient for the other three members, so I wasn't at the meeting that discussed this. But the primary reason the committee was struck was to address the increased office rental costs, primarily in our cities, and I must express a little disappointment that we aren't coming in with some kind of provision that would help the urban areas.

MR. McINNIS: That's the second motion.

MR. BOGLE: Well, that's across the board. If it would more appropriately be addressed in the second motion, I'll withdraw my remarks and make them at that point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.
Barrhead then.

MR. KOWALSKI: For clarification, Mr. Chairman. This subcommittee was composed of three representatives. Is this correct?

MR. WICKMAN: Four, but one was unable to make it.

MR. KOWALSKI: The three were Mr. McInnis . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Dianne and Pam.

MR. KOWALSKI: Oh, Ms Barrett?

MRS. MIROSH: No, John.

MR. WICKMAN: Or John. I'm sorry; it's John.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Wickman and Mrs. Mirosch. This was a unanimous recommendation made to the Members' Services Committee from the subcommittee?

MRS. MIROSH: Yes.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, that's the clarification I really wanted.

MR. WICKMAN: With the exception of Bob, because he wasn't there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, of the three who were there, one from each caucus.

All righty. Call for the question on the motion.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I could move the second motion and speak to it briefly. We wrestled with that whole question of how we attack the problem of rent, and there were a number of factors we saw. In my own constituency I probably pay the highest rent per square foot, more so than the constituency offices in Calgary. Maybe I've got prime space. I'm not sure why it is so costly. But when we had that material – and we don't have the material today, obviously, that we had at the committee – it showed that the costs being paid for by rural MLAs and urban MLAs really don't differ that much because rural MLAs in a lot of cases have contracts for three or four different locations for space. Ray Speaker, I believe, has 12. In other words, he's contracted with 12 different people throughout his riding. So it was really impossible to get a handle on that.

The other fear we had is that if the landlords realized that up to a portion could be capped – let's say an extra allowance of \$300 or \$400 a month, whatever, for rent in areas where there are rental increases, like Calgary and Edmonton – they are going to realize there is that additional budget there and they're going to go after it.

Then I guess the last factor, at least from my point of view, is that many of us are into leases. I'm into a three-year lease that was just signed after the election that spells out what my increases are. So to try and be fair, we saw that in addition to the discrepancy in rents and increased rents in some areas, there are also the other increased costs. So simply increasing it by 5 percent on a global basis would allow the individual member to do his own accounting, do his own financing, and use his own priorities, whether it means moving to smaller space or whatever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Taber-Warner, followed by Calgary-Glenmore.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, if the subcommittee is advising the full committee that a 5 percent increase across the board

would address the needs which had been expressed by some urban members and, based on what I've heard Percy say, there is not as much disparity between rural and urban as we thought there may have been, based on the unanimous recommendation of the committee, I'm certainly in favour of the motion as presented.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

All of you, I believe, have the two handout copies just distributed.

Calgary-Glenmore, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MRS. MIROSH: I just want to add to Percy's comments with regard to urban and rural. A lot of the rural members haven't got the flexibility of moving into cheaper rent space if their landlord decides there should be an increase. We had to take that into account, too, because of the availability of space. In the cities we do have the ability to move if we can't negotiate a decent rent. So it was very difficult, really, to come up with a formula with the urban and rural, just for clarification. And even between the two cities Edmonton and Calgary, Calgary real estate is escalating faster than Edmonton currently. But we feel that when you tie into a lease, that could change in two years or what have you. So the 5 percent global seemed to be . . . I think Percy and I probably have equally the highest rents of all the MLAs in the province, and feel we can live within this 5 percent, so I feel that's a fair recommendation to this committee.

MS BARRETT: What's your rent?

MRS. MIROSH: My rent's almost \$18 a square foot.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, there are some interesting chart things there in terms of what you were able to develop for the use of the committee.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, two things. Firstly, the way the motion is put here, we're taking in promotional allowance and communications allowance. Under the existing Members' Services orders, if memory serves me right, there is a formula suggesting the communications allowance be triggered when there's a postal increase. How we based the cost of that was according to the cost of a first-class letter. I wonder if rolling this into the 5 percent – it might be adequate for that, but since we set it last, have the postal increases increased more than 5 percent?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I could clear that point. We discussed that, and automatically there is that increase in the postage allowance by the 1 cent. That will occur just automatically, from the information we got from the Clerk. Is that not correct, David?

DR. McNEIL: No, I don't believe I indicated that. I indicated that in the past that portion of the allowance was based on the cost of two first-class mailings, approximately, to each constituent, to the number of households in the constituency.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Communications.

DR. McNEIL: To the communications allowance. If we applied that, there's been a 1 cent increase in the cost of a first-class letter.

MR. WICKMAN: Which is less than 3 percent.

DR. McNEIL: That would be about 2.5 percent for that. Now, if you want to take in increased handling costs, stationery costs, and things like that, you could justify it going up 5 percent, but that's the basis of the formula in the past.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, that postage is part of the communication budget at the present time, and because it doesn't exceed a 5 percent increase, there'll be no problems with the constituencies handling that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, let's now go back to Cypress-Redcliff finishing his comments. In the meantime, would Parliamentary Counsel take a look at the motion before us to see whether it's not in violation of what the formula is and so forth on page 18 of our *Members' Guide*?

MR. HYLAND: I think, Mr. Chairman, we should note that in the previous motion and this motion we need to highlight that both of those motions are put forward so we can continue to keep in contact with our constituents, so we can serve them. With changing costs and rising costs, these motions enable us to continue to hold the constituency offices and will continue to give us the capabilities in communicating with our constituents. It's no benefit to us personally.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, I have here the members for Edmonton-Jasper Place, Calgary-Foothills, Edmonton-Highlands, and the Clerk.

MR. McINNIS: My belief is that the cost of two first-class letters was the initial derivation of the figure for the communication portion of the allowance, but it's not indexed to Canada Post unfortunately. I think there's an important principle in staying with formula financing rather than having a rent element and having a kind of line item budget, because the members are responsible for managing their budgets and making sure they don't go over the expenditure. I think members are best equipped to determine where offices should be located as well. It's not really a Legislative Assembly administrative function. If you get into a separate rental allowance, somebody's going to have to control it. I think this subcommittee - at least I'm much more comfortable staying with the formula financing rather than putting in an additional rental allotment which, as Dianne said, would probably be gobbled up by some landlord in some new place for no particular benefit. So what we have is essentially a cost of living increase. It may not cover everything. Some people may face rent increases that are greater than 5; some may be lucky and get away with no rent increase. But the responsibility is still with the member to manage the budget, and I think we'd like to keep it that way.

MR. WICKMAN: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. I recognized Calgary-Foothills, Edmonton-Highlands, and the Clerk.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted clarification. A moment ago we passed a motion to increase the constituency allowance from \$34,500 to \$36,225 per year. In this new motion we have to put an increase of 5 percent again on the constituency office allowance. Is this on the original \$34,500 or on the

\$36,225?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the interpretation would be because the \$1,750 was added to the budget, which brings it up to the level that it did cover those additional costs on a per-average basis, then a 5 percent global increase on that new level of \$36,000 and somewhat. If you look at the actual increase, combine the two, you're looking at an actual increase in terms of dollars of 8 percent. You're looking at a net benefit in terms of an increase to each constituency office of 5 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MS BARRETT: Well, to further confuse the issue, my understanding of this motion is that the 5 percent across the board is basically a cost of living increase because the cost of printing MLA reports, et cetera, is bound to conform to the general CPI. My question is: will the cost of the mailing of the first-class letter, this subject we usually deal with on an annual basis, come up as a separate item aside from this, or is this part of this?

MR. WICKMAN: It's part of it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, then. I believe all members have also had copies of draft *Members' Services* orders distributed. Did everyone get one of those in the last few minutes? Page 2 would seem to be relevant to what we're now discussing.

MS BARRETT: Which one?

DR. McNEIL: Part (b).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Part 2(b) would pick up what we're about to now do.

DR. McNEIL: Part (b) deals with changing that formula \$0.8098 to \$0.8500, which reflects the 5 percent increase in the communications allowance.

MR. McINNIS: So you get 85 cents per voter as opposed to a shade short of 81 cents.

DR. McNEIL: Eighty-five cents per household, because the formula is \$0.8500 times the number of electors divided by one and a half to convert that to households.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So in essence all but half.

If this motion is carried, then we would also come back with these two *Members' Services* orders to be passed. They have the more technical way of having to put into place what the increases are, if the committee in its wisdom decides to go forward with them.

Additional comments?

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, you asked me to comment on the relation of this to what's in the *Members' Guide*. The *Members' Guide*, of course, reflects what is in the *Members' Services* orders and is a commentary on them. The history of the communications element of the members' allowance has indeed been that it has had as one of its benchmark elements the cost of two mailings. The adjustment of that has never been

entirely contemporaneous with postage increases, and sometimes we have experienced a postage increase during a time period when there has been a fixed allowance – it hasn't been changed – and sometimes there's been more than one increase during the time when it hasn't been changed. Going back to the time when this was first created, which is a number of years ago, I think members who were on that committee at this time will recall that the postage element was a benchmark, and I believe the committee wanted to make sure that that element never went below the cost of two first-class mailing stamps. But there are other costs involved with sending out the mailings, and the basis on which this order has been drafted is exactly a 5 percent increase on all three elements.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Further discussion, or a call for the question?

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion, which reads:

The constituency office allowance, communications allowance, and promotions allowance portions of the Members' Services allowance each be increased by 5 percent effective April 1, 1990.

Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried, but not unanimously.

From a housekeeping point of view, Parliamentary Counsel, the draft Members' Services orders which have been distributed: neither one of these needs to be amended?

MR. M. CLEGG: No, Mr. Chairman. In my opinion they reflect what the committee has just passed, with the insertion of the date April 1, 1990, in both sections.

MR. McINNIS: Just to point out that the increase is actually \$1,725 and not \$1,750, which is . . .

MS BARRETT: Oh, the previous motion? Yeah.

MR. McINNIS: That's the correct form.

MR. M. CLEGG: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, is it appropriate to make a motion to approve these two adjusted orders as distributed?

MS BARRETT: No, they've been passed.

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, you don't need a separate motion? Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, we don't. They're passed; therefore, we need to go with it. I just want to write the effective date. Thank you.

I think it's time for us to have about a 10-minute coffee break, so see you back here at about 11 o'clock.

[The committee recessed from 10:47 a.m. to 11:05 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Foothills.

MRS. BLACK: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to make a motion that the Members' Services Committee send a bouquet of flowers to the Grey Nuns hospital today wishing the leader of

the Liberal Party a speedy recovery.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, is there a policy that we have that . . . Why would we need an ad hoc motion to do this all the time? Members are always in hospitals.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have been doing it, and in actual fact we've already done this earlier this morning, but it's nice to have it recorded in the minutes if we're here in a meeting.

MR. KOWALSKI: Okay.

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

All right. We do have lunch being supplied. At 1 o'clock we have a guest coming, Brad Trumble from Videotron, to talk about a matter that is on our agenda. So at 1 o'clock we'll bring that matter forward, at least to hear some information involving the CRTC and television coverage of the House, or lack of.

Right. Item 4(g), EDP. The Clerk, please.

DR. McNEIL: This is just really a status report. Bill Gano asked us to put together some information on what we've done with respect to EDP in the Assembly compared to other jurisdictions. So this is just . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The whole thing can be there. Sure, you know, the whole package.

DR. McNEIL: Okay. There are three reports here. One is looking at the costs/benefits of our automation approach, the second is really a status report as to where we are now, and the third is a comparative analysis of our information systems services compared to other Legislatures. These are really information items for hon. members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: When you boil it down, you find that in terms of comparison to other jurisdictions we rate very highly. That's the one entitled Comparative Analysis of Information Systems Services. Again, the comparison is with respect to the House of Commons and the other provinces but not the territories. You also will note that each Legislature is having to contend, obviously, with the matter of the EDP. I suppose where a number of them have older buildings like ours, it really does tax the system and the fabric of their buildings as well as ours. For example, a fair amount of our ventilation system is not working because it's clogged up with wires that are there. One of the long-term questions facing everyone, I'm certain, is the matter of how you deal with the renewal of a building that was not built to carry the kinds of loads that it already is. All right?

That also brings you up to date with respect to where we are within the province. One other document deals with the net benefit, the document that is entitled Information Systems Services Constituency Office Automation and Assembly Automation Upgrade: A Justification. On page 2 of that you see, for example, the one summary there that I would refer to, at the centre of the page: the total annual maintenance savings is at this moment calculated to be \$132,485. All right? That's given

to you for information and for your caucus chiefs.
Any other comments, David?

DR. McNEIL: No. I just think in terms of the decisions that have been made at this committee with respect to EDP over the last year that this really captures, I guess, the cost implications and the consequences of those decisions, for the committee's information.

MR. WICKMAN: Just one question on this, Mr. Chairman, to David. The computerization program in the constituency offices, just so I'm clear for budgeting purposes, will be completed in this forthcoming fiscal period.

DR. McNEIL: Assuming that this committee approves the proposal that's presented in the budget to do that, yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Does that include the reimbursement for, like, the software package that some of us may have jumped the gun on and gone ahead within our own fiscal period?

DR. McNEIL: No.

MR. WICKMAN: The software package is an additional cost over and above the computer.

MS BARRETT: Can I comment on that, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do.

MS BARRETT: This is an old debate within this committee. Some of us computerized a long time ago at a cost to our own constituency offices, and we dealt with this at length, Percy.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm talking about the new equipment.

MS BARRETT: Even with the new stuff there's no fair way to do that, and I think we were unanimous finally when we brought it to a decision about two years ago that, you know, if you jumped the gun on any of the stuff that ultimately is undertaken by Members' Services, too bad.

MR. WICKMAN: No, but we jumped the gun in the sense that we brought it in about five months early and the leasing payments go towards the cost of that equipment. We will still get the allocation that each member would get to upgrade that computer system, would we not?

DR. McNEIL: If it's part of the standard software package, then you would. If it's nonstandard software, though, then you would not.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah. Like, we won't be deducted because of the fact that we've laid out some of the expenditures in this fiscal period.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, an interesting point to be raised, I think, in terms of the life of this committee: again, to reiterate that from 1986 and even before, but with a special emphasis from '86, we've been going in a logical progression and we've been committed to the fact that we're going into this program. If some individual members went off on their own cotton-picking little path, so be it. Again, we'll see what the individual case

and instance is, but if some people wandered off on their own, that's too bad.

MR. WICKMAN: We didn't wander off on our own, Mr. Chairman. It was co-ordinated through the ninth floor.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With due respect, I'm not referring simply to your caucus.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm not talking about the caucus. I'm talking about the constituency office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, same thing in my mind.
Okay, any other questions? Member for Barrhead.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, just a comment, not a question. I hope that once we have arrived at a consistency of packaging for all constituency offices in the province, we will then pause for a period of years and say, "Let's go with the equipment we've got." Let it work so that we don't have come back every three and four and five and six months, and somebody says, "Well, there's new technology on the horizon; we have to implement it." This is a never-ending expenditure. This material for the most part has built-in obsolescence. Technology changes so dramatically and there's so much competition in this area that we've basically got to say that this is where we're going and use it for a number of years without having to move in another direction, irrespective of the fact that somebody's invented some new toy or machine. This affects not only us in our constituency offices, but that's the approach we're taking in government, period.

MR. McINNIS: I think that was why the planning and policy branch of Public Works, Supplies and Services endorsed this technology. It has the ability - it has legs that will last for a while.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clerk? That's where the microchip capabilities . . .

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. I just wanted to add on to that in terms of equipment we did choose that has that capability of upgrading. And in terms of when we discuss the budget in more detail, we're proposing that in order to avoid massive expenditures on EDP in the future, we have a certain portion of the budget that we've saved through lower maintenance costs reallocated to replacement of equipment. If we do that every year, we should be able to avoid massive expenditures on EDP in a particular year. That's the strategy that the strategic plan suggests.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okey doke. Thank you very much.

We'll move on to New Business. Item 5(a); that's scheduled for 1 o'clock. Item 5(b), Deductions for Non-Attendance. Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: Yes. Under the Legislative Assembly Act before it was amended in 1989, section 40 of the Act indicated:

Deductions shall be made at the rate of \$75 a day from the indemnity allowance [of a Member] and at the rate of \$25 a day from the expense allowance of a Member for each day in excess of 10 sitting days during a session on which the Member did not either take his seat in the Assembly or a meeting of a committee of the Assembly otherwise than by reason of

- (a) illness or injury,
- (b) bereavement, or
- (c) public or official business.

That section of the Act was put under the authority of the Members' Services Committee under the Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 1989, and it's an item that the . . . In drafting the Members' Services order at the time, the deduction referred to in section 40 of the Legislative Assembly Act is continued in the same amount as was in effect immediately prior to the commencement of Bill 24, 1989. So at the present time the amount for deductions is still \$75 a day from the indemnity and \$25 a day from the expense. In discussing this with members subsequent to the August 28 Members' Services Committee meeting, it was indicated at that time that the committee wanted to review those amounts to see if they should be changed. What we've had drafted is an order where we've increased both amounts by \$25, reflecting now that the expense allowance is half of the indemnity allowance. I guess it's a question of what those numbers should be. This is the proposal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. It's housekeeping in many respects.

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that we do now have a proposal back before us. A couple of questions. First of all, do we have the comparisons with other provinces and with the House of Commons as to what their deductions are? Because I think that is a factor that should be considered. My reaction is that the deductions may even be higher. There's latitude for a member to miss with reason, with cause. We're talking about a member who's missing without just cause. So I'll leave that question on the table for now as to whether or not we do have the comparison. If we don't, I believe we should have it before we do make a final decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And we don't have that?

DR. McNEIL: We don't have that information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.
Edmonton-Jasper Place, and then perhaps a motion to table.

MR. McINNIS: I simply wonder if someone can define "public or official business" for me. I'm not clear what that means.

AN HON. MEMBER: Something like "who's a farmer?" Something like trying to define that.

MS BARRETT: If I'm not mistaken, section (c) here, if the business is not obvious, we submit a form through the Sergeant-at-Arms which goes to you as the Speaker, and you determine whether or not that business should be considered part of our job or not part of our job. That's what it comes down to. It's up to the MLA to make the case. If I say I'm at a conference and I'm on the 11th day of missing, then it's up to you to decide whether I'm at a conference to better myself or to do with my job.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MS BARRETT: It's worked that way. I've never heard of any complaints.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the three and a half years that I've been in the Chair, I've only had about one member who has been away excessively. We've got a very good attendance record in this House.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, as I understand this then, this order would see (a) these penalties increased by 33.3 percent for the indemnity allowance and would be a 100 percent increase in terms of the expense allowance. Is that correct? Those would be the figures, 33.3 percent increase and 100 percent increase in terms of the penalties?

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. KOWALSKI: I have no problem with this.

MS BARRETT: I don't either.

MR. KOWALSKI: If we want to wait for a further review to see what the comparatives are, that's okay.

MS BARRETT: I'd like to hop back in on this issue, actually. I mean, it seems to me that if everybody is in agreement with this, if this reflects the changes that we've made in terms of the formula, expense versus indemnity, why don't we go with it? And if anybody finds a better recommendation, let them come back. It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that what we want to accomplish in this meeting, and if we must meet on February 1, what we want to accomplish at that meeting, is all the tidy-up stuff to get ready for the House reconvening. So I move adoption of this motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, that's fair enough, and if we find that we should increase the penalties even greater, we can bring back another motion.

MS BARRETT: Hear, hear.

MR. BOGLE: If we find they're in line, well, at least we've made the move, so on that basis . . .

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. That's the Members' Services order. Thank you.

If you'd like to pull your budget estimates books, that's where I understand we're now headed, 5(c), review of those. As I recollect, the last time we went through this, we had the overview of Legislative Assembly components and one request that came back was for some projected actual figures, and that is now in your binders. With the Clerk speaking to that, first of all, and then because we've not dealt with caucus budgets, we might either go to that first or we could go once again through the components of the Legislative Assembly and do a page-by-page checkoff. But first the Clerk, speaking to the additional material.

DR. McNEIL: Under each section the summary page now includes a projected expenditure for '89-90. So that for each section, as we go through these, the members can see the

projected costs for each budget code under each section of the budget.

MR. McINNIS: How were the percentages calculated, from actual or projected?

DR. McNEIL: No. The percent change is a comparison of the '90-91 estimate to the '89-90 estimate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. So those are there for each section, I think. What is your pleasure, committee? Do you want to go through section by section, starting at the beginning, to do page-by-page approvals? Member for Barrhead, creative stretch.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'm just looking at the first one, which is the Estimates Summary, and if I read this correctly, we're looking at a budget that would realize a percentage change of 1.9 percent in the estimates of the Legislative Assembly, 1.9 percent.

My second point is that I hope we're going to continue with the understanding that we've established in this committee in the past, that when we come to deal with caucus budgets, we look at a global figure and we do not dwell on and delve into how that global figure was agreed to and the specifics attached to it.

MS BARRETT: Agreed.

MR. KOWALSKI: I think that's part of the rule that I guess just has to be reinforced one more time, because if we start getting into it, then all of a sudden we could be here for days dealing with that. And the others we deal with on a specific line-by-line approach. Would that be the approach taken? Would you be presenting us an overview with this or are we just going to dwell into it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We had the overview at the last meeting, but perhaps the Clerk could speak briefly to each section as we go and start working through it again.

DR. McNEIL: Just a point. The '89-90 budget figures reflect the special warrant dollars that have been approved in this fiscal year, so the 1.9 percent increase reflects the estimate over what we've allocated to date in 1989-90.

MR. KOWALSKI: Yeah. And that's a system of budgeting anyway. You go with the following year's budget based on the actual year before.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the changes that would come in here are the ones that will be reflected because of the motions passed earlier this morning, because those aren't building . . .

DR. McNEIL: Those are not reflected here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Section 1, General Administration. The front page gives you the overview of what happens within that whole section. Clerk, if you'd like to briefly highlight.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. The major increases here relate to requests for wage funds in two areas: the administration related to accounting and the fact that we are now on on-line with the

accounting system and therefore have to input all the data. Because of the number of accounts and the number of entries we deal with, the delegation of that activity from Treasury has put a significant load on us, and therefore we've requested additional wage funds. In addition, the fact that a number of members have chosen to put their staff on contracts of employment with benefits has increased fairly significantly the amount of activity in the personnel area because there was a lot more of an administrative workload related to handling all the benefits and so on. So we're talking a total, I think, of \$25,000 additional wages - \$10,000 in the accounts area and \$15,000 in the personnel area - to handle those activities.

To cover that this year, we've been using PEP and STEP, but it's an ongoing . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: Are you saying then, Mr. Clerk, in your second paragraph that one of the things that drives the increase in the general administration office of the Legislative Assembly is a requirement by Alberta Treasury that transfers . . . I say this because as a member of the Treasury Board I find this of interest and one that continually has all of us monitoring. I should be able to find a comparable decrease in Alberta Treasury's budget, then, too.

DR. McNEIL: My understanding of the original pledge was that the Treasury person-year allocation would be decreased because they would no longer have the data entry clerks required.

MR. KOWALSKI: In Treasury's budget.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct. At that time, I gather, it was stated that some of those resources would be allocated to departments which now had to do the same work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But none of it was allocated to us.

DR. McNEIL: We haven't received any largesse from Treasury.

MR. KOWALSKI: No. I'm sure you probably wouldn't. It'd be up to me to find that as part of the Treasury Board process. So then the bottom line of all this should be a neutral net, then, to the whole provincial budget as it is reported and related.

DR. McNEIL: I would hope so.

MR. KOWALSKI: An increase here would show a decrease there, and the bottom line for the province in terms of all the estimates should be netted out at zero.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We look forward to hearing your report.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, it gives me something to look forward to on a cold day in February.

MR. McINNIS: I just made a night for Dick Johnston's estimates.

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes. This is correct. I will make a note of it and make sure that we can find it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional comments or questions with regard to the first page?

MR. HYLAND: You'd better let me know about that one ahead of time, John. That'll take some digging.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. On the next page you see the statement of purpose and the responsibility areas. Anyone willing to give blanket approval to the whole section?

MS BARRETT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Moved by Edmonton-Highlands: approval of all of section 1, General Administration.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, if I might add something. The reason I move that so readily is because I think we had a very thorough explanation from the Clerk of the first three segments of this book, chapters one, two, and three, when last we met.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions on this section? Is there a call for the question?

MS BARRETT: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour of approval to section 1, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you.

Clerk, with regard to the first page of section 2, MLA Administration.

DR. McNEIL: The overall increase here is a small one, 1.8 percent. One thing we've done in terms of this budget this year is that all the Legislative Assembly's EDP processing has been centralized under MLA Administration and under the control of the director of the information systems services. As we stated in previous meetings, his ability to manage the budget globally has resulted in fairly significant maintenance savings. As I indicated earlier today, what we propose to do in this budget is allocate a certain amount of money each year for upgrading and replacement of equipment and, therefore, in the long term avoid large expenditures on EDP when we have to change technology. We would manage any kind of changes in technology in a very gradual way within existing resources.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Before I recognize Edmonton-Whitemud, we will not be able to pass this section today because we'll have to make changes because of the earlier motions today. We'll have to bring this one back another day.

All right, Edmonton-Whitemud, with regard to section 2.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, that was the question I was going to raise. Do any of the motions we've made up to now impact?

MR. CHAIRMAN: This whole section?

MR. WICKMAN: Specifically, what portion here?

MS BARRETT: I think it's near the end, if I'm not mistaken.

MR. WICKMAN: You see, we've only dealt with constituency budgets, and . . .

DR. McNEIL: But the formulas – for example, if you look on page 10 of this budget, the MLA communication allowance, the total there will increase, and therefore those allocations to

advertising, professional, technical, and labour services, and purchasing of equipment will have to change as well.

MRS. MIROSH: How about the postage rate? Is it on there?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MS BARRETT: Then promotional allowance is on page 18, so that would change.

MR. HYLAND: And then you have your communication allowance on page 9.

MS BARRETT: So there's a bunch of them that change. Actually, there's no reason we couldn't.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, if I could comment. When we look at page 10, for example, the MLA postage: do the dollars that are spent in the constituency office for postage reflect in this particular coding or this particular section, or a separate section?

DR. McNEIL: In this section.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, then what I would do is move that this budget be approved and that direction be given to increase those sections to comply with the two orders that were passed this morning. In other words, those changes are going to be so insignificant in terms of this global thing – they only relate in a couple of sections – that it's a matter of housekeeping for the Clerk to go through and make the appropriate adjustments to comply specifically with the orders we pass, rather than hold it up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That's the motion before us: to approve making the adjustments. Thank you.

MS BARRETT: Might as well.

MR. McINNIS: I just have a couple of questions. One relates to the calculation of the number of households for the communication allowance. I thought I heard earlier that we take the number of voters and divide by 1.5. Why not take the actual number of households, which would be available from Canada Post, rather than a formula like that? That's one question. The second question is just the very last item, page 21, MLA dictaphones and dictamites. I don't know what a dictamite is, but I . . .

MS BARRETT: I do.

MR. HYLAND: It's a little one.

MS BARRETT: I asked at the last meeting in December. You must have been out.

MR. McINNIS: I was probably looking for my daytimer.

MS BARRETT: Or your dictaphone.

MR. McINNIS: Anyway, who are the 10 who have dictaphones and dictamites?

DR. McNEIL: Those are replacements, and there's an ongoing need to replace equipment. They can be requested from . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Parliamentary Counsel, with regard to the first question asked about postage being dealt with on a household basis or on a voter basis, what's the reply? Are we tied into that under another formula somewhere?

MR. M. CLEGG: Well, the postage in the order which has just been amended. I'm just looking . . .

MR. McINNIS: It's not the dollar value of it. It's the number of households, the calculation of the number of households in an electoral district.

MRS. MIROSH: That keeps changing in some areas, in Calgary for growth.

MS BARRETT: It's the number of electors, though. I think that's . . .

MR. M. CLEGG: It's the number of electors divided by 1.5, which is deemed to be approximately the number of households.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So there we're caught, at the moment, according to what the last enumeration determined.

MS BARRETT: Right.

DR. McNEIL: We base that on the latest enumeration statistics which we . . .

MR. M. CLEGG: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. But then again the point about the . . .

MR. M. CLEGG: You use the number of electors in the most recent list of electors compiled for the member's electoral division of the Election Act. So it's an enumeration figure.

MR. McINNIS: You see, if you go to Canada Post and say, "Here's a newsletter; I'd like you to deliver it," they don't say: "Well, what was your enumeration last time? We'll divide that by 1.5." They say, "We've got 15,000 households, and that'll be X amount of money." So that figure is available, at least I think, from Canada Post on the number of households in each district.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then this committee could determine if it wants to switch the basis.

MR. McINNIS: Yeah. You'd have to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry. Are you finished, John?

MR. McINNIS: I'm finished, yes.

MRS. MIROSH: Just on that point, I would rather go with the latest update enumeration, because when Canada Post gives me a number, I have constituents who are left out of my area because of the way they divide up postal walks . . .

MS BARRETT: That's true.

MRS. MIROSH: . . . and I have to do them myself. Some of mine go into Calgary-Egmont, and some of my area's eliminated totally. So it's not as accurate.

MR. WICKMAN: Plus residents of nursing homes and extended health care centres.

MRS. MIROSH: That's right. It's just not accurate. Apartment blocks change; we've three going up that are high rises. We have to reflect ongoing construction in urban areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The motion before us is to approve this section, taking into account the previous motions of the day. Any other questions, or is there a call for the question?

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour of giving approval to section 2?

MS BARRETT: Subject to the adjustments to this morning's orders.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

House Services, section 3.

DR. McNEIL: As I indicated at the last meeting, this budget is projected to decrease by 2.1 percent. The major increase in this budget relates to the request for two additional nonpermanent roles at this point: the addition of security staff to cover an area of the House that the Sergeant-at-Arms felt was not being sufficiently covered. Number two, to add a position of a Bills and Journals clerk to be responsible for the production of House documents. As I indicated last time, up to this point this has been handled by the Clerk Assistant and the administrative assistant to Parliamentary Counsel. I feel that both of those roles have been under extreme stress and excess workload as a result of the demands made during the session and outside of session for the production of private Bills and the production of House documents while we were in session, resulting in Karen South having to be available every minute of every day that we sit, and a significant time afterwards as well.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, first of all, let me comment that when we go through these budgets it's delightful to have this type of breakdown. It would be nice if we had the same type of breakdown in the governmental budgets when we deal with the budget in the Legislative Assembly, but unfortunately we don't have that luxury. After that editorial comment, could I ask, however – under Supply and Services, Travel Expenses: an increase of 85.2 percent. Could I have an explanation as to what anticipated travel is going to be taking place that would see such an increase?

MR. HYLAND: What page or what code are you on?

MR. WICKMAN: I'm on 1.

MS BARRETT: It's on the summary page.

MR. HYLAND: The summary page?

DR. McNEIL: We're talking about House Services, are we? I thought we were still on . . .

MR. WICKMAN: I'm talking about House Services on page 1.

DR. McNEIL: If you look on pages 8 and 9, there's a detailed presentation there. Basically the reason for this increase is the change in venues of a number of these conferences this year as compared to last year. The regional conference which was held in Edmonton last year is in Fredericton this year. That's \$14,500. The other significant increase is the CPA general conference in Zimbabwe. It was last year in Barbados, and there's a significant increase there because of the distance required to travel to that conference.

MR. WICKMAN: So this is the type of thing that, depending on the locations of the Canadian Parliamentary Association conferences and activities, next year, just because of where they're located, it could be 40 percent less or whatever.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct. Yeah, there's quite a wide variation in this budget from year to year as a function of where the conferences are.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional comments on the section House Services?

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah. I guess the CPA was here last year. That would have kept last year's budget down considerably and then that would artificially reflect in this thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On travel.

DR. McNEIL: It did in the travel, but if you look under Hosting there, we had a budget of \$176,000 last year and \$11,000 this year. We did allocate \$175,000 to host the CPA conference, so there's a significant decrease there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Other questions with regard to section 3, House Services? Is someone prepared to move a motion to give approval to this section 3?

MR. HYLAND: Just one question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely.

MR. HYLAND: Under the vehicle supply to the Chairman of Committees and the Deputy Speaker and Deputy Chairman – they're not in this section?

DR. McNEIL: No; they're in the Speaker's Office budget.

MS BARRETT: That's right. It says so on page 12, that it's been transferred, right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any other questions in this area? I think one of the things we're finding here is that over the last three years one of the valued things I find is that most of the members here have been in service on this committee in its previous existence, or existences in some cases. Also, the staff and the computerization have helped immensely. So we're

getting the thing better tuned.

Is there a motion to approve this section?

MS BARRETT: Yes. So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any other questions? A call for the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of approval of the section 3, House Services, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you.

Section 4. Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: The Speaker's Office budget is projected to increase by 7.6 percent. The main reason for this is related to salary increases that were a result of reclassifications in the overall government system and the related costs of benefits and so on related to those increases in salaries.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions on that subject? And that's where the business of the automobile as raised by Cypress-Redcliff comes into play.

MS BARRETT: No. I move to approve.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion to approve.

MR. BOGLE: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question has been called. All those in favour of giving approval to section 4, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you.

Section 5, Government Members. Someone on behalf of the government caucus, I assume?

MS BARRETT: I have a question. We're now getting into the three caucus budgets. I would like to just ask one question and get the decision of this committee – I think once we get the decision, we'll be able to proceed – and that is: are we now assuming that a per MLA formula no longer exists and we're requesting on the basis of assessed need? Is that the will of this committee?

MR. WICKMAN: No. I'm not putting my hand up to agree with you, Pam; far from it.

MS BARRETT: You could agree with asking the question.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, there's . . . Was somebody going to respond to Pam's question first?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's yourself, I think.

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, no. I wish to speak on this whole matter, not . . .

MR. BOGLE: This is the item we tabled.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is the item that we had tabled, and this is where we're now into it, unless the committee wants to leapfrog and do the rest of the Legislative Assembly first.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I guess one approach would be to try and refer these back to determine that history, because I'm not satisfied with the comments that we're getting. If somebody can explain to me, first of all, who, precisely, prepares these budgets?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Each caucus.

MR. WICKMAN: And why, for example, has the Liberal budget been changed three times, three different sheets? Each time it keeps going up, and the latest shows a 15.8 percent increase.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, you sent it in.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, there's been no communication between me and David other than the initial direction that our budget is to reflect a 5 percent increase over and above the equalized baseline.

MS BARRETT: You see, that's the question though: the equalized baseline, Percy. Really, in my view, that came to . . . [interjection] Oh, sorry, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you would like to reply, and then the Clerk needs to reply as to why these changes have occurred. I think it's fairly obvious as to why some of them have occurred. Edmonton-Highlands, followed by the Clerk.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. I don't know how many different ways I can explain this, but last year when we were in the budget process – this was before the election was called – Nick moved to change the Liberal caucus budget in a way that didn't conform with the sort of per MLA formula that had hitherto been agreed on for the previous three years. Our assumption at that point was, and mine remained, that on that basis alone, that formula no longer held. And I think that that again was raised. I mean, I understand that there's sort of an underlying question here when you came into the committee a few months ago requesting an increase for your caucus on the basis of the four new MLAs who might not have agreed to that old formula, and that would be fair enough. So any changes that would be reflected in terms of percentage increase would be based upon the assumption that was made last year, which is that there isn't a per MLA formula anymore. And when you got your motion through a few months ago respecting your caucus and the four new members who didn't want to be bound by Nick's previous motion, I think it further skewed the notion, because you have a partial formula funding in your caucus and a partial nonformula funding.

So I raise the question. I operate on the assumption that it no longer exists, but I'm asking the committee to decide whether or not that's the case.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Clerk, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

DR. McNEIL: In terms of the changes to the budget, we've made some changes because of the special warrant. I noted a

couple of days ago that in comparing this year's proposal with last year's budget, the Liberals were originally allocated \$448,880 last year. You would have had to pay your leader's salary out of that. So the way we've set the budget up here is: the general caucus budget was \$441,094 last year, plus you had to pay the leader's budget of \$7,243 and the pension of \$543; if you add those three numbers together you get \$448,880. Then the \$31,902 is a special warrant to account for the \$16,000 additional funds that you received, plus the amount for the third party House leader and the Whip and associated benefits costs. That's how your number for last year comes about. So your budget from this year over last year is a 13.9 percent increase.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So it's administrative as to what would occur, in this previous section we've done today, to reflect the decision of this committee. Then the figures get computed and that comes in, and to some degree that's what's happened here.

DR. McNEIL: What we agreed to – I think this was informally, when I talked to members from each caucus – was that these payments to members this year be separated out from the general caucus budget requests so that those payments to members be added to the number that each caucus requested.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, to follow up on that. We used the figure, David, of 13.8 percent?

DR. McNEIL: Thirteen point nine is the bottom line.

MR. WICKMAN: So you're using the latest sheet that came out yesterday?

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. WICKMAN: But at the top there, where we see in the general caucus budget 13.8, it now reflects 15.8. The bottom line is – we previously showed 12.2; we now show 13.9 percent, and of course that's going to include things like payment of extra dollars for the leader. The largest portion of the increased amount has been turned over to the government arm, the foundation. That is in this budget, is it not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, what you want to do with public money, you know, I . . .

MR. WICKMAN: No, I'm just asking the question: that is in this budget?

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. You know, Mr. Chairman, I'm not satisfied. I'm a little outnumbered on this committee, but I'm not satisfied with the explanation that somebody threw the formula out of whack and for that reason there's an assumption the formula no longer counts. All the previous member did was move a motion freezing the budget for the four Liberal members at that time, for that year. There was no reference made to changing the formula. Now we're in a position where we have a difference of 9.4 percent between the per member allowance for the members within the New Democrat caucus, for the members other than the cabinet ministers within the government caucus – 9.4 percent higher than our baseline within the Liberal caucus. It overlooks the fact that this committee realized, at the

very least, that the four new members shouldn't be penalized by a previous decision and reinstated \$16,000. But in this baseline, as it has come back, that hasn't even been taken into consideration.

Mr. Chairman, I've been put in the situation, quite frankly, that if we were to adopt a 5 percent increase in our budget over last year, we'd receive less than last year. You know, that's got to be stupid when you have all of us in the Legislative Assembly working for our constituents. Pam Barrett is entitled to so much and Percy Wickman is only entitled to so much: that doesn't make sense to me, Mr. Chairman, and it angers me. It angers me that other Members of the Legislative Assembly would sit back and not take that seriously, and say that's fine.

The first principle I think we have to adopt is that you have to have an equal baseline per member. And I do have a motion, if we have to reinforce that principle, that that principle be reinforced. To just make some assumption that it's thrown out the window is beyond belief.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there a motion?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. I'll move that the principle of an equal baseline per member be adopted for purposes of determining members' caucus allowances.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can you get that one typed up for . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. All right. Now we have a motion before us.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, while the motion is being distributed, this might be the appropriate time if the Clerk would distribute the answer to the question I raised at our last meeting, and that is: if we look at the current budgets as proposed by each caucus, what would that work out to on a per member basis? So we'll distribute that material now.

MR. WICKMAN: As long as you've separated the leader's allowance from the members'. I don't know what you've done now, Bob.

AN HON. MEMBER: No, he hasn't.

MR. WICKMAN: No, you haven't separated the two.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I'm trying very hard to look with sympathy upon the plight of the Liberal caucus. They feel that their budget is inadequate to do the job they want to do on behalf of the people who sent them here, and I have a great deal of sympathy for that. I don't feel it's for me as a member of another political party in this Legislature to determine what the needs are in the Liberal caucus. It seems to me that we have a budget submission from them which presumably reflects their desire to expand their services to their members and services that they provide to the public through the caucus office, and it doesn't seem to me that it's desperately out of line. But the motion that's before us suggests something that, in my experience in this place, has never been the case.

I mean, different members of the Assembly have different responsibilities. Some are members of cabinet; some are party leaders; some are Chairs of caucus; some have additional

responsibilities. Their remuneration reflects that, but also the support that they receive. A minister's office is clearly different than a private member's office, so we've never had an equal baseline per member. I really don't mind the Liberal Party seeking an increase, but I think what's happening is that they're trying to find some way to take a dime and say it's a nickel. I'm a little bit concerned about that.

I would prefer that we go through the budgets one by one. If the Liberal Party feels that the amount they've submitted is adequate, then I'm prepared to support it. But I just don't think we're going to get at it doing equal amounts per member, because as I see the material just handed around, it looks to me like it's not even equal in this proposal that's come ahead. In fact, I don't know if I'm reading it correctly, but it looks like the amount per member for the Liberal Party is the largest of the three.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, the information here is very misleading in that that does not refer to the individual member's caucus allowances. What's been done is a bit of tactics in that the whole thing has been grouped, and that now includes the leader's portion, and then it's been divided. We all recognize that the leader has different responsibilities, different duties than an MLA. He receives the MLA plus the additional expenses as being related to the leader. That's what's happened here. In the old system, Mr. Chairman, to John, it always happened that the per member caucus allowance was a separate item and the leader's allowance was a separate item; in other words, there were two portions in that particular budget. It's all now been grouped into one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any additional comments? With respect, we are dealing with Government Members section at this moment. It's got the general principle in it, but it's . . . Clerk?

DR. McNEIL: Just a piece of information. The figures that I handed out are based on the general caucus budget divided by the number of government members and ND members and Liberal members - the budget not including those payments to the leader or the Whips and so on.

MR. WICKMAN: No, but it's also the leader's allowance. Not what he gets in the form of a paycheque, but I'm talking about his allowance for his office as leader of the party to hire a principal secretary, to hire a personal secretary. That's all included in this.

DR. McNEIL: But I was asked to give an allocation per member based on the budgets that each caucus submitted to me.

MR. BOGLE: That was the question put.

DR. McNEIL: And so that's what those figures reflect.

MR. WICKMAN: I just wanted everyone to be clear exactly what these figures do reflect.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Time for lunch.

MS BARRETT: Already?

MRS. BLACK: Right on the button.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Unless you want to turn it into a working lunch.

All right, ladies and gentlemen, back at 1 o'clock. We need at that time to have some input given to us by the representative from Videotron. We will take that information and ask questions. Then we'll get on with the budget, and then we'll come back to that issue. Okay? Adjourned till 1 o'clock sharp. Thank you.

[The committee recessed from 12 o'clock to 1:09 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, ladies and gentlemen. Sorry for the delay in starting.

As mentioned earlier, we're going to depart from where we are in the agenda for a short while so that we can have input from Brad Trumble from Videotron about the TV coverage of the House. I think we have a couple of handouts here. One is with respect to the CRTC application and ruling, which Brad will speak to. There's also a letter there from him to me with regard to the coverage of the House, the implications of the CRTC decision, and appended to that letter as well, we have what some costs related to the decision would be. So thank you for allowing us to depart from the agenda slightly.

Brad, if you'd like to talk to the issues, please.

MR. TRUMBLE: Yes, thank you very much. I thought I might just begin by giving you a brief idea of kind of some of the reasons why I guess I am here today and give you a little brief background as to what was involved in all the correspondence that you're now viewing. QCTV's, now known as Videotron Communications, licence expired on August 31, 1988, and we went through our traditional five-year licence renewal process. When we received our licence from the CRTC, in it was a kind of one-liner that took us by surprise. It said: You are reminded that the legislative proceedings are no longer allowed to be carried on the community channel. Well, there were a few phone calls, and we said: "What is the problem here? Is there a definitional problem?" It appeared that there was, that it no longer fell within the guidelines according to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. In subsequent phone calls it was decided that we should write to the commission and ask for exemption of this particular guideline, so that we could be allowed to continue carrying it, and there is a letter from our company to the CRTC, which I believe you have, asking to be exempted from that decision. It's dated May 1 of 1989.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's not here.

MR. TRUMBLE: Okay. I'm sorry; maybe you don't have it.

It talks about some of the reasons as to why we wanted to be exempted. For one, we have been doing this since 1972, and we felt we were a bit of a grandfather of the pioneer state. Also, as I am aware, we are one of the only community local stations that do it all, versus a third party just simply providing a feed to the cable operator. It had grown and been seen as a part of the community channel; therefore, it has a home there, and that is what our customers expect from us. These were reasons that we gave for continuing.

Subsequent to that, our application was what's called gazetted, made public, and input is requested. We requested that interventions be received from each of the leaders of the major parties here and the Speaker. I'm pleased to say we did receive

two positive interventions, one from the Speaker and one from Laurence Decore on behalf of the Liberal Party, talking about the issue of continued coverage. To our surprise we received the response about three weeks later saying that there was no compelling new evidence to support coverage of the Legislature proceedings on the community channel, and therefore we were denied. It was strongly recommended that we do, however, continue the coverage but on a different channel. So what we're led to believe, then, is that it has to be anywhere other than the community channel.

The letter I sent to the Speaker said: I regret to inform you that we'll no longer be doing it.

There are two implications then. Number one, because it no longer falls under the definition of community programming, there are costs inherent with it, because it would no longer, if you will, be covered by community programming budgets. I would have to pay the people, as I do anyway, but I would have to pay the people to do it, and it would have to come out of another budget. So I've suggested that there are inherent costs now. Number two, it's going to have to move to an upper band channel. In our system that will likely be channel 19, which is the House of Commons channel. We have not yet addressed the issue of what happens when the House of Commons is actively doing something and you people come to be actively doing something. We haven't quite addressed that issue yet, but that is where we will likely place it.

I spoke this morning with Mr. Larry Biswanger. He is the general manager of Shaw Cablesystems. I asked him what his plans were with respect to this, as they carried it on channel 10 along with us. They have suggested they would likely also carry it on their House of Commons channel, which happens to be channel 26 on the Shaw cable system. But I've also addressed the concern of what happens if the House of Commons is doing something important and you people are doing your question period: a couple of hurdles that we have to overcome at that point.

In any case, I think that's a little bit of background, and that's the reason we are here. That's all I have to say at this point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One question. If it moves to an upper band, that effectively takes it out of . . . If people are on cable, they're going to receive it that high, but not all television sets go that high. Is that right?

MR. TRUMBLE: That is correct. Basic cable television on the Videotron system is from channels 2 to 23, not including 15, which is the Family Channel. Everyone would be available to see this with a converter or cable-ready television set. The penetration of those types of sets is very high. About 75 to 80 percent of the people have at least the capability to receive upper band channels on one of the sets in their home.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

I recognize Barrhead, Cypress-Redcliff, Calgary-Foothills, and Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have several questions to Mr. Trumble, if I may.

In the application that Videotron had before the CRTC, you said that the CRTC came back to you and said it was inappropriate to use a particular channel because it did not fall under Canadian content. Is that . . .

MR. TRUMBLE: No, it's not Canadian content; it doesn't fit the definition of community programming.

MR. KOWALSKI: Community programming. And there is a legal definition for community programming?

MR. TRUMBLE: No. But I don't think you should be surprised by that. I have here a small sheet. This is actually an excerpt coming directly from the cable television regulations.

"Community programming" means, in relation to an undertaking, programming that is produced

- by the licensee . . . or by members of the community served . . .
- by the licensee of another undertaking or by the members of the community served . . .
- by a network operator licensed to provide programming to a licensee for distribution on the community channel.

What it does not lend itself to is to say the legislative proceedings are or are not. As I am understanding – and I apologize for not being able to have this here today. I spoke with a gentleman in our office who does most of the handling or talking with the CRTC. He led me to believe that there may have been a notice published in 1986 that gave a better definition of what is and what is not community programming, and I'm sorry I was not able to get that. But from what I understand, the CRTC regulations are written in a manner that is greatly open to interpretation, and it does not fit with their interpretation that this is that level of programming.

MR. KOWALSKI: So as I take it, we've had this coverage. You've done it at least for one year, the last year or more.

MR. TRUMBLE: Since 1972.

MR. KOWALSKI: Since 1972. And it's shown here in Edmonton, you said, on channel 10?

MR. TRUMBLE: Yes, it is.

MR. KOWALSKI: And in other parts of Alberta on different channels depending, of course, where it is or what it isn't. Have we paid you in the past? Have you received compensation?

MR. TRUMBLE: Not that I'm aware of ever. No.

MR. KOWALSKI: But now to change it to another channel, will there be a compensation factor?

MR. TRUMBLE: It's not the changing of the channel; it's the changing of the definition of where it comes from. When it was done previously under the definition of community programming – I possess a community programming budget, and I'm expected to expend the money and produce programming. Okay? As soon as it falls out of the definition of community programming, where am I going to get the money to pay to do this is the point. So it's a definitional thing. Now I have to make up five hours of programming per week, so it's likely I will take the moneys that I was paying staff to do this and use that money to make up five hours of programming from somewhere else. What I'm suggesting is that if I'm to do this in addition to that, there will be a charge for it.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, that is an internal matter within your company or corporation.

MR. TRUMBLE: That's an internal matter.

MR. KOWALSKI: It's really none of our business here.

MR. TRUMBLE: Yes.

MR. KOWALSKI: You're just saying that in your budgeting process you need some money in order to continue doing it. Right?

MR. TRUMBLE: That's correct.

MRS. MIROSH: On that point, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On that point, and then we go to . . .

MRS. MIROSH: I just wonder about your community budgeting. Does government pay for community budgeting?

MR. TRUMBLE: No.

MRS. MIROSH: Who pays for community budgeting?

MR. TRUMBLE: We do.

MRS. MIROSH: The company absorbs that?

MS BARRETT: It's part of their licence requirement.

MR. TRUMBLE: It's a licensing requirement; exactly. We set aside money within our budgets to operate the community programming department.

MRS. MIROSH: You aren't subsidized by government in that? Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Was there additional . . .

MR. BOGLE: On that point, your costs are recovered through your subscription fees by the cable subscribers.

MR. TRUMBLE: Yes. What we do is set aside moneys out of cable subscriptions to operate the community programming department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Barrhead, does that pick up all your points for the moment?

MR. KOWALSKI: For the moment, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Cypress-Redcliff, Calgary-Foothills, Edmonton-Highlands, Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of questions. Firstly, this regulation of the CRTC: how old is it? And, again, why is it being enforced now? Because of the new application?

MR. TRUMBLE: It's my understanding that the regulation is as old as 1986. When we reapplied for our licence renewal for our continuation, another five-year licence – they give them to us in five-year parcels – we fell under those regulations. That

is my understanding, that the change existed since 1986. It certainly was something that we were not aware of. But when we renewed, they said: "Okay; now you fall under this new set of rules. Here you go."

MR. HYLAND: So what you've been doing from '72 until now – which is how many years? – sets no priority in law or priority in regulation?

MR. TRUMBLE: Well, that was our point within our letter, which said that we've been doing this since 1972; that alone should exempt us from any changes in the regulation, because our customers expect this service from us. We were unsuccessful in making that point.

MR. HYLAND: Which is true is any other sort of – which was proved true dealing with the Constitution, for example. What happened for years set part of the law that it was judged on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What's the right phrase?

MR. HYLAND: And yet in the CRTC that doesn't follow true.

MR. TRUMBLE: Well, we use a term called "grandfathered." We say it's been grandfathered in place. Apparently not.

MR. HYLAND: So would this be a decision of the whole CRTC board or just some single identity? The Secretary General or other bureaucrat drafted this, it was signed, and it came out. One person has made a decision, and we have to live by that decision?

MR. TRUMBLE: I'm not familiar entirely with the process of which a decision comes out. All I know is that when Ferdinand Bélisle pens his name to it, it becomes the law as far as we are concerned.

MR. HYLAND: So that just goes to show our problems with AGT and others under CRTC is just the beginning of a big problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just quickly on that point, Robert, your discussion with Jim Edwards.

MR. R. DAY: I spoke to Jim Edwards, who is Marcel Masse's parliamentary secretary, with respect to this decision. It was passed by the board in addition to a couple of hundred other decisions. I spoke to him Tuesday, and Jim has committed to research it on behalf of the province. He was surprised himself by the decision but made no specific commitment to whether it could be amended.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There were some 500-odd decisions that have . . .

MR. R. DAY: . . . gone through the board and were sitting in a massive pile on his desk.

MR. McINNIS: Are we aware whether there's an appeal at this stage, or is that something that is being checked?

MR. TRUMBLE: I spoke with the Speaker. It is not our company's policy to appeal CRTC decisions as a whole. To be

perfectly frank, it's not good politics for the cable operator to be appealing. I suggested to the Speaker that if you or his office wanted to follow it up, that's fine, but at this point we'll accept the decision as made. We made our best efforts to have it changed in the first place. I'm not trying to run for the tall grass, only to suggest that we typically don't want to get ourselves into fights with our regulatory body.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Calgary-Foothills, Edmonton-Highlands, Edmonton-Whitemud.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess my initial instinct is that I think the ruling is ridiculous. When you read off the definition of what your mandate is, I don't know what better function fits within a community than the proceedings within a Legislative Assembly. That type of communication I think is very important.

Some of my questions were answered from the questions asked by the Member for Barrhead. But I do feel that possibly we could be looking at making a statement to CRTC that they are interfering with our community operations within our own province. Possibly they could revisit this issue, and I think a strong statement might come from us. I think it's important that all communities, whether they have the higher numbered channels within their community or people have paid for additional converters, et cetera – I don't think that enters into the situation at all. I think the proceedings should be made available to all Albertans, and that's a position I'd like to see us take. I'm quite concerned, when you read that definition, as to why the emphasis in your reply wasn't more on the . . . You do serve the community, and the community is in fact the Legislative Assembly, and we are representatives of that community within this Legislature. That should be communicated, I think, back to the CRTC.

MR. TRUMBLE: Those were two issues that were made pretty strongly, I believe, in the positive interventions by Mr. Laurence Decore and the Speaker. They made both those points in their interventional letters, and they were acknowledged in the decision. As you can see on page 2, they're acknowledged, but it's suggested that it wasn't enough to convince them otherwise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That lets you know where the two of us stand. It's okay. We'll get xeroxed copies of that definition for you as well. Thank you.

MS BARRETT: Pat and I were talking about this, and I said, "Wait till you hear the motion I want to move." This is a ridiculous decision. I personally have had to fight the CRTC on issues before, and it goes a long way back, to my support for what was then just commonly known as CKUA radio and later ACCESS radio. I have a little bit of the Saul Alinsky influence in my life, Mr. Chairman, and therefore I move that this committee reject acceptance of this decision and forward a strongly worded appeal on behalf of all members of this committee representing, as we do, all the political parties represented in the Assembly, and ask that reassessment of this decision be made in light of the fact that the decision was made as one of some 500 in a rafter, and secondly, make all of the points that are relevant to our case, including that not all subscribers have access to the higher band channels, and ask them to do this as quickly as possible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We now have a motion before us.

Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, just a couple of questions; first of all, to Mr. Trumble. If you can just back up a bit in history, because I haven't been here that long, when this programming started, was it done because Videotron approached, let's say, the Speaker's office and wanted to do it? Or did the Legislative Assembly, through the Speaker's office, approach you and request to have it done? Like, who wanted the initial benefit?

MR. TRUMBLE: The president and founder of QCTV, Mr. Ed Polanski, as is my understanding of history, pressed the Alberta Legislature to allow cameras in and was successful in it becoming the first body of this variety to be telecast on television in all of Canada.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the British Commonwealth, is my understanding.

MR. KOWALSKI: That's true.

MR. WICKMAN: So without question, then, there must have been some perception at the time that it would enhance the attractiveness for people to hook up to the cable system by in fact including this as a channel.

MR. TRUMBLE: May I provide just a piece of trivia to you? In the original AGT microwave setup that brings signals from a place called Mount Kelly, which straddles down near the border where we receive the Spokane area network signals off air and transport them via microwave all the way up 27-odd hops to Edmonton through Calgary, there was originally, I understand, an intention to provide one reverse-link microwave, and the Alberta legislative proceedings would be simulcastly transmitted in Calgary on the cable system. That was the original sort of pie-in-the-sky dream of the microwave system that brought channels up: it would also have one channel going south to carry this service into Calgary so that it could be on both cable systems. So the answer to your question, I'm sorry, is yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Does that cable company in Calgary, which is owned by somebody else, pay for that service to Videotron?

MR. TRUMBLE: No, they do not carry the Legislative Assembly proceedings on channel 10.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It should be done by ACCESS.

MR. TRUMBLE: We've got a wonderful opportunity with ACCESS network. Mr. Peter Senchuk approached us about two years ago and said, "We would like to play the proceedings on ACCESS network late at night, similar to what they do with the House of Commons question period." Would we provide them a feed at no charge, and they would simply play it so all of Alberta would get the benefit of seeing this? At the time, our company was bicycling tapes to all of our regional areas that we own: High River, Okotoks, et cetera. "You're saving us money by doing this, by putting it on satellite; absolutely. But I'll make you a deal. You give me a nice Chyron character generator so I can do nice fonts on the members and you've got a deal." So

he gives us the character generator; we give him the signal at no charge. It's a corker of a deal.

MR. WICKMAN: I guess my question, Mr. Chairman, would be that as a cable subscriber myself, and I pay a pretty good price per month, in fact there are channels that are being added, it seems, almost every other month that I'm not necessarily requesting. Because of a negative marketing approach that's used, I now have sports channels and everything else coming, and my bill keeps going up. And I've heard that from a lot of people in the southwest; a lot of people have objected to the approach that is used. Nevertheless, in exchange for what I pay out to Videotron, which is something like \$41 a month, should I not feel entitled to receive the benefit of the Legislative Assembly during question period even if it means that Videotron picks up the tab from their overall budget, in which they get the revenues from the various subscribers? The more options there are to watch on the cable channels, the more attractive it is to the consumer and the more possibilities there are to generate additional revenue. Why can your company not just cover the cost?

MR. TRUMBLE: Well, we have covered the cost in the past because it was a part of the community station. We covered all the costs and passed the signal on free to, say, Shaw Cablesystems. They didn't pay us anything. As a matter of fact, they do us a service by carrying it through. And the same with ACCESS; we provided it at no charge to them, so we were kind of a loss leader, if you will, in this situation.

MR. WICKMAN: I can understand that it can't come out of your budget, because I accept your argument that you have to make up that five hours a week of programming. That's going to cost money. However, your programming is just a small portion of the overall budget of Videotron, and I question why the corporation itself can't continue to provide this as a service to the people like myself who subscribe to it. What happens if we refuse to pay this? Will Videotron discontinue the service?

MR. TRUMBLE: That is the inference at this point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could I ask one thing at this stage? I understand that our signal from question period gets bounced around into other provinces sometimes. Are you aware of that? There are people on Vancouver Island who watch Alberta question period and somewhere in the eastern Arctic. Do you know what those connections are?

MR. TRUMBLE: That would likely be because the ACCESS network satellite footprint I believe extends all the way from the Manitoba border to the north, probably about as far south as the bottom half of Montana, and all the way out to the coast.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What a scary concept.

MS BARRETT: And that's just a footprint.

MR. TRUMBLE: We have, incidentally, been approached by CPAC, the Canadian Parliamentary Affairs Channel, which is being spearheaded by Philip Lind, who is the senior vice-president of Rogers Network Systems, to provide to them copies of our question period two to three times per week - on approval, obviously, of yourselves - which would be telecast on

the public affairs channel nationwide.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, my last comment would be that I was surprised after the last session, and during the session, at the number of people who told me that, you know, they watch question period on a regular basis. There is a great audience out there. I had a hard time believing it, but people do; some people make a point of watching it every night. And I would suggest that by doing it, it's a benefit to your company. If you discontinued it, what you would find happening is people phoning and saying they want their cable disconnected, because they expect that service, just like the protest when PBS was being threatened.

MS BARRETT: May I make a point on this, please?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Upon this point, Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. There's an additional point to be made here, Percy, and that is that if we don't fight the CRTC, even if they want to pick up the tab themselves, Videotron will not be allowed to offer the service on cable 10 in the low band area. For that reason alone I think we should start at that point, which is not to say that your points aren't valid; they are. But I think that just keeping it on channel 10 is a matter of right for the people who already get it.

MR. WICKMAN: That portion we should fight.

MS BARRETT: Yup.

MR. WICKMAN: But that's not related to the budget.

MR. TRUMBLE: We anticipate negative fallout in any case, whether we carry it or not carry it, as soon as it does not show up on channel 10. Unfortunately, our company will bear the brunt of the negative reaction, because people will call us and say, "What have you done?" We hate to be in a pass-the-buck routine that says: "It's not our fault; it's the regulatory person's fault."

MR. KOWALSKI: There's almost a suggestion here that the ratings are so high that you'd better reconsider.

AN HON. MEMBER: We should sell commercial space.

MS BARRETT: How about we join the actors' guild? Eighty-three new members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I can envision a question period where finally the Chair gets a chance for a breather. "We're going to have a five-minute break while you flash commercials."

MS BARRETT: I think all 83 of us should apply for membership in the actors' guild.

MR. WICKMAN: It has higher ratings than *The Young and the Restless*. Especially after I watched that media video tape of Pam: "The party's at my house." Maybe you haven't seen it, Pam.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Cypress-Redcliff, Edmonton-Jasper

Place.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, a question as to the way the motion is worded. Is the appeal to the chairman of CRTC? Do we assume out of that we'll send a copy to the minister responsible and ask for anything he can do related to it?

MS BARRETT: Excellent idea.

MR. HYLAND: I think it wouldn't hurt to touch that base.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A friendly amendment incorporated in the motion.

MS BARRETT: Right on. No problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional comments, Cypress-Redcliff? Okay; Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: A couple of questions. The broadcast is live on channel 10 and rebroadcast on ACCESS, channel 9. Is that correct?

MR. TRUMBLE: The broadcast is carried live Monday through Thursday at 2:30. We tape delay Friday, but only because you people sit early on Friday. It's hard for viewers to understand why you're sitting early on Friday, so we tape delay it so that it's consistently at 2:30 every day. The program is taped simultaneously at ACCESS. I notice that in your memo you've got ACCESS - that ACCESS charge is a link charge over to their office. They record it simultaneously, and then they tape delay broadcast at 11 o'clock each evening.

MR. McINNIS: So presuming we continue to have a broadcast, the rebroadcast at 11 o'clock on the low-range band wouldn't be affected by the CRTC decision.

The second question is: do you have any idea what will replace this broadcast under the new regime?

MR. TRUMBLE: No. As Mr. Wickman has correctly pointed out, it was five good hours per week. I don't know exactly what Edmonton will replace it with.

MR. McINNIS: Well, it has its fans. I share Percy's experience; it's surprising the number of people who actually watch it. And it couldn't be more convenient from the point of view of the Assembly and I suppose the taxpayers: the fact that you've borne the production cost in its broadcast not once but twice in the day on the lower band channels. So I'd like us to try to preserve that.

Mike, do you know whether we can legally appeal a decision that we're not a party to or . . .

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of what the appeal procedure is for this. The regulations are passed by the CRTC pursuant to their legislation, and I could research to see if there is an appeal mechanism.

MR. McINNIS: The motion, I think, is basically to fight with whatever means we can.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, you bet.

MR. McINNIS: I think at some point we have to consider our alternatives as well, and that's what's in here, but that's not part of this motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. We'll go on to the broader spectrum of things after Brad's been through all this mill, through this scrum.

Do you have another comment?

MR. TRUMBLE: I was going to say that there is an appeal process. Dr. Charles Allard used it for *CBC Newsworld*. There is a pseudo appeal process in place. I don't know all about it.

AN HON. MEMBER: To cabinet?

MR. BOGLE: Right; it's to cabinet.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We'll check that via legal counsel, and that will be an addition to any follow-up we've already started to initiate through the parliamentary secretary to Marcel Masse, if the motion carries.

Additional comment with respect to the motion?

MR. KOWALSKI: Oh, sorry. No, not the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The motion again, Louise, as much as you've been able to decode it.

MS BARRETT: I do speak in paragraphs, don't I?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Welcome to the club.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Motion by Ms Barrett:

That this committee reject acceptance of this decision and forward a strongly worded appeal on behalf of this committee and ask that reassessment of this decision be made in light of the fact that this decision was made in line with . . .

MS BARRETT: Just drop the rest of it. Forget it. You get the point: one of 500, probably all doubled in two days.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes, one in 500.

. . . and make the point that not everyone in Alberta has access to the higher band channels, and this be done as quickly as possible.

Then an amendment . . .

MS BARRETT: I move that you approve that speech.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. So the motion, which will be suitably boiled down, will be to make an appeal to the CRTC with respect to the decision regarding Videotron and the coverage of this Legislature.

MR. HYLAND: In the amendment I put in about the minister.

MS BARRETT: Yeah; cc to the minister.

MRS. BLACK: And the Prime Minister.

MS BARRETT: Okay. And the Prime Minister. She says the Prime Minister too.

MR. HYLAND: I don't think it would do any good.

MS BARRETT: Oh, oh. Did you catch that comment, *Hansard*?

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Is there a call for the question with respect to the motion, which is to make an appeal to the CRTC decision?

MR. KOWALSKI: Agreed.

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

Okay, Brad. I guess that's where we are at the moment. Thank you for coming.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to address one more question to Mr. Trumble, if I may.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, sorry. Any more questions through to Brad?

MR. KOWALSKI: Sure. It's the context, really, of the question period that right now has been done. In the past, in the experience Videotron and your predecessor had with covering the proceedings of the Alberta Legislative Assembly, was any thought ever given to extending that coverage beyond just simply the question period and going into the other proceedings of the day? I know there had been various discussions around this table in the past, but do you know if an analysis was ever done as to what the costs might be with respect to such a question?

MR. TRUMBLE: I think I provided you with something last year.

MR. KOWALSKI: Was that provided last year, Mr. Chairman? I can't . . .

MR. TRUMBLE: I think we did talk about gavel-to-gavel coverage, yes, although we've . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: From '79 to '82 we were gavel to gavel, weren't we?

MR. TRUMBLE: No, I don't think we were.

I'm sorry. To simply answer your question, at the time the Legislature, I believe, was under renovation and there was television coverage of your own nature being contemplated, I believe I did score up some ideas as to how much it would cost. There would be a cost there, because now we're talking about a significant commitment of resources to complete that. I believe at that time I sent that off to yourselves. But a couple of years ago that was contemplated, yes. However, that would not likely be carried in its entirety on the community station. We were thinking about telecasting the question period as part of the community telecast and then breaking away and putting it on another public affairs kind of channel at that point. But yes, there was some contemplation and, as far as I know, that was about two or three years ago, and there would be a cost to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the Assembly were to do that, would they have to find their own channel, or do we have to do it through a cable company or somebody else?

MR. TRUMBLE: At the time we put together the proposal, we were willing to commit a channel toward that, but I can only speak for myself and not for Shaw Cablesystems or for the systems in Calgary. They just may not go along with this at all.

MR. KOWALSKI: Can you even remember a ballpark figure of what it might cost if it were four hours or five hours a day as compared to the one hour a day?

MR. TRUMBLE: I'm sorry, I don't have the . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: I know it's an unfair question. You weren't given warning of it, but . . .

MR. TRUMBLE: A guesstimate. We've worked out a cost here for this coverage of, I think it was, \$1,400 per week. I think you could almost take that figure and multiply it by about four or five, because there'd be four . . . This was based on an hourly of one hour per day, so it would be about four or five times that on a weekly basis to do four or five hours per day. That's a fair kind of estimate.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the motion only dealt with the question of appeal, so my question to Mr. Trumble is: what can we expect when the House convenes on March 8?

MR. TRUMBLE: Now that the decision has been rendered, it will look like . . . You'll notice that previous to this decision being rendered, we telecast you on channel 10, if you will, in contravention. But it's almost like having appeal before the courts; we felt we were absolved from that while we had our licence application. We have committed to the Speaker that we will put the Speech from the Throne and the opening ceremonies on channel 10 regardless, because we think it's a strong enough community event. After that, it will likely go on channel 19.

MR. WICKMAN: The company will cover the costs.

AN HON. MEMBER: That is the question.

MR. TRUMBLE: For the opening, absolutely.

MR. WICKMAN: No, I mean the question period. I'm very, very concerned about this, Mr. Chairman. We'd lose a great deal and the consumer out there would lose a great deal if it were discontinued.

MR. TRUMBLE: Well, you've put me in a position of suggesting that I've asked you for money because there are inherent costs I will have to absorb, but if you don't pay me any of this money, that's okay, I'll do it anyway. You place me in a position of compromising my negotiation by asking the question. Do you follow what I'm saying?

MS BARRETT: It's too late, Brad. You answered the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a concept of fairness.

MR. TRUMBLE: A concept of fairness – that's a very good

point – is what it comes down to. We will have to reassess it. Our company will have to reassess it.

MR. WICKMAN: But is it something you can continue to communicate with the Speaker's office, so the Speaker can keep us informed as to what's happening in case we have to meet again for a decision? I don't want to see it discontinued. I don't.

MS BARRETT: Nobody does.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All righty.

MRS. MIROSH: We're asking the people of Alberta to pay twice if this is not overturned. I mean, the taxpayers are paying . . . They have to pay for the video, whatever it is, their cable, and then they have to pay for whatever it costs us to get this coverage.

MR. HYLAND: The CRTC says that's okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the meantime it's interesting to note that we have been something like a ship in the North Sea. We're a pirate station in contravention of the CRTC.

MR. HYLAND: For how long have you been a pirate?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hey, that's why I wear that funny-shaped hat.

Any other questions for Brad at this time? Okay. Thank you, Brad. I appreciate we'll see you then.

MR. TRUMBLE: Thanks very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Brad, if we could also have a copy of the letter that was sent to CRTC in the package.

DR. McNEIL: And that definition of the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the definition of community programs.

MS BARRETT: Who gets to draft the letter?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I guess we do.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are a couple of other matters about that. One of the issues that was brought up was the CPAC, Canadian Parliamentary Affairs Channel. A report was filed in the House of Commons. The committee had been chaired by . . . What's his name, Bob, Taber-Warner? Chuck Cook?

MR. BOGLE: Chuck Cook of Vancouver.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Chuck Cook. The report has received some media attention, but it's only a report from a committee to the House at this stage. I reviewed the document last week, and one of the interesting things that struck me was that there was precious little attempt to communicate with other Legislatures as to what they were doing. In fact, the committee only dealt with Ottawa and only visited Toronto. So once again they seem to forget there are a few other spots in the country that have been involved in this for some time. They also want to then interpret some restrictions about how the cameras are to move

in the House, the types of coverage, and there's one throwaway line in that document that says of course this will apply across the country. I was fortunately being driven to Calgary, so at least I wasn't at the wheel when I erupted on that one.

Tomorrow we start our meetings of presiding officers in Toronto. It's one of the issues I'm going to bring forward to the Table for the other Speakers and Deputy Speakers, that it's an issue they need to look at and review and get some more input on in terms of the federal committee, whether they want to listen or not. But the point is that this report which is out there . . . If any of you are interested, there are copies in the Clerk's office and my office, and we could run quick copies of them if you wish to review. But again, it's a report to the House which has not been adopted.

These community definitions are now coming around. Perhaps if you put CRTC at the top of the page, it'll give you a bit of a clue.

MRS. BLACK: This is their definition?

MR. CHAIRMAN: From the CRTC. This is the one that Brad Trumble referred to.

Now, by way of additional information, committee members . . . Robert, I think you have this in another file for distribution. The other costs we have here relate to what would be the cost to do our own system. Now, I'm not putting this before you as an advocate of it. I'm just giving it to you so you've got it to reflect upon over the next while, because there are very substantial dollars involved in this. The letter before you is the capital costs involved for doing our own Legislative Assembly in-house television system of \$1.1 million and the additional changes to the sound system of a quarter of a million. So it would cost, as far as we know, \$1.35 million to have to do the initial purchase of equipment and so forth to run our own system, which would make it similar to the Saskatchewan system which, in my opinion, is the best in this country. Then in addition to that, we have the operational costs, and that would be on a per-year basis of \$153,000. You have the grand total there for the initial year of operation, the capital costs and the operational, of \$1.5 million.

The other interesting fact is that in order to put it in place, it would take us a minimum of 44 weeks from the final decision and approval to go. So you're talking about at least a year before you could do it, and that has ramifications from what we've heard in terms of the Videotron discussion. But again, our House is geared up to do this. When we did the renovations, we had the various camera ports established if we need to go to that at some future time in history.

Then the last note there, of course, is the fact that there's no provision for linking to commercial broadcasting or cable TV. If cable television was prepared to take it, such as Videotron, Brad had indicated they might be able to dedicate a channel for that purpose.

There's one other piece of information which we would like to share with you. I had asked Robert to make an initial contact with the other cable companies, so would you like to give a brief reporting on that, please?

MR. R. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I spoke to Shaw cable, their vice-president of operations – who in turn has briefed Mr. Shaw, the owner, and Jim Shaw Jr., the executive VP – that if we were in a situation to send out a bid because we were no longer in a position where the service could be provided free of charge,

would they be interested? The response was yes. After one discussion with Mr. Shaw, Mr. Biswanger called me back and said there was a potential because they were going to be bidding on half of Calgary, which is currently for sale; that they would file an application with CRTC on the basis that this would be of significant benefit, again under the community definition, and if they were successful in the Calgary application, they would likely carry it free of charge, at no cost to the Assembly, because they see it as being of significant benefit. Shaw's reach will exceed that of Shaw cable if the Calgary situation comes across.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shaw's cable area, you mean, will exceed Videotron's.

MR. R. DAY: It will exceed Videotron's. Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The other question raised is if the CRTC has said no to Videotron, will the CRTC then say no to Shaw?

MR. R. DAY: Mr. Biswanger's opinion was that when they count the number of households that it will reach, that could have an impact and could have had a bearing on this decision. He also commented that regardless of CRTC, they just may find it of benefit, regardless, to be able to broadcast it as part of the cable package.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. So what we have before us are at least four different elements that I can see: no coverage whatsoever; continued coverage, either at a cost to us or free by Videotron; an approach by Shaw; and then the other one was this massive figure to have to choke on of doing our own system.

Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place, followed by Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to put a motion on the table, and see if it flies. That motion would be that we direct your office to negotiate with Videotron an acceptable financial arrangement to ensure that question period is covered in the forthcoming session.

Just speaking to that, Mr. Chairman, I have some concern with the history of this. Certainly Videotron has found themselves in a spot beyond their control because of a decision by the CRTC, but at the same time, one has to look at Videotron, one has to look at their consumers, at their revenue. There is no question that they benefit by having this program, because it does attract viewers. In his particular budget, this gentleman has a problem. Obviously he does. However, that doesn't escape the entire company from sharing some of the responsibility. To simply pass on the entire cost to us for something they wanted to initiate in the first place, which was a good initiation, I think is unfair. I think there has to be some type of compromise where we recognize there's a benefit to the people we serve, our constituents who choose to watch it. At the same time Videotron has to recognize it's of benefit to them in serving their viewers that they charge to get the additional services cable now provides.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

On the motion, Edmonton-Jasper Place, Edmonton-Highlands, and Barrhead.

MR. McINNIS: Obviously, if you put before anybody a choice between spending \$1.5 million and getting no coverage this year

and spending \$22,000 and getting coverage this year, it's not very difficult to come to a choice. The thing is, why does it cost them \$22,000 and us \$1.5 million? Do they own all the equipment?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They own all the equipment.

MR. McINNIS: So they would take their things home and we'd have to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: And we have to do console installations as well as cameras, then some changes to these camera ports, two here and two on the other side.

MR. HYLAND: And they're just doing cameras off the floor.

MR. McINNIS: Yeah, this is different technology. I appreciate that.

DR. McNEIL: We'd have to have our own studio and . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have the space for it.

MR. McINNIS: I suppose there is some degree of logic in the CRTC decision. Cable companies are obliged to provide a community channel so that people who usually don't have access to the media have access, and it would be possible for an unscrupulous operator to fill up all that time with city council, Legislative Assembly, House of Commons, school board, whatever, because they're cheap. I mean, we write the script for them and act it out. All they have to do is film it, in effect. Although some people have noticed the questions a little better than the answers in there. I don't know. I shouldn't say that. It's the wrong forum for that comment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm afraid it applies equally on both sides.

MS BARRETT: The Speaker's always fair.

MR. McINNIS: Anyway, I'm hoping we could negotiate that \$22,000 figure downward, because I think there is some sense in which the cable company benefits from this as well.

The other thing I wonder is: the other operators that are picking it up, why there isn't some possibility they could share in the production costs as well. It's one thing for them to say, "Well, we'll take it if we get it," but I wonder why it should fall on one operator to do the production if others are carrying the broadcast.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would also be interesting in the estimates if you were to get the minister responsible to have ACCESS pick up their own charges too.

Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: This will just take me a minute. I know I have some questions here. Ah, yes. Okay. First of all, this television system. Is this the sort that has the automatic eye that goes to the person who's speaking?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

MS BARRETT: That's right? Okay. Does the sound system involve . . . Now, you may recall that we talked about this a couple of years ago in Members' Services, Mr. Chairman, the

suggestion that we have timers on our speakers. Would the sound system include that or no?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd have to double check on that one, whether we have it or not.

MR. HYLAND: Do you think anybody would pay any attention to it?

MS BARRETT: Yeah, yeah, because they click off automatically. I mean, the whole subject here was going over time, et cetera, et cetera. So they would go off automatically.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe it does, but we'll double check.

MS BARRETT: We need that for you. Not for me. I'm Greek, remember. I'm short.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Short in speech?

MS BARRETT: I think I conform to my height, don't you know?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ah, very good.

MS BARRETT: Okay. So . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: When do we get quality?

MS BARRETT: You've had that the whole time, dear. The problem is in the eye of the beholder. You just don't understand.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order, order.

MS BARRETT: Okay. How come, then, you would need the manpower, supplies and services element if the whole thing is automated?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Because you'd still need a technician and a producer in terms of doing this and doing the maintenance.

DR. McNEIL: The maintenance of the equipment and so on.

MS BARRETT: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And this again is modeled on the Saskatchewan numbers.

MS BARRETT: Okay. There is no motion for us to deal with this at this point, but it seems to me . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, I made a motion, Pam.

MS BARRETT: To deal with this? No. Your motion had to do with Videotron.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right. And we haven't passed or defeated it yet.

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, that. No, I didn't want to make a motion on that. I made a motion to resolve the problem.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, but somehow or other between your motion and the time I got the floor we ended up on this page, so can I continue for a minute then, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: As long as you don't give us a motion just yet.

MS BARRETT: No, I won't. In fact, what I was going to ask, though, is: is there any reason we couldn't ask around for a couple of other quotes on this, or is it so specialized that only this company could do it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is now in regard to . . .

MS BARRETT: This is now in regard to the memo from Robert Day to you regarding our own television system.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On that one, when we last ran it, it was done with estimates. In terms of the equipment installation, at last report there were only two in the whole world, one in London, England, and one in Los Angeles, which is really a Japanese company. But that was our last input on this, so we could do an update if that's what you'd like.

MS BARRETT: But isn't Woolfenden Hamilton local?

MR. R. DAY: They're the architects that had designed . . .

MS BARRETT: Right. That's how I know the name.

MR. R. DAY: . . . the capability to carry this specialized equipment.

MS BARRETT: Okay. So there would be nobody else we could ask, then, or are they quoting from both their sources and giving us their best quote?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's them working in conjunction with Public Works, Supply and Services and again dealing on this worldwide basis as to the technology. Again, this is from referencing the Saskatchewan experience. The most recent automated one is Ontario, but we can update this one.

MS BARRETT: Okay. One more question. If we were to go to this trouble and the annual expense of the operational costs, I wasn't sure if we got a commitment from Videotron and anybody else who would carry the signal if we could get our own channel. Was that categorically stated or just sort of suggested?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, Robert.

MR. R. DAY: If I can, I'd like to make two comments about the 153. When the sound booth got moved up into Mr. Speaker's gallery, some staff were retained. This cost will be impacted by *Hansard* having some people on staff. It's a worst case number, the 153. It contemplates obviously bringing in technicians for maintenance and video tapes, et cetera, but it's a worst case number because we could share some of them with *Hansard*.

My second comment . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: One of the other features is that this costing would then allow gavel-to-gavel coverage.

MR. R. DAY: Correct. Oh, I'm sorry. All we need is a requirement under the note. It's broadcast quality here, but we need a commitment for a commercial broadcaster or a cable network to link to it. There is a cost associated, but it would have to be quoted.

MS BARRETT: Okay, Mr. Chairman. One final comment, then. I think this is worth the continuing investigation. I don't want to supersede the motion that's already on the floor, but I would like to recommend to this committee that we ask the cable companies if they would be prepared to do it, because there's obviously no sense in investing this money if it ain't going to be used.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Barrhead, the motion before us at the moment is with regard to Videotron and . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I want to speak against the motion, and I also want to point out that I think what we're doing right now is unethical and very improper. We have a matter before this committee right now, and I'm totally opposed to the motion put forward by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud where he says that you should be requested to negotiate an arrangement with Videotron. What is appropriate? This committee has been provided information from a firm that does business in this province, and we have placed before a public meeting information with respect to a contract that firm might have with this particular committee. That, I think, should be viewed as internal information for the benefit of the members of this committee. It would only be proper if we were to instruct or come around to a decision that would basically ask for a public request for a proposal with respect to coverage of the question period in the Alberta Legislative Assembly and offer that in a very public environment so anyone in the province of Alberta might bid on that, and any information that has been provided by your executive assistant or anyone else about alternatives I think has to be viewed as internal information of this committee and should not be in the public record.

Nothing could be more devastating to the tendering process and the openness of operating than to have someone's particular financial package brought before this in a public environment and have it played in the papers tomorrow, saying that this committee wants to whittle down Videotron because they're . . . I don't know what the implications are, but that's not the way to do business. That's not the honest, open way of doing business.

So I would ask our members to defeat the motion put forward by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. I'd be very, very happy to raise an alternate motion with respect to it, and I have it written in front of me.

MR. McINNIS: Just a question before we vote on it. If we go to a tendering system . . . It's now January 18 today, is it?

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. McINNIS: The Assembly may be in session as early as late February. Is there any chance we can get that done in time for this session? We're talking about missing a session, I guess, is the question in my mind.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We believe there is enough time to achieve something productive.

MR. McINNIS: With the tendering process?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Whitemud, speaking in conclusion on the motion.

MR. WICKMAN: A question, Mr. Chairman. The indication given earlier was that this equipment was initially installed by and on behalf of Videotron in the Legislative Assembly. At that particular time was there some type of agreement that it became the ownership of the government so we're in a position that we, in fact, can use that equipment, or are we going back to a system where that all has to be redone? Are we boxed in, in other words?

MR. CHAIRMAN: My understanding is that all the equipment there is indeed theirs, but we have all the interconnects there that we put in place in the renovation.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, with no disrespect to the Member for Barrhead, you see the position we're in. We're boxed in. You can go out for tenders; you can go out for our own system. Nevertheless, when we look at the time between now and when the session will open, the time isn't there for that. If we want to provide coverage, allow Albertans to view it, we really have to negotiate with this one company. To put it out for tender, who else is going to be interested? Other than Videotron, you may have Shaw, but Shaw would have to put in their own equipment. How could they possibly compete against the bid? It's not unreasonable to have an item or a service that could only be offered by a very small, limited number of companies to negotiate directly. It's got nothing to do with upstaging the tendering process. I still hold that my motion could resolve the problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question on the motion. Those in favour of the motion as moved by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, please signify. Opposed? The motion is defeated. Thank you.

The Member for Barrhead had a motion.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Chairman, I would like to move the following motion:

That the Members' Services Committee direct the Speaker to issue a public request for proposals with respect to coverage of the question period in the Alberta Legislative Assembly.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

From the Chair to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands, we'll take it as direction that we continue to do some update on this other sheet.

MS BARRETT: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Is it the wish of the committee in respect to comments made previously by the Member for Barrhead . . . Does the committee wish to send back some paper to my executive assistant here,

or do you keep that in your files?

MR. McINNIS: Send it back.

MS BARRETT: Is it this paper?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, the sheet that talked earlier about the ACCESS cost and the proposed cost from Videotron.

MS BARRETT: Oh, you want . . . Okay.

MR. McINNIS: Would it be all right if we tear off the covering memo?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, just give me back the covering letter dated January 17.

MR. McINNIS: You want the Woolfenden, Hamilton, Brown note?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, you can have that one. That one is . . . That's quite fine. Well, thank you very much for that interesting diversion, but we have no alternative.

All right. Now, I'm sure we go back to some very mundane issues here. Item 5, Government Members' Office Estimates. Is there any motion with regard to this section? Any comments?

MR. WICKMAN: Well, my motion is still on the floor, Mr. Chairman.

MRS. BLACK: What was your motion?

MR. WICKMAN: My motion was the motion that was distributed just prior to the break.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. At that stage I had comments from Edmonton-Whitemud, Edmonton-Highlands, the Clerk, and Edmonton-Whitemud. So are there any other members that want to speak to this? All right, Edmonton-Whitemud. Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I guess I'm again going to make an appeal to this committee to be fair, to recognize that particularly in opposition we all have a responsibility to do. We all want to do that responsibility in the same fashion as far as effectiveness and efficiency are concerned. I guess what's good for the goose is good for the gander.

No matter how you break it down, no matter how you look at past history, there were formulas there that were accepted. The formula was such that member allowances were so much per member for each caucus. The leader allowance was different. Of course, the leader allowance has to be different because, for example, within the government caucus the leader of the government, the Premier, gets his dollars from some other budget. Our leader doesn't have that opportunity; it all comes out of the same budget. So you can't put it all into one global pot and just divide by the number of members and say that's the per member allowance. You have a distinct budget for the leader.

I say that to be fair we have to in fact start from an equalized point. We have to have an equal base on a per member basis. We retain the formula that was there before. I'm prepared to make the necessary motion to allow for that catch-up for the

Liberal caucus, which is pinned down at something like 9.4 percent, but I point out that in that 9.4 percent the \$16,000 we had already received, by my interpretation of the figures, has been subtracted. In other words, I've gone back even further than that \$16,000 I recovered. Nevertheless, I am prepared to make that motion to receive that 9.4 percent, put us on the same basis, and then we'd look at the whole matter. Mr. Chairman, whether the base is \$36,000 a member and we decrease that to \$34,000 a member, that's fine. I can buy that as long as it's on the basis of per member so that it's fair to all caucuses. If we want to increase it by 5 percent, which I advocate, a 5 percent increase on an equalized basis, that's fair. That's very, very fair to me, and that's a second motion I have if we accept this first motion.

The basic matter that I'm saying, the point I'm raising, Mr. Chairman, is that we as a caucus can't be left in the dust. We can't be left behind. We have to have the same resources on a per member basis as the other opposition caucus. The government caucus is different. They still are entitled to, with the exception of cabinet ministers, the same per member, but their total caucus has other resources to fall back on. But there's no way I'm going to sit back here and see us fall behind what the New Democrats have in their budget. We can hire additional researchers if that's what it's going to take, but we have to keep pace. That's part of the democratic process, and fairness is part of the democratic process. To be fair, the first thing we have to do is accept the equalized basis for a per member allowance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I guess I've had this go-round now four years in a row. I have always spoken against the formula funding, as has the other member of the Official Opposition on this committee, as did Percy's predecessor, Nick Taylor. What I show here, based on the budget proposals as in our books, is that the government members on a per cap basis would be asking for \$42,804, the Official Opposition would be asking for \$59,772, and the Liberals, \$63,870. I'm not sure why Percy would want to speak against that, and he says . . .

MR. WICKMAN: That includes the leader's portion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, please. Hold it.

MS BARRETT: Just a moment. That also includes the leader's portion for the Official Opposition, you see, Percy. So you know the argument doesn't just cut on the one line – that is, the Liberal caucus – it would cut on two lines at least, which would be the Official Opposition caucus as well.

I know what's going on here really is a debate about whether or not the formula continues to exist or not. I am of the view, and have been of the view since February 13, 1989, that it no longer existed. I argued on that date that if a principle was to be established, it should be consistent, and because there was no principle being established, there was no consistency, to which Nick responded, and I quote from page 155: "As far as the allowance for an MLA for future years, that's up to each one." I think he made the case quite strongly. I do know that Nick argued with me and Gordon against the notion of a formula funding in the first instance, and I would refer Percy to the *Hansard* of Members' Services Committee meetings from 1986 on this matter and again in 1987, particularly when we were facing a budget cut of 20 percent. As I recall, Gordon, Nick,

and I all voted in the same direction.

So in any event, I think that the numbers might account for economies of scale. What you will see is that the larger the group gets, the relatively smaller the per cap allowance is for support staff, and that makes sense to me. It was a principle that I advocated in 1986, and I haven't abandoned it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Additional comment on this motion?

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question with regard to the motion.

MR. WICKMAN: Can I close debate, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Indeed.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to have to ask a couple of questions here, and I would hope they could be answered. I guess the bottom line is that what we have to look at is not the hokery-pokery we see here in this sheet that's been distributed that includes the leader's portion. What we have to look at is how many actual dollars more – real dollars more – on a percentage basis have the New Democrats got than the Liberals in terms of looking at the current year and the projected expenditure that's forthcoming or that has been submitted. I think that's the real test, Mr. Chairman. I think it'll point out to you right off the bat that the difference on a per member basis – the Liberal caucus is assessed at \$32,000 a member; the New Democrats, \$36,000. So right off the bat we come in from the starting gate 9.4 percent behind. Then we look at the figures that have been submitted. Then on top of that there is a request by the government caucus for an increase of 18 percent, 19 percent, whatever; by the New Democrat caucus of 16 percent roughly.

You look at our request, which I feel is more realistic in terms of what's happening out there in the real world, what we're doing to hospitals and school boards and such, and you look at if that's accepted. What's happening here, we're going to end up with a disparity between the two caucuses on a per member basis of something like roughly a 21 percent difference. In other words, 21 percent less per member we would have to function with as an opposition – and a third-party opposition. I ask you, is that fair? Is that reasonable?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for concluding the debate.

All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed? Defeated. Thank you.

Now with respect to section 5, Government Members. Any other comments? Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, the government members' submission reflects . . . I'd just like to give a quick overview. From 1986 to '87 we experienced a 20 percent reduction. In '87 to '88 we kept our budget on hold at zero. In '88-89 we reflected a wage increase at roughly 8 to 10 percent; I'm not sure. Now we're experiencing, basically, a difficulty with staff increases, wage increases, benefit increases, and I'd like to make a motion that we change our numbers under general caucus budget from 18.9 percent to 15 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: From 18.9 to 15 percent. Okay, that's a

motion.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry. Just hang on. Okay, you're saying to change the 18.6 figure or the 18.9 figure?

MRS. MIROSH: The 18.9.

MR. WICKMAN: To what? Fifteen?

MRS. MIROSH: Right.

MR. WICKMAN: So then the net increase at the very bottom – total expenditure – would become what, David? About 14.7?

DR. McNEIL: I'd have to calculate.

MRS. MIROSH: We'd have to figure that one out.

MR. BOGLE: May I make an editorial comment? I did have a discussion with David McNeil yesterday because I was troubled that we were lumping in payments to members with our general caucus budgets, because it tends to skew the picture.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Especially when they're new.

MR. BOGLE: Yet as David pointed out to me, while we could move that section over to MLA Administration, these are caucus positions, not MLA positions. So I believe that the motion that's been made by Dianne and our discussions as a committee for all three caucuses should focus on the element described as general caucus budget, because the other portions have been dealt with by a Members' Services order earlier, and we would not be changing in any way. We're really talking about general caucus budgets in all three caucuses.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Okay. The motion before us, then, is to make that figure a 15 percent change rather than an 18.9. Further discussion?

MR. WICKMAN: Well, I'd like to speak on the overall motion, not that particular little amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that is the motion.

MRS. MIROSH: That wasn't an amendment.

MR. WICKMAN: So what is the motion in front of us then?

MR. CHAIRMAN: As you yourself repeated a few minutes ago, hon. member, on the page that is included in section 5, where it says general caucus budget of 18.9 percent – as you pointed out, it's to be 15 percent by this motion.

MR. WICKMAN: So the motion is to increase the general caucus budget for government members by 15 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's correct.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I'm going to speak against that, and I'm going to speak against – I do have a motion here. I don't see any point in distributing it. It's moved that the equalized base be . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. No, no. We've got one motion on the table.

MR. WICKMAN: No, I'm not going to introduce it. I said that I had a motion prepared, but it doesn't make any sense . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, then I can't have you refer to it either.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I don't agree with the 15 percent increase for any of the caucuses. I feel that a 5 percent increase for all the caucuses on an equalized basis would have been a fair way to handle it. I think that would have been more reflective of what's happening out there today, and I think we just dig ourselves in here a bit deeper when we send this message out to the public that we're asking them to hold the line but then at the same time we're prepared to advocate a 15 percent increase within our own caucuses. Again, 5 percent I figure would have been much more reasonable. Now, of course it's going to come further down the road that the Liberal caucus budget is going to be dealt with, and I'm placed in that position. Do we run from behind, or do I do what I can't really even feel is the realistic reflection of what should be happening? I can't support this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Further discussion?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I guess it's only discussion, because it has now been stated many times in this meeting here today by my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud. I think I want to react at this time to some of the statements he's made, particularly the "running behind" statement. I was a member of this committee several years ago, as were several other people, and we had very, very lengthy discussions with respect to caucus budgets and caucus presentations. There came a point in time, in the fall of 1988 and the early part of 1989, when it was made very, very clear to all of the hon. members on this particular committee that there was a position being advocated by the Liberal Party. It was very, very clear. That position was advocated by the leader of the Liberal Party, who spoke on behalf of the caucus of the Liberal Party and said that this was the position that the Liberal Party wanted. Thorough debate took place on that, and there should be no misunderstanding in anybody's mind as to what was being discussed and what was finally arrived at. That principle was established.

Then in 1989 shortly after the provincial election we got another position, which was 180 degrees opposite to the position that was advocated just a few months earlier. That position was very clear. I recall at the meeting the leader of the Liberal Party looking at me with a big wink in his eye saying, "But we're coming back at another time." That just isn't cricket. That isn't ethical, and that is improper in my view. The Liberal Party has determined what it wants to do, and all the other members of this committee reluctantly agreed with the Liberal Party.

But we're now here in 1990. It's time for the jockeying to end, hon. member, and it's time for ethics to return to this particular committee. The position is very clear. No one should find arguments that are fabricated or anything else based on past history. It's very clear what the Liberal Party wanted, and they can certainly get it today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional comments to the motion? Call for the question.

MS BARRETT: Sure.

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion, please signify. This is 15 percent for the government members. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Well, that's only one part of that. Let's follow through. That means complete acceptance of section 5, agreed?

MS BARRETT: It does. Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Section 6. Does anyone from the ND caucus wish to raise the matter or speak to this?

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll certainly open the discussion on this one. You'll see that the request we've asked for comes to a 17.9 percent increase. As Dianne mentioned earlier, we are still trying to recover from a cut of 20 percent that came down in 1987-88, which despite inflation in fact left us at zero percent increase for the following year so that the year after that we were barely able to offer our staff minimal increases in pay. We had to lay people off, in fact. It was one of the worst parts of the job I have ever experienced.

Now, I don't suppose you guys would go along with 17.9 percent, eh? I have a feeling, Mr. Chairman, that what's taking shape here is that given that we no longer have a formula for caucuses but have a submission based on need and have all made those assessments . . . I can't believe I'm going to do what I'm about to do, but I'm going to propose an amendment to the budget request for the Official Opposition as it's shown in the book under section 6. It shows a request for the caucus budget of a 17.9 percent increase. My experience on this committee tells me that I shall now move that that be reduced to a 15 percent increase for the upcoming fiscal year, which would leave our budget, if my calculator is working right, at \$933,231.

DR. McNEIL: It's 32 actually.

MS BARRETT: Thirty-two? I was close. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That is a motion? Discussion?

MS BARRETT: Yeah. So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion. Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: I would certainly like to point out that this motion still leaves average New Democrats considerably behind average Liberals in terms of overall caucus budgets. But I don't worry too much about that, because we don't have any people drawing more than \$60,000 a year. I think they have a couple, so they need more money. I think I'm prepared to go along with it on that basis.

The 15 percent I think will allow us to take some pressure off the clerical end of our staff, where things have been pretty ragged. When one secretary works for three and sometimes four MLAs, it gets pretty difficult sometimes. We have a priority to

try and relieve some of that stress, and the 15 percent will allow us to do that.

MS BARRETT: Someone whose calculator works better than mine says that the overall increase, then, for our caucus would come to 13.7 percent.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MS BARRETT: Thank you for both of your calculators. It comes to \$58,327 on a per cap basis.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see: in the overall. Thank you. I was getting on the wrong page here for awhile. All righty. But the motion still is to reduce the general caucus budget to 15 percent.

MS BARRETT: Yes. It's an amendment actually.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there a call for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

That then flows that that whole page is approved.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Because we only had to make the one. The rest of it was consequential. Thank you.

Item 7, Mr. Wickman, Liberal opposition.

MR. WICKMAN: I have a couple of questions, Mr. Chairman, a couple of additional questions through you to David. In the figures that are presented - the 15.8 is one, the other one is 13.9 - explain to me, to begin with, if 14.8 is based just solely, totally, on last year's budget, not considering that there was an extra \$16,000 added to this budget. Or is that figure taking into account last year's base plus the extra \$16,000, and then from there you're projecting a 15.8?

MR. McINNIS: Is it not the case that the \$510,960 comes from the Liberal caucus?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. McINNIS: Well then, maybe you can explain why it's 15.8 percent.

MR. WICKMAN: It didn't come from the Liberal caucus. I'm sorry, John. That's why I'm so puzzled as to how we've arrived at these figures.

MRS. BLACK: Who prepared this budget, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, hold on a moment. The Clerk is about to come in. Who gave the initial material on the Liberal caucus budget? It was submitted to your office?

DR. McNEIL: I received a letter from Mr. Wickman by which he gave us a formula to calculate the budget, and the \$510,960 reflects that formula, that he requested a deduction.

MR. WICKMAN: In that letter that's referred to it simply states: on the basis of an equalized base and then 5 percent. Now, what I'm asking, Mr. Chairman, to David: what figure was used? Like, this \$510,000 or the \$441,000? Is that including the \$16,000, or isn't it?

DR. McNEIL: The \$441,094 plus the \$7,243 plus the \$543 – if you add those up, you come to \$448,880. That was the original allocation to the caucus last year. In addition to that, this year there was a request for \$16,000: the \$4,000 for each of the new members. That would make the budget \$464,880. Now, in addition to that, there are costs . . .

MS BARRETT: It would make the budget what? How much?

DR. McNEIL: Four hundred and sixty-four thousand, eight hundred and eighty. So a portion of that special warrant was for that extra \$16,000. The remaining part of that special warrant . . .

MS BARRETT: Oh, I see; okay.

DR. McNEIL: . . . was for the portions of the leader's salary, the third-party House leader's salary, and the third-party Whip, for the fiscal year '89-90.

In terms of what was originally allocated, \$448,880 was allocated originally to the Liberal caucus based on the formula that the Liberal member of this committee accepted at the meeting last year – in other words, \$32,000 per member times eight members plus the leader's allowance, and the leader's allowance was \$192,880. So that comes to \$448,880.

MR. WICKMAN: So the \$16,000 isn't in there.

DR. McNEIL: The \$16,000 is part of that special warrant dollars that's included.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, but it's not part of the 15.8.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. WICKMAN: So the 15.8 increase reflects it on the basis . . . I'm not going to make a motion on this, Mr. Chairman. What is happening here – I don't care. If you guys figure the Liberal caucus shouldn't be treated fairly, that we shouldn't get the same amount, that we shouldn't get any money, I guess it's in the hands of you. As one voice I don't have a great impact here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, hon. member . . .

MR. WICKMAN: You can shoot it right down if you want.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pardon me?

MR. WICKMAN: I say it can be shot right down. I don't care.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right then. Is that a motion on your part to delete this whole budget?

MR. WICKMAN: No, I haven't made a motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it's customary. Would you like to

have a motion to approve your own budget? If no motion is forthcoming, we'll move on to section 8.

MR. McINNIS: Games within games.

MRS. MIROSH: That means it doesn't get any money.

MS BARRETT: No, no, no. I don't think we can leave it like this, Mr. Chairman. If the Liberals requested \$510,960, and if they're not willing to move that motion, I will on their behalf. I've sat through enough bloody games in this committee. I've watched Nick go back and forward. I am not going to take the blame for them not having a budget. I so move.

MR. McINNIS: Does this mean that the Liberal member gets to vote against it and take the money?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Of course.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further discussion? Is there a call for the question then? Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, this is a little bit reminiscent of last year in that although in the end Nick did move his own budget and in moving he made the comment in *Hansard*, quoting from page 154, February 13:

We pay our staff the same as you do. As a matter of fact, I've heard a rumble or complaint from you people that we were overpaying our staff. We're just getting more economy than you are . . . Apparently, you go in for quantity; we go in for quality. Everybody has a choice.

A short time later Mr. Taylor then moved the motion at a different amount to what the other caucuses were doing. We followed that motion because of his request at that time.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud a question. Is the figure of \$510,960 the correct number for what you requested, or is it not the correct number?

MR. WICKMAN: The number that was requested was done on the basis of what I assumed – and I'm going to say it one more time, Mr. Chairman – what I assumed this committee had agreed to when they reinstated the \$16,000: that it would come at the equalized base. That was an assumption. I thought it was an understanding. I thought it was made quite clear. So on that basis the budget would have come in at \$36,000 times eight members, which would have included not only the \$16,000 that we achieved but the other \$16,000 we were still short, and then be on that 5 percent. I did not visualize this committee behaving in this fashion.

MR. McINNIS: My question is: is the figure too high or too low?

MS BARRETT: Yeah. Like, what do you want me to move, Percy? I've moved your budget for you. You don't want it?

MR. KOWALSKI: Which gives a 15.8 increase.

MS BARRETT: That's right.

MR. KOWALSKI: Is that too high or too low?

MR. WICKMAN: It's a 15 percent increase on the basis of a budget which has the base 9.4 percent lower than the other two caucuses in comparison to a year ago. That's what it is. That's what it reflects in reality.

MS BARRETT: It's what your caucus wanted, for heaven's sake. Don't blame us for that, for heaven's sake. You're asking for \$510,960. I have moved that amount.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Calgary-Foothills, followed by Barrhead.

MRS. BLACK: Because it's 2:30, could we take a 10-minute coffee break?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely. Adjourned till 10 to 3.

[The committee recessed from 2:39 p.m. to 2:55 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. When we adjourned, we had a motion with respect to section 7, as moved by Edmonton-Highlands, and the Chair recognized Calgary-Foothills.

MRS. BLACK: Yes, Mr. Chairman. While we're into this - I guess I've missed something in the discussions. I really wanted to clarify it from the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. He's talked about a formula, et cetera, and we realize that that isn't the way we're going. But, Percy, what is the number? How many dollars are you requesting? If it's not this that's in here, what did you calculate to be the dollars, exact dollars, that you want?

MR. WICKMAN: What I had calculated, Mr. Chairman, to Pat, is the equalized basis of \$36,000 per member; in addition to that, the same leadership formula that there was prior and then for all three caucuses an extra 5 percent. Whatever that would have turned out to be in dollars was beside the point, because that was fair to all three caucuses. As it turns out, what that figure does reflect, however, is the \$510,960. That's what it reflects. Now, if the other caucuses would have accepted a 5 percent increase, I would have said that that was great. Now I'm caught up in the situation where I see a 15.8 percent increase which to us in terms of the deflated base is really only a 5 percent increase that appears to be a 15.8 percent increase. So if I take 15 percent like the other two caucuses have, in real terms we've only gained 4.8 percent while the New Democrat caucus achieves 15 percent and the Tories achieve 15 percent. But I guess I'm boxed in; there really isn't much I can do about it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Calgary-Foothills, additional comment?

MRS. BLACK: I guess what I'm not understanding, Percy: when we went through this whole exercise and we went through the concept of what your caucus needed in dollars to operate, what number did you come up with, in dollars?

MR. WICKMAN: Pat, you can't put an exact number on it because you have to weigh it in terms of the other opposition party. If the New Democrats have \$4 million, for example, we have to look at a resource that's fair, in proportion, so that we can keep pace from the point of view of research and that type of thing. So you can't isolate it. That's why you always had that

formula before of \$32,000 per member. That's the reason why it was done: because it was fair. I don't know how many times, Mr. Chairman, I have to explain this. It was there because it was fair. Now, because once . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, the acoustics in this room are good enough, and shouting it every time isn't going to help. Let's just continue with the comments.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, because once the former leader and the member of this committee asked for a freeze for one year, are the four new members to pay for that for the rest of their lives? Is the whole caucus to pay for that for the rest of their lives? It is clear that the intent was only a freeze for that one year. Now, to undo that freeze and keep pace would mean 24.4 percent more. But I can't move a motion for 24.4 percent more; I won't. I wouldn't support it. It wouldn't make sense. I'm boxed in.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There isn't one on the table either.
Calgary-Foothills, finished? Additional comment then, Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If what Percy wants is the same as what the NDP wants, that comes to \$58,327 per MLA. So if you'll just give me a moment here . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Are you including the leaders' thing again, Pam?

MS BARRETT: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, okay; don't bother doing the calculation.

MS BARRETT: It would come to \$466,616 for their global budget. On behalf of the Liberals, who wouldn't move their own budget, I'd move for \$510,960, which is a good \$50,000 above that ratio, including the leaders' budgets for both of them, which would bring their per MLA budget to . . . Where am I? If I'm not mistaken, would it be \$63,870 per MLA or would it be higher at \$510,960? I've got too many scrawls in here; I'm trying to keep up with all this. But in any event, yes, \$63,870, compared to our proportional budget of \$59,771. So. Now, I understood during the break that . . . [interjection] Oh, yeah. Okay. Sorry; our budget now would come to \$58,327 per MLA. I have too many figures going here. I think that's pretty fair. He said he wanted to have it the same. In fact, on a per cap basis it would be a much better formula.

Then I understood . . . I'm sorry to do this to you, gang, but I thought Percy wanted to move his own motion, so I was going to ask for unanimous consent to withdraw my motion to sponsor their budget at \$510,960. If the Chair will forgive me. Perhaps, Percy, could you tell me: do you want me to withdraw my motion?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, to Pam. To bring it up to the equalized basis, to bring it up on a per member - and get a waive on that leader's portion in there, Pam. You know better than that. It would mean a 24.4 percent increase. I can't responsibly ask for a 24.4. We're going to have to do with less. We're going to have to just hustle that much more in the Liberal office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please. In answer to the direct question, on a procedural basis, if this motion is withdrawn, will the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud put forward a motion with respect to his own caucus budget? Yes or no, please.

MR. WICKMAN: At the 15 percent, even though it's going to leave us behind.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh. Then I gather the answer is yes. Thank you. The request?

MS BARRETT: Okay. Given that - I wouldn't do this on my own; I did it as a result of a conversation with Percy, I want you to know - I'm going to ask the members for unanimous consent to withdraw my motion.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can I see a show of hands, please? Thank you. It is unanimous.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'll move the 15 percent for the Liberal caucus budget, but I want it to be said on record that that 15 percent is not reflecting a 15 percent increase in real dollars. I've explained it before; there's no need to explain it again. It's still in proportion to what's happened in previous years. It leaves us behind on a per member basis of 9.4 percent excluding that leader portion, which has always been kept separately.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, to the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. Outside your general caucus budget there's a special warrant of \$31,902 that would remain to reflect those extra members, right? So what you're saying is that you're short compared to everybody else - the four members - from last year.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Dianne, that's a good question. But you see, I talked to David about that, and the figure that's been moved in the two previous caucuses is your top figure, your general caucus budget. Now, if I could move the bottom figure, which would be the same - yeah, then that would close it up somewhat more. But then in reality that wouldn't . . .

MRS. MIROSH: We're just talking about your general caucus budget of 15 percent, but we're looking at the special warrant in the next section.

MR. WICKMAN: You see, that special warrant is not included in that top line budget, the general caucus budget. It's not included. If it were included . . .

MRS. MIROSH: That's right, but that can be added.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, it should be.

MRS. MIROSH: It's for your total expense.

MR. WICKMAN: It should have come in added. That's my argument right from day one.

MRS. MIROSH: But this is your budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. WICKMAN: No, I didn't draft up this budget. Mr. Chairman, please. Everybody understand: I did not draft up this budget. I didn't write down one of these figures. Not one. Don't be under the assumption that I drafted this up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you very much. The committee stands adjourned for five minutes. The Clerk and I want to have a little conversation.

[The committee recessed from 3:04 p.m. to 3:09 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All members, as chairman I'm also very concerned about a comment that was made by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud with respect to the officers of the Legislature and what was done about the budget. So I'm going to have this letter circulated to all members, and I ask the Clerk to read it into the minutes. It's not left out; there is an addendum. Clerk, please, and give us the date on it.

DR. McNEIL: Thank you. This is on Liberal opposition letterhead dated December 12, 1989, addressed to myself, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, re 1990-91 budget:

As you are aware, adjustments have been made in the current fiscal year to the Liberal Opposition budget in order that the four new MLAs elected in 1989 receive the same allocation per member as the other caucuses.

I am writing to request that in preparing for the 1990-91 budget submission for the Members' Services Committee, you use the allocation of \$36,000 per member for all eight MLAs as a 1989-90 base. In addition, we would expect that you would [then] use an adjusted amount for the Leader's allocation which reflects the decisions of the Members' Services Committee taken earlier this year. Furthermore, a 5% inflationary factor is requested for the 1990-91 fiscal period.

Now, on that basis I took the leader's allowance, last year which was frozen, which didn't get the 5 percent, and adjusted that by 5 percent, added that to eight members times \$36,000 per member, which comes out to, I think, \$448,666, and then I added 5 percent to that total, to come to the \$510,960. So the basis on which this general caucus budget was calculated was reflecting this letter. In addition to that number we, I think, agreed that we would add these other payments to members, since most of them were new, on top of those numbers that were submitted, as opposed to having them absorbed in that budget by the caucus.

MR. WICKMAN: Just two questions, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment.

DR. McNEIL: So that's the basis on which the numbers here are reflected.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I have Edmonton-Jasper Place, Taber-Warner, Cypress-Redcliff, and Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I have some experience with this budgeting matter from a different point of view. In my previous life I was the chief of staff for the NDP caucus, and one of things that became clear to me was that the business of

dividing, at least opposition budgets, between leaders' allocation and caucus allocation made no sense at all because for one thing it's not always possible to allocate staff time as between the leader and members of caucus when in fact they would often work for both.

Now, for another, the way our operation worked out in practice, the leader's allocation subsidized the caucus to a very great extent because that's simply the way we organized our operation. Now, I understand the Liberal caucus does things the other way around, that the caucus members tend to – you know, if you look at it from that perspective, they tended to subsidize the staff in the leader's office rather than the other way around. But for all intents and purposes we ended up with a global budget, which was one sum of money which was allocated the best way we could to do the work that had to be done. The other thing was really kind of a legal fiction, I suppose in a sense a way of deriving the formula. In fact, when the tire hits the road, when it comes to the Legislative Assembly, you don't see that breakdown. There's just a figure for each of the caucuses, and that's all that the Legislative Assembly votes on in the end anyways.

I think the evolution of it was that it really became a matter for the caucuses to internally budget their resources. We would provide to the Assembly administration a breakdown for our own administrative purposes so we'd be able to tell when we were over and under in certain categories, if adjustments had to be made. But, in fact, the allocation of dollars within the caucus was a matter for the caucus to decide. In the case of our caucus that was a full caucus discussion, and it still is. So I think the nostalgia for the breakdown in formula really doesn't correspond to the way the world actually operates around here and, in fact, to the job that this committee has to do, which is to put figures before the Legislative Assembly in the budget blue book.

Now, I think Percy's made some powerful arguments on the basis of equality between members, and it's a bit of a shock to me to learn that in the year we're presently in, where the member says that the Liberal caucus allocation is too low, they've averaged in excess of \$55,000 per member, whereas our caucus has averaged just a shade over \$50,000 per member for a global budget to do all of the things we have to do. If we were to follow the equality argument, as my colleague pointed out, they would be entitled to no more than \$466,616. Now, I don't believe I heard that suggestion at all. I think the suggestion was that they wanted to take the \$510,000 or maybe more. The suggestion that was really being made was that the other budget should be reduced, I think, and that may be consistent with the voting pattern. So, anyways, if we take the equality argument, we're talking about \$448,000 and not the \$507,000, because as I understand it the \$507,000 is now on the table. I think that should be pointed out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Cypress-Redcliff, Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Cypress-Redcliff, and then Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. HYLAND: A comment first and then a question. We have out of all the years – with the exception, I think, of one,

and maybe even that first year – that I've been on this committee stuck with global votes for caucuses because we as members of other parties shouldn't know or have to influence how another caucus wants to allocate their funds. I think John has outlined it well. That is none of this committee's business. Our business is to set the global amount. Each one operates differently. Obviously, they have to operate within the guidelines from Treasury, but if they do it with secretaries or researchers or how they do it is their business.

As I remember, when we set the amount for leaders and that a few years back, it was done that way purposely as an outlet for additional things that opposition members had to do or their leader had to do because of their position in parliament that we didn't have to do as government members, knowing full well that it would be used within the caucus. That's how it has to work. That's how it would average out. Always before the leader was included in those amounts, not only as the leader's allowance but as a member, to gain extra money so that his position as leader was funded but he was also funded as MLA to do his MLA thing. We voted those in global amounts because it was none of our business how it was broken down.

To the question. So then what we're saying is that with this letter that's circulated, the amount that's in the budget is calculated following the exact instructions that were laid out here?

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Edmonton-Whitemud. Perhaps this is wrapping up the motion, 15 percent. Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, two questions. In the letter when it refers to \$36,000 per member for all eight MLAs as a '89-90 base – as a '89-90 base, not a '90-91 base. I must direct my question through you to David. Was \$36,000 per member or \$32,000 per member used to determine the \$441,000, which is the '89-90 base?

DR. McNEIL: The '89-90 base . . . Well, what was used in terms of . . .

MS BARRETT: Half-and-half, wasn't it?

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. It depends what you're talking about. If we're talking about how I calculated the '90-91 estimate, I used, to start with, the \$36,000 per member times eight members, so it comes to \$288,000. Then the previous leader's allowance that applied to the Liberal opposition last year was \$192,880, but that was frozen; that wasn't increased by 5 percent as the ND budget was increased. So I added 5 percent to that and added those two numbers and then I took that number and added 5 percent, to come up with the \$510,960.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, on that basis, then, the '89-90 base was done on the \$32,000 per member not the \$36,000 per member.

MS BARRETT: No, \$36,000.

MR. WICKMAN: No; the '90-91 is done on the \$36,000.

MRS. MIROSH: No.

MS BARRETT: No.

DR. McNEIL: Are you referring to the figures on this sheet here?

MR. WICKMAN: Look at the 1989-90 estimate: \$441,000. Then you look at the 1990-91 estimate. The \$510,000 obviously was done at a \$36,000 base per member. Obviously, then, the '89-90 was done on the basis of \$32,000 per member.

MR. McINNIS: It's right out of the estimates book.

DR. McNEIL: The \$441,094 plus the \$7,243 plus the \$543 comes to \$448,880. That was the calculation based on \$32,000 per member. In addition, there was \$16,000 that was part of that special warrant figure there that was added to your budget, which brought it to \$464,880.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, but that shows after the \$441,000. That shows further down.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. WICKMAN: It's not part of the 15.8 percent.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I hope it's clear the problem that I have. In that letter I requested that the '89-90 base be done on the basis of \$36,000 a member like the other caucuses, where the budget would have come in differently, but it came in at the \$32,000. I'm not faulting David for it. Don't misunderstand me; I'm not faulting him for it. I just did not realize how the budgetary process operated. I just assumed, based on previous discussions, that that's the way it would go, that the base would come in at the \$36,000 per member like it would for the New Democrats, but it didn't. So that leaves me by my calculations and my recollection going back in history, David – and you can tell me if I'm incorrect. But that tells me that that results in a figure of 9.4 percent when you look at the difference between the \$32,000 and the \$36,000 and you look at what Nick Taylor gave up in his motion where there was no increase even given the leader's allowance. Going back – and if you've got those figures there, I think it will clearly show that Nick Taylor bypassed a 9.4 percent increase. Am I not correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Clerk, Barrhead, Cypress-Redcliff . . .

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry. Could I have my question answered, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. I said the next one was the Clerk, then Barrhead, then Cypress-Redcliff.

DR. McNEIL: I just wanted to restate, I guess, that the '90-91 estimate in this book was developed based on the allocation of \$36,000 per member and then adding the 5 percent factor to that.

MR. BOGLE: As per his request.

DR. McNEIL: As per the request of the letter.

MR. WICKMAN: No. The letter states, Bob, '89-90 base.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, hon. member. You're out of order.

MR. WICKMAN: It does. It's there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're out of order, hon. member.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Barrhead, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, if the expectation of the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was that the Clerk would have done a certain thing that would have been illegal for the Clerk to have done – you cannot fudge budgets. We have auditors, we have a Financial Administration Act, and we have laws that we have to uphold. The Clerk, as far as I can understand, did exactly what he was instructed to do by the Liberal caucus. He can't fudge and say, "Well, we only got \$32,000, but really for the estimate book you put in \$36,000." We've got a Financial Administration Act that all people in this province live under. We have an Auditor General, and that clearly – I'm sorry, hon. member, but I cannot believe that with your experience at city hall in Edmonton, you don't know what the hell you're talking about. To come here and say, "Well, I didn't know." For four years in a row we've been dealing with this kind of nonsense, and ethics and propriety are important in government.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member for Barrhead covered part of what I was wanting to say in that the '89-90 estimate that's in this book matters not anyway. That's what was in the blue book. That's what was passed by the Legislature with the exception of the special warrants. The figure we need to deal with is the figure for this year. What happened last year is an exercise in discussion, or whatever you want to call it. Let's deal with the figure from this year, so we know what they get to operate on or we all get to operate on. What happened matters not. If that's the right figure, let's deal with it.

MS BARRETT: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We have a motion before us to approve the 15 percent general caucus budget.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In summation.

MR. WICKMAN: Could I ask that that motion be withdrawn?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment. Can I ask: is there unanimous consent?

MS BARRETT: Well, I have something to say about this. I mean, you got me to withdraw my motion so that you could sponsor your own motion.

MR. WICKMAN: Uh huh.

MS BARRETT: You agreed to sponsor your own motion. I don't want this to carry on. Either you know what you want your budget to be or you don't. Now, I for one am not going to take the blame for you not knowing, Percy. So which is it? If you want it withdrawn, are you going to replace it with another motion?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. Yes, I am.

MS BARRETT: Right now?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes.

MS BARRETT: Today?

MR. WICKMAN: Right now.

MS BARRETT: Are you going to agree to pass this motion today, or at least vote on it?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes.

MS BARRETT: All right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a request by the mover to withdraw the motion. Is there unanimous consent? Please signify. Those in favour of withdrawing? I need everyone to vote on this; I'm sorry. Everyone in favour? Opposed? Carried unanimously. Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to move an increase of 24.4 percent, and I'll speak to it. Hopefully now we're clear as to how it's arrived at this discrepancy between the one base and the other base, and it's not a question of me asking the Clerk to fudge the figures. God, I sat down with him, and we discussed it, and I sent this letter in on the basis that this committee had approved \$4,000 per member. That was already put in, and just the expectation that there was an understanding that the base would come in at the \$36,000 – I just assumed, based on that, that it was in good faith. It's not a question of any fudging. But now I'm in the spot, Mr. Chairman. To catch up on that is going to take 9.4 percent, and there's no other way of doing it simply than to incorporate it in the increase, and then that brings it up to the level that it would have been at had Nick Taylor not made the motion for the one-year period.

MS BARRETT: You want to undo history.

MR. WICKMAN: But, Pam, that was only meant for the one year.

MS BARRETT: It was not. [interjection] Never mind.

MR. WICKMAN: You mean for the rest of the – and also for the new members? We should be penalized who weren't even here when Nick Taylor was the member? Come on, Pam, let's show a degree of fairness. The 9.4 and the 15 percent that the New Democrats have advocated: that comes to 20.4. That's the only way we keep up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Twenty point four?

MR. WICKMAN: Twenty-four point four.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Twenty-four point four.

Taber-Warner, Cypress Redcliff. Let's go there. I missed Calgary-Foothills, and I have Edmonton-Jasper Place. Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, one of the points that needs to be restated is the fact that prior to 1986 there was not a formula. That's been stated, but it needs to be restated. Possibly, in order to better understand the history of the various caucus budgets, we need to request of the Clerk that research be done and that we be provided with the budgets from 1982 up to and including the current fiscal year's budget. So because I'm requesting that information be obtained – it's not yet here – I move that we table Percy's motion until February 1.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion to table. Those in favour of the tabling motion, please signify.

MS BARRETT: I can't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed?
Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, if I may ask a question. What the heck is the number we're talking about, 24 percent of what?

MS BARRETT: I'm going to go and get the budget books, okay?

MR. HYLAND: What numbers – what are we talking about?

MR. WICKMAN: Twenty-four point four percent of the \$441,094.

MR. HYLAND: Okay. Which is how many dollars?

DR. McNEIL: It's \$546,957.

MR. WICKMAN: That's right.

MR. KOWALSKI: Less than what's shown in the book.

MRS. BLACK: How much?

DR. McNEIL: Five hundred and forty-six thousand, nine hundred and fifty . . .

MRS. BLACK: I thought it was \$548,000.

MR. WICKMAN: I thought it was \$548,000 too.

DR. McNEIL: Okay. I'm sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's try these figures once more.

DR. McNEIL: Twenty-four point four.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A 24.4 percent increase on the figure of \$441,094.

MRS. BLACK: Yes. It comes to \$548,721.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And \$548,721 would represent, indeed, the

24.4 percent increase of that figure alone.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's without leader's salary or special warrant or anything like that.

MRS. BLACK: Just that top line.

DR. McNEIL: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Additional, Cypress-Redcliff?

MR. HYLAND: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was your question as to whether the specifics . . .

MR. HYLAND: At least we know what we're talking about – maybe.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We trust.

MRS. BLACK: Well, Mr. Chairman, this whole exercise has been disturbing, I'm sure, for everyone, but I want to make it perfectly clear that eight members in the Liberal caucus are making almost half of what the government caucus is with 31 members, in their caucus budget: number one point. Number two point: since coming on this committee, I don't want to see the Liberal Party come back in two months and ask for another special warrant of catch-up game – it doesn't get reflected, and it comes after the fact – because I think that that was wrong. And I hope, Percy, that this brings you so that this is what you're going to get for the year. Keep in mind . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: If it passes.

MRS. BLACK: If it passes, right. But keep in mind that your caucus is getting just about half of what our caucus is, and we have quite a number more members than what you have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.
The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is next on the list.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's been pointed out that the request now from the Liberal Party is for \$548,720 for general caucus budget for the current year, which comes to an average sum of \$68,590 per member. Now, we've just approved a budget of \$933,232 for the New Democrat Official Opposition caucus, which comes to \$58,327 per member. I can't support an increase that's that much greater for the Liberal caucus than it is for the New Democrats, and I can't support the notion that each of them should be supported to the tune of \$68,590 compared with some \$10,000 less for each New Democrat. There's a lot of things I could say about that, but if the member wants equality, I'm here to see that he gets it. Therefore, I'd like to amend the motion to set the Liberal caucus budget for the coming year at \$466,616, which is \$58,327 per member, which is identical to the Official Opposition.

MS BARRETT: Including leader's allowance equivalents.

MR. McINNIS: It's everything in. It's the general caucus budget. It's the global budget that they have to deal with. The eight of them versus the 16 of us. They have dollar for dollar, person for person the same amount. That's what the member wants.

MRS. BLACK: What's the amount?

MR. McINNIS: That's \$466,616.

MRS. BLACK: Now, I can do that. I just got last year's actual budget here. So . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: For purposes of an amendment, I would then need that translated into a percentage, because of the fact – although the motions today have been running . . .

MR. McINNIS: Well, actually my amendment is to put the dollar figure in and not the percentage figure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, then, in the original motion – what was it, a 24.4 percent increase? We'll then interpret that one as being a dollar figure.

MR. BOGLE: Is it appropriate to entertain an amendment to a motion when the amendment very substantially changes the nature of the motion?

MR. McINNIS: Well, it doesn't really. It changes the numbers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's deleting . . . Parliamentary Counsel, I mean, there's the problem of using a percentage or using a dollar figure. What it is that they're saying: if you're going to come in at the rate of 20 percent and you want to amend that down to 15 percent, that's a legitimate amendment, is it not?

MR. M. CLEGG: Yes it is, indeed. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What we're doing will be in the percentage forms and whatever.

MR. M. CLEGG: I think it is a problem if the motion is expressed in a percentage. It's when it isn't clear what the percentage is based on. I was concerned that we should really be dealing with a specific figure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So that takes back the original motion. The 24.4 percent of the original motion by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, what dollar figure was that in your calculations?

MR. WICKMAN: My original was \$548,721.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So for purposes of clarity with the motions, the original motion is that \$548,721. This amendment as moved by Edmonton-Jasper Place is in order at \$466,616.

We are now speaking to the amendment. Edmonton-Whitemud speaking to Edmonton-Jasper Place's . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, let me point out that that motion would result . . . Okay, first of all, our base being \$441,000 plus the \$16,000 we gained brings it up to \$457,000. John's proposing we get a budget of – what? – \$466,000.

MR. McINNIS: It's \$466,616. The same dollar that we get per member.

MR. WICKMAN: In other words, our caucus gets an overall budget increase of \$9,000, while the New Democrats get \$145,000.

MR. McINNIS: You asked for equality. You're going to get it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For clarification, that would give equality with one party.

MR. WICKMAN: Except, Mr. Chairman, the leader's portion is included in there.

MR. McINNIS: And in ours too.

MRS. BLACK: And in ours.

MR. WICKMAN: Look, I'm getting tired. I'm getting tired of these little games here.

MR. McINNIS: We're comparing apples and apples, my friend.

MRS. BLACK: Well, Percy, so are we, and we're on your third motion.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay, do what you have to do. Do what you have to do. I'm not going to say anything.

MRS. BLACK: Okay. That's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Any other members speaking to the amendment?

MS BARRETT: What does the percentage increase come to?

MR. McINNIS: It doesn't matter.

MS BARRETT: Five point eight?

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right; with regard . . . Sorry; do you need some more . . .

MRS. BLACK: What are we on, the motion or the amendment?

MS BARRETT: We're on the amendment. Right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're on the amendment, which states: to the Liberal caucus \$466,616.

MR. BOGLE: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the amendment, the call for the question. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? That is defeated.

On the main amendment of the 24.4 percent increase. The call for the question?

MRS. MIROSH: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion by

Edmonton-Whitemud for a 24.4 percent increase, please signify. Opposed? Defeated.

The Chair is willing to entertain one more motion. Thank you. It'll come up at the next meeting.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I'm prepared one more time to move that the budget request of \$510,960 as submitted by the Liberal caucus be approved today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That then would be a 15.8 percent . . .

MS BARRETT: Correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. All right, we have a motion. Discussion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Oh, okay. Give me a show of hands. Those in favour, please? Those in favour? Opposed? It's a tie.

MS BARRETT: We need a tiebreaker.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the event of a tie of a motion I can cast, but one casts in favour of the status quo. I'm going to vote against it. Therefore, this item will come up at the next meeting of Members' Services.

Are we moving onto the next section or . . .

MR. BOGLE: No. Before we do that, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move that the section of the three elements: 5, 6, and 7 – all elements other than general caucus budgets; that is, basically payments to members – be removed from the category and that another home be found for them either in MLA Administration or, if need be, if that's not acceptable to Treasury, a new category. I say that for a couple of reasons. Number one, it skews the bottom-line figure. When the budget book comes out, the actual dollars flowing to each caucus will not be exactly as shown because of the payments to members. And regarding any argument from Treasury that it's not proper to do this because the members are selected by caucuses, I think we should remind them that the legislative committees and the makeup of the committee, or the membership, are decided by the various caucuses, and that appears in another section in the Leg. Assembly book.

So my motion is that we delete the payments to members section for the three caucuses and that the Clerk work between now and the next meeting with Treasury officials to identify a proper spot for them in the budget book. All right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the motion?

MS BARRETT: If I can just speak to it. I think it would clear up the difference between the percentages when it comes to the annual budgeting process. I speak in favour of the motion.

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed? Carried, but not unanimously.

Section 8, with regard to Legislature Committees. I'd suggest we hold this one till the next meeting because of a need to

contact one or two of the committee chairmen for additional information.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Section 9, Legislative Interns. Inside that front cover you see it represents a .1 percent increase due to the increase in benefit premiums. I wonder if someone would be willing to move approval of that section.

MR. McINNIS: I can move it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Jasper Place. Is there a call for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, Edmonton-Highlands was trying to get the floor prior to the vote.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Okay then.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to move an amendment, if I could. I ain't going to hold my breath, but I've always been a champion of the program of interns, and I'd like to try my bargaining ability one more time at this table with my good friends.

I would like to move that we double the number of interns to eight, which is where it stood . . .

MR. McINNIS: Traditionally.

MS BARRETT: Yes. . . . prior to 1987, which would have the implication of doubling the amount shown on page 2; that is, \$76,996 times two equals \$153,992.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: Just a point. There are other implications in doubling it in terms of other aspects.

MS BARRETT: I'd be prepared to move them one by one. Let me start on this one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of doubling the number of interns, please signify. Opposed? Defeated. Thank you.

MS BARRETT: We don't do recorded votes, do we?

MR. BOGLE: If you request.

MS BARRETT: I wouldn't mind a recorded vote on that motion, Mr. Chairman, if it's all right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On that last motion?

MS BARRETT: On the motion to bring back to eight the number of interns.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. What was happening here was that the Chair was using discretion in having the original motion for approval of the budget suspended until such time as we had this other motion.

MS BARRETT: The amendment, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was as an amendment?

MS BARRETT: Yes, it was.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you. Now we're back to the main motion to approve this complete budget for the legislative interns.

MS BARRETT: No. Mr. Chairman, I was asking could we have a recorded vote on the amendment. I'm sorry. I said motion; I meant amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. So on the amendment once again, those in favour of doubling the number of interns? Let's record the vote.

[For the motion: Ms Barrett, Mr. McInnis]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

[Against the motion: Mrs. Black, Mr. Bogle, Mr. Hyland, Mrs. Mirosh, Mr. Wickman]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HYLAND: Question on the main motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question on the main motion?

MS BARRETT: Agreed.

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

Section 10, *Alberta Hansard*. David McNeil.

DR. McNEIL: We're requesting a 3 percent increase. This is primarily due to increases in wages and salaries as a result of reclassifications and market and merit adjustments. The decrease in Supplies and Services is due to efficiencies in the computer network as well as decreased printing costs as a result of the recently completed tendering process. The objective is to do another video next year as well.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move that we accept the budget of *Alberta Hansard* as submitted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Discussion or questions? Call for the question.

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion with respect to *Hansard*, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Legislature Library. Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: The requested increase here is 2.9 percent. Basically, it's a request to maintain the existing operation with no additions or changes.

MS BARRETT: I'm seeking information here. I'm not sure if it can be answered today, but in 1987, as with the cuts that were implemented throughout the Assembly – I cannot recall if there was a cut in the acquisitions budget of the Library, and I'm wondering if anyone here can answer that question for me, or if in subsequent years the acquisitions budget was restored.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We could phone Blake.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah, I can phone Blake. My recall is that the acquisitions budget was not affected.

MS BARRETT: It wasn't?

DR. McNEIL: The cuts were related to the research area and the microfilming in one year, which was reimplemented last year. But let me phone him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Surely. We'll put a hold on this issue while you take a moment.

MS BARRETT: Thank you. I appreciate that.

[The committee recessed from 3:47 p.m. to 3:55 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, ladies and gentlemen. The Clerk was getting some information from the library in regard to Edmonton-Highlands' question.

DR. McNEIL: The answer to the question of whether or not there was any decrease in the library acquisitions budget in the past two years is no. The acquisitions budget has been maintained, and reductions were in other areas that didn't affect the main library operation.

MS BARRETT: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. With regard to this whole section on the Legislature Library, are we ready to entertain a motion to give approval?

MR. McINNIS: As to form, I'm just curious why there's a thing called B budget items set at zero. None of the others have that.

DR. McNEIL: That partly reflects the Legislature Librarian's thoroughness.

MR. McINNIS: Okay. Well, it's comforting to know there's no B item budgets in there. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. On the question, is there a call for the question of approval?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

All right. We have a few items to come back to at our next meeting with regard to the budget, but I congratulate the committee on its progress.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to try one more motion on the Liberal caucus budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, hon. member, that's not possible. The next meeting.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I understand that the date for our next meeting is scheduled for February 1. I wonder, if we know we've got a relatively small agenda – let's hope it is – if we should try to schedule that around the swearing in of the Ombudsman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. On page 2 of the agenda for today I was presumptuous enough to note that in there, hoping that the committee would be able to adjourn at 11:45 and all be able to attend that swearing in and at that time also to join with other members of the Legislative Offices Committee plus the legislative officers, possibly the Auditor General, the Chief Electoral Officer, and then the small group of invited guests of the families. Depending on the numbers, we would probably try to attempt to have that reception up in the Speaker's suite. But thank you.

MS BARRETT: Thank you. What time is it? Is a motion to adjourn in order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm afraid we had a couple of motions that were being held over to this afternoon. If we could just go quickly through them to see whether you wanted to deal with them today or not: 4(a).

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, it turns out that we still didn't get a chance to get into a discussion about this, and I respectfully move further tabling of this item to the next meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Those in favour of 4(a) being tabled to the next meeting? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
A similar fate for 4(b)?

MS BARRETT: Similarly, Mr. Chairman, I move tabling to the next meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Item 4(b). Those in favour of that tabling motion, please signify. Opposed? Carried.

The date of the next meeting, then, is February 1 at 9:30, hopefully in this same room, and with that provision that we would adjourn long enough for the Ombudsman's swearing in and then come back if we needed to. That's agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to just quickly give an interesting announcement. In times past we have had a blood donor clinic here in the building. It's been handled by the Speaker's office: the secretarial staff directly, and in particular Susan Purdie. It appears that people around here don't bleed enough at that particular time of the year. That includes not only the MLAs

but also staff or members of the media or anyone else who works within the general environs of the Legislature Building. The Red Cross say they're not going to operate on a clinic basis unless there are 125 units, and we've been down around about 85, 90, or 95; somewhere in there. So that's just notice that we won't be doing that public service. Okay?

Now, any other announcements or items of business?

MS BARRETT: A motion to adjourn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion to adjourn by Edmonton-Highlands. All those in favour of this, please signify. Opposed? None opposed. Carried unanimously.

[The committee adjourned at 4 p.m.]

