

1:50 p.m.

Thursday, November 22, 1990

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, ladies and gentlemen, if we may come to order, please. Order. Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sure everybody will like my sweater.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not everybody, Percy.

MRS. MIROSH: Percy, take that shirt off.

MR. WICKMAN: If Calgary had beat Edmonton, I would have been there rooting for Calgary.

MRS. BLACK: Sure you would have.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm not going to root for the east.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we won't deal with the hypotheticals. The Chair now calls the meeting to order.

MS BARRETT: Hear, hear. Right on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And there'll be no further comments about where the Flames and Oilers are in the NHL standings either.

Okay, ladies and gentlemen, I know you're working under tight time lines with other commitments you have in your caucuses, especially in light of the fact that the session begins on Monday, but also the by-election call. You have in your binders the agendas, and perhaps you could have a quick look at those. I'm given to understand that we're hopeful we might be able to get out of here no later than 4:30 this afternoon so we can come back in at 9:30 in the morning.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, on that point, if I may, could we establish some guidelines for time now. Would you accept a motion that we adjourn today at 4 o'clock and tomorrow we don't go any later than 12 noon?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I think we could deal with the one in terms of what today's time line is, and tomorrow we'll deal with tomorrow's. Fine by me. I've got a motion on the table that today we'll adjourn at 4 o'clock.

MR. KOWALSKI: I second it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Call for the question. Those in favour, please signify.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried. Thank you. Today at 4 o'clock.

The other guideline, Edmonton-Whitemud, will be that people will only speak once to each issue, and I'm sure you'll lead the way and give us a shining example of that.

Okay. With respect to the agenda, Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: I just want to give notice under New Business that I may have an item coming forward tomorrow under the mileage program. I'm not certain yet.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mileage?

MR. BOGLE: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Will this also include replacement of vehicles that have been damaged by deer? Sorry.

MR. HYLAND: You just have to go faster so you go right over them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nice try. I've got to speak to my MLA about that matter.

MS BARRETT: What are you guys talking about?

MRS. BLACK: He hit a deer.

MS BARRETT: Who did?

MRS. BLACK: David.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the Cypress Hills.

MS BARRETT: Motion to approve the agenda as amended, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Edmonton-Highlands. Those in favour of the motion to approve the agenda? Opposed? Carried by a whopping majority of three. Copies of the agenda, then, can be distributed to members of the media, if you wish.

All right. Item 3, Approval of Committee Meeting Minutes of October 29.

MRS. BLACK: Motion to approve them as circulated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Moved by Calgary-Foothills.

MS BARRETT: I second it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Errors or omissions? Call for the question.

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of adopting the minutes of October 29, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you. Item 3(b), October 30 minutes.

MRS. BLACK: Motion to approve as circulated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Calgary-Foothills. Errors or omissions?

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of adopting the minutes of October 30, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you.

Item 4(a), Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services with regard to constituency WATS line. The Member for Barrhead.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Chairman, there has been some correspondence back and forth with respect to this, and if I

recall correctly, the request was made to see whether or not the WATS system throughout the province of Alberta was in fact taxed to its capacity. That was the question the committee wanted responded to?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. KOWALSKI: First of all, from a technical point of view, the WATS system can only be accessed through two prefixes on telephone numbers, 422 and 427 in Edmonton. That service is not available as part of the Alberta government network service outside of Edmonton, and on a provincewide basis it's simply technically not feasible with respect to the present network configuration.

There is some evaluation being done, though, in terms of the major switches we've currently got in the government telephone system and in Edmonton Telephones. As technology comes on, you talk about major megainvestments, and as minister of public works one of the things we're looking at is whether or not we've got the dollars to basically enhance that kind of service within the next fiscal year, but no decision has been made with respect to that.

So the bottom line in terms of the WATS system throughout the province of Alberta: it's just not feasible with the present network configuration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Questions, hon. members? Take the item as information.

MS BARRETT: Agreed.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item 4 (b), Legislature Access Cards in regard to security. I believe an amicable arrangement was made with regard to the last outstanding issue, which was the sharing of any information should it ever be required with regard to security.

Clerk, will you speak to this one, please?

DR. McNEIL: Yes. If you look under tab 4(b), the very last item, you'll see a proposal there that captures all the concerns the members had with respect to access cards. The third paragraph I believe addresses the issue of the information on who's accessing the building from the system. The very last item under that tab says, "Proposal - Lieutenant-Governor and Legislative Assembly Access Cards." It's the third paragraph in that proposal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the process outlined in the document is the correct one. As I understand it, the information is there for the use of security personnel in the pursuit of their duties. I'm pleased with the document the way it is.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wonder, Edmonton-Jasper Place: would you be good enough to move a motion that gives approval to paragraph 3 on that page? Then we have the proper wording that we can incorporate in the minutes.

MR. McINNIS: Why don't I move the approval of the entire document?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. McINNIS: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Questions? Discussion?  
Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: Just to add that what we would be proceeding with is the last page of that four-page document, a security access card request, which we would send to each caucus and each area of the Legislative Assembly Office to be completed and returned to the Sergeant-at-Arms. Then we would proceed to pass this information to the people who issue the cards. We've had the cards designed with the Mace on the top, basically in the same manner as the government access cards.

MS BARRETT: That's fine.

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

MS BARRETT: Question.

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

Item 4(c). The Clerk wishes to speak to this item as well, 4(c) in your tabs, and you have on white paper some legal opinions.

DR. McNEIL: With respect to the issue of child care expenses from constituency funds, the Parliamentary Counsel have assessed the issue and present these opinions. Maybe I could call on them to summarize their views.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Mr. Clegg, Mr. Ritter, which one of you wishes to speak to 4(c), Child Care?

MR. RITTER: I'll address that, Mr. Chairman. Essentially Mr. Clegg and I are right on the same plane. We both agree that the wording of the present Members' Services Committee order is widely interpreted or should be widely interpreted. The way it's written, it allows many things under the item of communication between a member and his constituents.

From a legal point of view, the present orders would seem to accommodate child care being provided by a member on behalf of constituents. However, there are some administrative matters which . . . Again, as lawyers we have to take a very, very cautious approach to the legal liability should a mishap occur. We are covered by risk management for certain types of things, but of course that does not render us immune from a lawsuit should there be a mishap with someone's child such as death through an accident or a food allergy or something like this. These are more an administrative matter for the committee to just consider than a legal one. Under the present structure we can do it. The advisability is strictly a matter for this committee to decide.

2:00

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is dealing with child care at a public meeting?

MR. RITTER: That's correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're not talking about offering this as an ongoing thing attached to your constituency office.

MR. RITTER: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is just a public meeting. Okay.  
Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, as the person who originally raised this, I would like to clarify that I was talking about child care provided or contracted for provision during a town hall meeting. It's rarely taken up, but having read the letters here, I think it's pretty clear that, you know, if a mom and her child come into the constituency office and the child knocks the coffee table over on him or herself, the liability that goes with that is the liability that goes with all sorts of incidences applying to conducting our jobs as MLAs, and there's really no difference except that precaution should be exercised so children aren't put at risk, basically. So if we're acting responsibly, that's basically the bottom line in terms of both the legal and the political decision-making.

And no, I was not talking about ongoing services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are there questions? Barrhead.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I didn't look at this until just a few minutes ago. It's simply the matter of the liability that captures my imagination. The Crown, the province, would have a liability insurance policy essentially for Crown buildings that would have certain codes and meet certain standards. The clarification here about an individual getting hurt or something happening in an office rented by an MLA – because the system we have doesn't ask anybody else to prove the quality of the building, the standard of the building, or anything else. It's an individual choice by an MLA. It would concern me if, without recognizing there's a standard assessed for a building – and I don't know what the legal implications of that are – someone were to get hurt in a building that an MLA contracts for, for whatever reason. There are no questions asked as to who the MLA deals with. In fact, if something were to happen there, then it's the Crown that could be held liable for something happening. I mean, in our public buildings we follow standards and everything else that goes with those, certain codes. I'm raising it in a very confused way because I am confused about it. I'm not sure what the liability is and what the implication would be to the Crown. If there would be an implication to the Crown, boy, I'd have to say hey, let's just take another look at this.

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, where a person rents a building for a purpose, there is, of course, no doubt that if an accident happens, a statement of claim can be served on anybody in sight, a term which was often used. Lawyers tend to sue anybody they can see just in case they make a mistake and have forgotten the person that had the money and had some liability.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could we have that underlined in the record?

MR. M. CLEGG: So there is nothing to protect the Legislative Assembly or the member from actually being named in a suit.

We then have to see what the protection is. Generally speaking, the owner of the building would be responsible if there was any accident which was caused by a defect in the building which was rented by a member. In case there was some liability imputed to the member or in case the Assembly itself was joined in a suit, even though in the end it was clearly established that it was the building owner's fault or the fault of some independent contractor who had been hired, there would be some expense incurred in defending the position of the member and the Assembly, and that is the kind of expense against which the general liability policy is carried. It would also, of course, cover any expense if any damages were awarded in any circumstance against a member or against the Assembly. Even if you're not liable, there is sometimes an expense incurred in proving you're not liable, which is one of the defects in the legal system. You sometimes have to spend money to show that you shouldn't have to spend money. But I have checked with risk management, and they agree that the policy they have would cover this kind of liability.

One thing is worth considering, and that is that where members do wish to retain the services of an outside party to provide something like babysitting, it is always prudent to retain somebody who is licensed to do that business and is experienced in the business and has their own insurance, but that's just reducing the possibility of something going wrong. I think in the case of the Member for Edmonton-Highlands, she was referring to perhaps sometimes using the services of the YMCA; you regularly do this and are licensed and insured.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional comment?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think it's really important. I don't have any problem with the objective. That's okay. I'm just concerned about the liability and the protection of those individuals who might be in that particular office and the MLA as well, because within public buildings we have certain standards. We spend a great deal of time – everybody laughs at this – on bureaucratic control over how big the office is, what kind of furniture you get, the standard of it, and all the rest of that. If some individual MLA decides they've got a souvenir sword from Seville, Spain, and have it in their office and then some little child comes running along and falls on the sword and somebody sues the MLA, is the MLA covered under our liability insurance program as well? I think it's an important thing to get some questions to the risk management people. Identify the questions, ask them to give the answers, and get it in writing before we get carried away, because it could be embarrassing down the line on the basis of the "I assumed this was okay" kind of thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Clerk, Cypress-Redcliff, Edmonton-Highlands, Calgary-Glenmore, and Calgary-Foothills.

DR. McNEIL: I'll pass.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this is a momentous occasion, because these are two legal opinions we've asked for from the Parliamentary Counsel and they have both agreed two times in a row. I think it's unusual compared to the others.

My concern also – and the Member for Barrhead covered it – is that I have no problem with the idea; it's the liability related to it. That's quite a problem.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, what Ken was talking about has to do with the renting of facilities outside our constituency offices for the purposes of town hall meetings, which we do all the time. Most of us presumably know how to read a contract. If we don't, we shouldn't be here, we shouldn't be in the Assembly, because then we can't read legislation either. But I'm perfectly happy to have the issue tabled until risk management can report on a couple of questions Ken posed, as long as we understand that we shouldn't be confusing two issues.

One issue is the renting of the facilities – that's what Ken was talking about – compared to public buildings. All buildings fall under codes. The other is: can you contract to an insured child care service for the purposes of providing child care during the town hall meeting? If it suits the concerns, I'd certainly move to table it until we have a response from risk management. Is that your desire, Ken?

MR. KOWALSKI: I just want it clarified so there's no misunderstanding on the issue. Nothing else.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. Okay. Then I move to table the matter until we've got those two questions in writing answered by risk management.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion to table, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you very much.

DR. McNEIL: There's another portion of that issue related to transportation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, is there? Okay.

MR. McINNIS: While that's being distributed, the question of liability is an important one that the minister has raised, but from your comments, Ken, I take it you're equally concerned about MLA offices in addition to this child care operation, because what we have is a whole class of building space which is not really government office but members' office and meeting space which doesn't meet the code. It's that general question we're getting an answer to, and I think it should be answered in respect of our offices as well, because the problems could happen just as easily there and maybe even more so than they would in a licensed facility.

MR. KOWALSKI: And it goes without saying that some MLAs may very well hold public meetings in their constituency offices.

MS BARRETT: I do.

MR. KOWALSKI: So the same thing would apply.

MS BARRETT: Exactly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members.

Another memo has been distributed to you with respect to transportation. Mr. Ritter, would you like to speak to this one?

MR. RITTER: It's essentially the same position on the provision of child care services, Mr. Chairman. The nature of the Members' Services order involved is very wide, and therefore

transportation would, from a legal point of view, probably be included in this section. I have less concern about the provision of transportation than I do of child care. I mean, if a child should become injured or die, it's a very, very serious matter, which will almost certainly involve a lawsuit to everybody in sight. Transportation is a little different, provided that a member adopts a policy of only providing transportation through a licensed carrier. Licensed carriers are required by provincial legislation and federal legislation, depending on the circumstances, to carry extensive public liability insurance. I think the likelihood of the Legislative Assembly or a member being involved in a lawsuit, should a mishap occur, would be considerably less.

Again, my only comment is that perhaps the Members' Services committee might like to examine the possibility of rewording the order just to ensure that if a member is to provide that type of service, it be done through a licensed carrier such as a Greyhound bus or something like that.

2:10

MS BARRETT: Well, I think that's good advice, and perhaps we could ask the Clerk or Parliamentary Counsel to look at drafting such an amendment.

But my question is: if I go and pick up a constituent to bring her or him to a town hall meeting, my auto insurance covers me on the job, right? This is clear. I pay handily for it. If I get into an accident, there's no question, because my vehicle and me are fully insured on the job, right? The Assembly is never looking at a lawsuit then.

MR. RITTER: Mr. Chairman, to respond to that particular situation, there's no doubt that everyone who drives an automobile that is properly insured is adequately protected for themselves and their occupants. However, if the vehicle is being used in what might be considered a public capacity, the lawsuit may in fact then include the Legislative Assembly and, you know, the public office that the member holds because the lawsuit may very well exceed the limits of the member's own insurance.

MS BARRETT: So the hitchhiker's Bill covers that then.

MR. RITTER: There is a liability problem when private transportation is used.

MS BARRETT: Oh, boy. All right.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, just on that point. In industry, if a vehicle is used in the line of business, then there has to be passenger/carrier insurance on the vehicle in addition to PL/PD because of it being deemed to be part of the business transaction. So additional coverage should kick in because it's being used in the line of business.

MS BARRETT: Thank you.

MRS. BLACK: And you should carry that to, you know, the same extent you do PL/PD, because it may not respond.

MS BARRETT: Thank you. I didn't know that.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, can we get an idea why this came up? Did somebody put a bill in for taking somebody to a meeting, or just why?

MS BARRETT: I think it was contracting DATS. I think it was mainly contracting a participating automobile transportation system so that somebody who's disabled could come out to the constituency meetings, the town hall meetings.

MR. McINNIS: So this is the carrier.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. DATS and things like that would be licensed carriers, so I think that question's covered. I agree I confused the issue by asking about personal coverage.

MR. HYLAND: So that could include cabs?

MRS. BLACK: No, because you pay for service in consideration, so there's a "hold harmless" clause in there.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. They're a licensed carrier.

MR. HYLAND: But, I mean, then we could accept bills from that because that's a licensed carrier like DATS or Greyhound.

MS BARRETT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, group, what's your pleasure?

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, could I just extend a note of caution? If ever a member does in fact retain a transportation service, they should make sure that the fee for the transportation is paid to the company that is providing it and not . . . For example, a member might say, "Well, I'll hire the bus, and everybody pay me \$5." If a member did that, then the member would be in the business of transportation and would need business insurance. But if you arrange for a cab or a bus or DATS, any fee is paid directly by the person to the carrier and the member does not become involved in the business transaction.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I think the whole reason this was raised was to accommodate travel by passengers who cannot get on a public bus. So perhaps what we should do – and I'm willing to make the motion – is request that an order be drafted which allows the payment from a constituency budget to a licensed carrier, either a taxi company or a disabled adult transport system, for the purposes of getting a constituent to a meeting with the MLA or to a town hall meeting with the MLA and leave it just at that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A handicapped constituent?

MS BARRETT: Yeah, a handicapped constituent, somebody who can't take public transportation. That's what we're really talking about here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Further discussion, questions? Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: What happens, then, in the case of a rural area where the person may not have a car or may have a car and may not be able to afford to run it and the MLA can't go to see them; they have to come? Will we pay somebody to do that? I'm just a little concerned that it's . . .

MS BARRETT: Too tight? Okay. Go ahead.

MR. HYLAND: I don't know; maybe it shouldn't be any. I'm just saying there's another side to it.

MS BARRETT: Or we could even put "under occasional circumstances deemed appropriate by the member." You know, that way a little discretion is available, but it's assumed you'll be responsible in the exercising of the right.

MR. HYLAND: I mean, in my case, even if you go halfway, you're still looking at a hundred-dollar bill or more.

MS BARRETT: I understand. I don't mind that sort of friendly amendment. Let's just see if we can get something drafted and look at it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. In terms of the drafting of this, perhaps we could have the matter put over until tomorrow and collective wisdom might prevail overnight.

MS BARRETT: I'd be fine with that. Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The motion to table tomorrow, Cypress-Redcliff. Those in favour of not tabling the motion until tomorrow? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Item 4(d), Parliamentary Counsel.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Item 4(d) has been moved. Questions or discussion?

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; 4(d), the draft order at the back of that section. Because of the fall by-election, it will sort of change things, but it's good to have it in place if we're ever faced with this again. We have a call for the question. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Item 4(e). Has the subcommittee had a chance to meet? The chairman, I believe, was Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item 4(e), Communication/Constituency Allowance Guidelines – Subcommittee. I believe you're the chairman.

MR. WICKMAN: I didn't realize I was the chairman.

AN HON. MEMBER: It was your idea.

MR. KOWALSKI: You moved the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Well, we'll take it as notice that for the next regular meeting of the Members' Services Committee . . . [interjections] All right then. That will be a carryover item, I gather.

Item 4(f), Greening the Hill. In there you do have the memo that went out to members. For the members that did respond, we made copies and sent them on to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, and then there was a report back from the minister.

Would the Member for Barrhead care to comment at all?

2:20

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I responded and reacted to that one particular document, and there's a memo dated October 22 that I provided to you and all members, I would think, on the committee. I've given you a series of preliminary comments with respect to all the items that were contained within the document Greening the Hill, an update, as best as I can understand, where the overall instrument known as government is on this particular matter. So if members of this particular committee would want to deal with it further, I'm certainly open to suggestions and ideas.

MRS. MIROSH: Prohibit smoking in parliament buildings: I'll make a motion to do that.

MR. McINNIS: Second.

MS BARRETT: I don't know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has a motion on the floor. [interjections] Or perhaps I was just hearing some of the electrical machinery groaning.

Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, you raised the matter initially. This exchange of suggestions and the report from the minister is helpful for David, and it certainly has the matters highlighted. I'm sure people will continue to be working at it.

MR. McINNIS: Well, it is very helpful information. I want to say that I appreciate very much the format of the report that came back from the minister because it's easy to work with and to see what's going on. A lot of these items are being done by at least one of the caucuses at the present time: two-sided copying, reusing paper, copying on the other side, and using it as note pads. But there are some institutional things here that we should perhaps look at, such as hiring or designating an environmental co-ordinator. I'm not certain we need to have a new person in that position, but it might be an idea to designate Dan Dunlop, or somebody like that who deals with supplies on a regular basis, to co-ordinate something like this. We do need some additional follow-up, I think, above and beyond what's being done already. But I think this little guidepost gives us an idea of what we should be looking at.

My suggestion would be that each of the caucuses look at its own operations and perhaps the Assembly do the same and the Speaker's office. That would be the best way to proceed, in a decentralized fashion.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I should just add that this is such an ever-evolving situation that almost as every week goes by, there's something new that we can say, well, it's now been put in place or under review or will be put in place. The whole aspect of environmental enhancement and protection is certainly there, and it's being addressed in a variety of ways. But I'm certainly open to any suggestions that could fall under the purview, for which I might be able to be of assistance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, the Clerk has a couple of quick comments to make with regard to this.

DR. McNEIL: What I would like to do with respect to the Legislative Assembly Office would be to write a report to the committee summarizing the status of the initiatives with respect

to the Legislative Assembly Office and make any recommendations to the Speaker that we feel would be appropriate in terms of the implementation in the Legislative Assembly Office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I suppose Dan has been involved to some degree, but Kathy Bruce-Kavanagh has also been working with it for some period of time. Okay?

MR. McINNIS: Just out of curiosity, it says on the cover that 15 items should be considered by the Assembly. I can only count 13.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe we've recycled two.

MR. McINNIS: In any event, I'm sure we'll be [inaudible]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Before the next regular meeting we'll try to work out what the proper arithmetic is.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. What's going to happen with the item?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Clerk is going to give a report to the Members' Services Committee as to what various initiatives have been undertaken by the Legislative Assembly Office. Then we also invite you, as the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place has pointed out, to take the document back to your own caucus and hopefully find someone in that caucus who will keep more of a grandmotherly eye on it or something. Okay? Thank you.

Item 4(g), Edmonton-Jasper Place. Just briefly this time.

MR. McINNIS: Constituency Office Signage: I don't know how much more remains to be said about this except that I understand that the Members' Services order, which is scheduled to come into effect the first of the new year, is not even intended to be retroactive in its application. It will deal with items of art work, signs, and so forth which are displayed or purchased for display from that day forward.

When I see a member's office in my travels throughout the province, I have made a practice to look at what's on display there, and I would wager that a fair number of members, without knowing it, are in noncompliance with this new Members' Services order, which was kind of scratched together on the back of an envelope at a prior meeting, which is probably not going to be a problem because all of that was done in good faith prior to this coming into effect. Afterwards, I think we have to find some way to communicate this to other members so that they may be aware that some of the things they do in good faith, believing that they're representing the interests of their constituents, may confound and run afoul of this proposed new Members' Services order. I don't believe there's much to be gained by redoing the debate all over again, but I do think that's a concern, and I hope members of the various caucuses think about that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: For clarification could we have the original motion read back?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Four (g).

MR. BOGLE: Well, the member is suggesting that the motion addresses any signs created from January 1 forward. I don't recall that. I'd like the motion read back for clarification.

DR. McNEIL: This would be an order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right.

DR. McNEIL: It would be a Members' Services order that was passed?

MR. BOGLE: No, I want the motion that we passed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, the secretary will search for that one.

We've been working so terribly well I think it's time for about a 10-minute coffee break. Then we can find this exact wording.

[The committee adjourned from 2:27 p.m. to 2:49 p.m.]

[Mr. Bogle in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Speaker is delayed and has asked me to chair the meeting. As you know, the break was called so that some research could be done not only on the minute but also the *Hansard* dealing with Stockwell's motion on constituency office signage. There is no motion to table, but I will advise the committee that the matter will be referred over till tomorrow. By that time we'll have *Hansard*, so we'll see what discussions were held at the committee and the ensuing motion and then the order which was drafted, to determine whether or not the order accurately reflected the intent.

All right; the next item on the agenda is New Business, item 5. Do we have anything other than that one matter which may come tomorrow, depending on whether or not the paperwork is done?

Then going on, under Other Business: 6(a) Sign Language - Chairman.

MR. R. DAY: If I could respond to that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right. Robert.

MR. R. DAY: Mr. Chairman, this is on the agenda as a result of the July 19 meeting, where Videotron had offered to technically provide the services to sign. I'm pleased to say that the Assembly has been successful in retaining a signer, who will start with us on Monday the 26th when the fall session starts. She will be signing, daily, question period and would cover any type of special event. For example, during spring session when we have a budget speech, she has agreed to cover those items as well. She has an excellent reputation. She has studied numerous tapes to pick up and interpret words that are unique to the Assembly. All of this was a result of the unanimous passing by the Assembly of Motion 216 on American Sign Language, so we can't go wrong.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any questions? Members are satisfied with the report given?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It implements the intent of an

earlier motion by the committee.

All right, moving on then: 6(b) Impact of Federal Tax Legislation - Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: Mr. Chairman, Parliamentary Counsel, Mr. Clegg, was going to address this issue. Maybe I can just summarize it in that the Legislative Assembly Office is still looking at the impact of the GST on the operations of the Legislative Assembly Office. Most of the transactions of a commercial nature to do with outside parties relate to selling things are that regulatory in nature, like *Hansard* and so on, and my understanding is that those will not be subject to the GST. A very few things, like library photocopying for the public and so on, may involve having to include the GST in those charges.

I wanted to give you an interim report on that that at this point in time we're just looking at the implications of those various things.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Any questions of David?

MS BARRETT: Well, yeah, I guess I do have one. Does that mean that basically all our supplies and services will be GST exempt?

DR. McNEIL: Well, we're attempting to determine that at this point in time. Our belief is that that is the case, in terms of one level of government not being able to tax another level.

Michael Ritter, I don't know whether you want to add to that point.

MR. RITTER: Actually, I think you've summarized pretty well the intent of the whole thing. There's a lot of points that have yet to be clarified by Ottawa.

DR. McNEIL: I have a memo here that probably summarizes this, just for your information, as to where we're at now. It's really just an information item.

[Dr. Carter in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: So this is just an information sheet?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. No other action required on 6(b) at this time?

DR. McNEIL: It's still ongoing in terms of the assessment of the situation. That's what we know now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, if you'd like to go on now to 6(c), there are some budget books. The Clerk would just like a couple of minutes to clear the deck in front of him and get the documents for it. You have your estimate books.

MS BARRETT: While we're doing that, Mr. Chairman, can I ask a question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure.

MS BARRETT: By what time of the year do we usually have all of this finalized? Is it usually done in January or February?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, February. From the Assembly point of view we've been trying to move it ahead so that we show you just how efficient the group is.

MR. BOGLE: One of the committees that feeds into Members' Services is Leg. Offices, and Leg. Offices has had the preliminary round of discussions with the Ombudsman, the Auditor General, and Chief Electoral Officer. Their final budget discussions are late January, early February.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I could see that we could go through a fair amount of the material either today, tomorrow, or both, and that we would anticipate having one or two meetings in early January and one or two in late February if it requires that. On the other hand, we may get it all put together without having quite so many meetings.

MS BARRETT: Well, if I could, Mr. Chairman, I find one of the things that's rather time-consuming – and this committee is now experienced with this – is the explanation of the introduction. Perhaps, unless there were specific questions, we could bypass that and just go right into what I would call, for now, vote 1, vote 2, and stuff like that. Because I think the newest members on the committee are familiar with it by now.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, on the overview that you've got, that total A and B budget, the figure that's being at least suggested in the first cut: that's the blue book figure? That's the total figure for the Legislative Assembly? I thought it was higher than that. That's the 1990-91? I thought it was \$31 million; I thought it was \$10 million more, but if it's \$21 million, that's fine. It's just that \$10 million . . . That's the blue book figure, the estimate?

DR. McNEIL: That would be the blue book figure, but there are certain assumptions here that have to be . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: No, but the '90-91 one is the one that I'm looking at. I don't have my budget book with me.

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. KOWALSKI: Okay. That's everything?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. KOWALSKI: Okay.

DR. McNEIL: Just to proceed. In building this budget, we made a number of assumptions. At this point we haven't made any adjustment to the government members, Official Opposition, or Liberal opposition budgets. They are in here now as they were last year, and we haven't requested any information from the caucuses as yet. We felt it was up to the caucuses to determine when you wanted to submit that. So the bottom lines reflect that.

Of some of the factors in the environment that impacted on the development of this budget, I think the most significant factor relates to the bargaining unit opting out and excluding salary adjustments that had been made and implemented in the government service. On average these adjustments for bargaining unit people were a 5 percent market adjustment effective April 1, 1990, plus a bargained adjustment of 5 percent, a market adjustment, effective April 1, 1991, plus any merit

adjustments that individuals get in terms of their movement up their salary ranges in that period. So in terms of bargaining unit, on average you're talking about a 13 or 14 percent adjustment in salaries going into the 1991-92 budget. For the management group and senior officials group, cabinet approved a 5 percent market adjustment and up to a 3 percent merit adjustment effective June 1, 1990. Those assumptions are built into this budget.

2:59

So we were challenged, at least with respect to the budgets that the Legislative Assembly Office controls, with implementing those salary adjustments but attempting to maintain the overall increase at zero or as close to zero as possible. What the budget we've presented to you does in terms of the adjustments to administration, House services, the Speaker's office, the Legislative interns, *Alberta Hansard*, Legislature Library, and information systems budgets: taking into account those manpower increases, we project a total A budget increase of .86 percent, so less than 1 percent, and that's building in those salary adjustments.

What we've tried to do is really focus in on the supplies and services budgets. We're not looking for any additional manpower increases, other than there's some wage money requested in the administration budget to account for the fact that Alberta Treasury is going on a remote data entry for all the payroll and wage systems and delegating the inputting of all the data on wages and salaries to individual departments. So the work that the Treasury has been doing up to this point will now have to be done within the Legislative Assembly Office. All the salary, wage, and contract transactions will now have to be done and input by the Legislative Assembly Office, which is going to put pressure on the personnel area. We've requested some wage funds in there to be able to deal with that. We're not getting any positions from Treasury, as far as we know, to handle that additional responsibility.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And we look forward to seeing Treasury downsized accordingly.

MR. HYLAND: Well, that should be a fair downsizing if each department the size of ours is losing one person.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, on that Estimates Summary page, the first page – you've got it there. What we've deliberately been doing in terms of this last number of weeks is as best as possible to normally do a no-growth, but to try to knock it down even further. You can see the results of it here. It doesn't leave very much that's left to be trimmed, because consistently over a four-year period we've been putting the squeeze on the Legislative Assembly.

What's your pleasure? Do you want to just go through each individual section, look at the summary sheets, and come back, or do it line by line? Okay. If you have that first section, which gives you the overview, you can keep referring back to that one if you wish.

Let's go to General Administration. Clerk, please, section 1.

DR. McNEIL: Again, consistent with my opening remarks, the General Administration budget overall goes up 4.9 percent, with an 8.4 percent increase in the salary/wages area, a 26 percent decrease in Supplies and Services, and a 75 percent decrease in Purchase of Fixed Assets.



HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Guess we're ready for number 2. Do I have your agreement that we move over to MLA Administration, item 2 in your binders?

Item 2, MLA Administration. Clerk.

MR. BOGLE: Excuse me. I may be the only one, but why don't we take just a little more time with each section? I know we're only going through them in a very general, preliminary way today, but I think it would be helpful to go through them in just a little more detail than that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. In section 1, General Administration – and I take it that we're past the first two pages, because the second page deals with the Statement of Purpose: financial, administrative, personnel support services to the Assembly.

The next page, which starts with the Summary of Budget Estimates, 711A00. Clerk, any comments on that?

DR. McNEIL: As I say, page 2 just reflects the market and merit adjustments implemented for both management and bargaining unit related classes. The policy line that the Legislative Assembly Office has taken in the past with respect to salary adjustments was to be consistent with the related bargaining unit class or opted out class or management group classification.

It might be easier just to respond to any questions by page. Are there any questions on page 3?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're going by the page number that's in the lower left-hand corner of the page, right?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

Page 4?

Page 5 is just that the benefit costs are all up, based on the wages and salaries that are there. You'll note a number of increases there relating to increases in premiums for Alberta health care, for Blue Cross. The workers' compensation rates have gone up significantly, from .7 percent to .9 percent of salaries, wages, and contract payments.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 6, Staff Training.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 7, Travel for Personnel Recruitment, Seminars, and Conferences, based on the actual, showed a decrease of 25 percent.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

DR. McNEIL: Page 8, Newspaper Advertising, again showing a 25 percent decrease based on our actual experience in the past year.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 9, Postage: that's been factored in in the increases.

Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: An overall observation – and I think it was made a year ago, possibly the year before that – is that in addition to

comparing the estimate from the current fiscal year to the next fiscal year, we look at the forecast. How much money are we spending in these areas now? So when we do come back to it in a more detailed way – I think this is satisfactory today, and it may well be that that's what David and administration plan to do. Because if we don't have it, we're going to be asking questions, and that's going to prolong the process.

DR. McNEIL: We'll be in a much better position for forecasting when we come back to it in January because we'll have completed three-quarters of the year by then and have a much better handle on it.

What we would propose to do then would be, with respect to the summary page in each section, to provide you with that forecasted information as well.

Page 10, in terms of the photocopiers. At least in this area we're on fixed-rate contracts.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

DR. McNEIL: Page 11, again based on our actual experience to date.

Page 12, the repairs.

MR. HYLAND: That can't be all our tolls. There's got to be some buried somewhere else.

DR. McNEIL: That's just for the administration office in the Legislative Assembly. When you get to the end, that comes under MLA administration.

3:09

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Page 12, the repairs.

DR. McNEIL: And stationery. Page 12 reflects some of the recycling and reduction efforts that we're making with respect to stationery for the Legislative Assembly office, the administration portion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

DR. McNEIL: Page 14. Again a significant reduction there with respect to typewriters. Number one, we're using electronic mail and microcomputers to a much greater extent, so typewriters are almost becoming obsolete – not quite, but almost.

The last page is this – I call it rebudget. This is for something we haven't been required to do to this point; that is, input our own payroll information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Edmonton-Highlands?

MS BARRETT: Yeah. I really do wish that we could have value-for-dollar audits of some changes. Because it looks to me like if you've got Treasury's decision to so-call decentralize and downsize, what you're really doing is just asking another division to pay the same expense. It's really just asking a different hand to pay the same bill, and maybe cost even more. But now that I've made my editorial comment, my question is: why is this presented as a B budget when it's obviously an essential component?

DR. McNEIL: I guess we did it to highlight the . . .

MS BARRETT: Ah; okay. So it's not a B budget in the concept of, you know, we've got A, which we have to do, and B, which is discretionary. This is obvious that we have to do it.

DR. McNEIL: We wanted to highlight the points . . .

MS BARRETT: Yeah. Okay. Thanks. That's all right.

DR. McNEIL: . . . so we wouldn't gloss over it.

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We went through a similar process a couple of years ago.

MS BARRETT: In terms of what?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We went through a similar process a couple of years back, and we picked up the slack.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, I remember.

DR. McNEIL: We had some wage ones in the administration area when some of the accounting transactions were . . .

MS BARRETT: I know. That's why I said value-for-dollar audits might be . . .

MR. McINNIS: If we don't approve the B budget, what do you do: assign somebody else that task?

DR. McNEIL: Well, we'd just have to see what we could do. We may have to stop doing other things that we're doing, because this is an essential item.

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

DR. McNEIL: We have to . . .

MR. McINNIS: If you don't do it, nobody gets any cheques.

DR. McNEIL: Exactly.

MR. McINNIS: Some could consider that important.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, bearing in mind that at the next meeting we're going to be having the forecast figures as well, let's move on to section 2, MLA Administration. David.

DR. McNEIL: I'm wondering if, in light of the possible discussion tomorrow of the mileage allowances and so on, it might be better to delay this section for discussion to tomorrow, because all of the constituency office allowances and the mileage allowances and so on are all built into this particular budget, under MLA Administration.

MS BARRETT: Okay, sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Is it agreed to move onto section 3? We'll come back to section 2 tomorrow if there's something coming forward about mileages which would throw it into a cocked hat.

All right. We're now on section 3, House Services.

DR. McNEIL: The House Services budget is projected to drop by 1.3 percent. This is accomplished by a marginal increase in Salaries, a marginal increase in supplies and services, and a fairly significant reduction in payment to members of the Assembly for CPA related functions as a function of actual experience in the past two years.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, who's making that suggestion? Are they suggesting, then, that in fiscal '91-92 there'll be fewer opportunities for Members of the Legislative Assembly to attend CPA meetings and seminars and conventions, or that there will be just fewer of them?

DR. McNEIL: No. Just based on the initial budget . . .

MS BARRETT: On actual costs. If you go to that page . . .

DR. McNEIL: The \$50,000 was initially put there when the Members' Services order was changed to allow that. We only had an estimate of how much would be used, so we used that to budget last year. Having had a full year of actual experience, that number now reflects the level of use by members of that particular allowance.

MR. KOWALSKI: This is really so, Mr. Clerk? This is not one of those typical bureaucratic moves where you reduce the services offered to the Members of the Legislative Assembly to enhance the positioning of the bureaucracy?

DR. McNEIL: Definitely not. It reflects the usage over the past two years of that particular allowance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: I might have answered my own question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, good.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. But I want to get clarification, just in case. So to facilitate all that, I'll even let you know what the question was.

David, no layoffs, right?

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MS BARRETT: Okay.

DR. McNEIL: At this stage we've assumed no layoffs.

MS BARRETT: But what I'm seeing here under Salaries is a drop of 5.9; Salaries Nonpermanent wiped out, dropped 100 percent; and then Wages increased 139. So what you're talking about is that the people who are working here - you said they would get marginal pay increases. They're still going to get pay increases; it's just that they're switched around in terms of designation?

DR. McNEIL: Yeah.

MS BARRETT: Okay.

DR. McNEIL: The biggest item in this budget is the fact that, as you know by the memo I sent out a couple of weeks ago, Mr.

Clegg is going on a contract basis on a part-time basis, so there's some for this. That reduction is reflected here under Management Salaries, where they're going down 17.2 percent, but the Wages budget is increased.

MS BARRETT: I understand. Okay. Thanks.

DR. McNEIL: Are there any questions on pages 2 or 3?

MS BARRETT: I just want to ask about Travel Expenses, and I haven't found the page yet, so hang on a second.

DR. McNEIL: That would be 8, 9, and 10; they're the Travel Expenses pages.

MS BARRETT: Oh. So those are all those meetings. Are you sure that it's going to go down? I mean, aren't airfares skyrocketing because of the gas prices, fuel prices?

DR. McNEIL: We've accommodated the airfare increases that the airlines have projected for us, but . . .

MS BARRETT: Okay. So it just means less traveling.

DR. McNEIL: There's less traveling. There's one conference that was budgeted for in the past that we've put no dollars in for next year. That's the CPA International Seminar, which is taking place on the Isle of Man. We've budgeted for that in the past. Typically, it takes place in June, and the last two years we've not had the opportunity to send a member. So on that basis that number is zero this year.

MS BARRETT: Good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is assuming that everybody is okay, certainly up to page 3. Now we're on page 4, which relates to the Pages, Legal Counsel; 5 is the Security Force, and 6 is the Employer Contributions, which just pretty well follows along. Then over on page 7 is where you start to see these other items.

DR. McNEIL: On page 7, the increases there relate to the NCSL and the CPA international membership.

3:19

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 8 then takes us through the various conferences that we know of at the moment. The CPA Regional, the summertime conference which we hosted a year ago, will take place in August in Victoria; Presiding Officers, January '92 in Charlottetown. The regional council is the Speaker and the Clerk in Ottawa. That's on a weekend.

The next item of New Delhi, India, is where the next Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is. But just a quick comment. If things sort of fall apart in India and they end up in a civil war or something . . . Last week I was discussing with our two Canadian representatives as well as with the Commonwealth parliamentary office in London that if they have to change the venue and they can't persuade other countries to come into it, Canada could probably adjust to taking the conference next year. So we'd better have all that one come January.

The regional seminar is in Whitehorse, and then we've been sending two delegates every year to Washington. Then the other conference there is the National Conference of State Legislatures, which is due to be in Florida next summer.

MR. KOWALSKI: That should be August 1991 instead of August 1990?

DR. McNEIL: Correct.

MS BARRETT: Details can be filled in.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we would not approve it retroactive.

Okay. Page 10 deals with Clerks' Conference, Parliamentary Counsel, Sergeant-at-Arms Conference. Agreed?

Page 11, Insurance, Clerk's Vehicle; 12, Freight and Postage, actual costs reflected; 13, Photocopier; 14, Long-distance Tolls for the Assembly office; page 15, contingency built in in case he schmucks a vehicle. Page 16; these are some of the services that do, indeed, go on.

DR. McNEIL: I've one thing to point out here on page 16. You'll notice that the Orders of the Day and Votes and Proceedings are both estimated to be increased. The primary reason for that is that both of those documents are becoming larger, an increased number of pages, as a result of more Motions for Returns and Written Questions and various motions, and that's reflected here.

MR. McINNIS: I think it's all those positive ideas put forward by the opposition loading up the Order Paper.

MR. KOWALSKI: All those trees.

MR. HYLAND: All those trees that are being cut to produce it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I noticed in the Manitoba House that once a week only will they print all of them in full length. So for four days a week they're just printing basically the title or the intent of the motion for a return and so forth.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, on that point, is that something we could consider here? Is there any need for those Motions for Returns to be printed out day after day?

MS BARRETT: That's not something that we have the power to determine. That has to go to the Assembly.

MR. KOWALSKI: Why? Is that in the Standing Orders?

MS BARRETT: Yeah, I'm pretty sure it is. The power to print, I believe, *Hansard*, Votes and Proceedings, et cetera, is done by a motion that authorizes the Speaker to allow it. It's done annually, or it's done at the beginning of each session.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, the questions in the Motions for Returns don't have to sit on the Order Paper for months at a time; they could be dealt with relatively quickly. The problem might be with substantive motions which take some time to work their way through. Those we could easily print on a rotating basis, perhaps on the motion days or something like that.

MS BARRETT: I'm pretty sure we can't decide that here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I think it's one of these that we could do some checking on with other Legislatures to see what the

practice is across the country. I know that at the House of Commons it seems to be much more abbreviated.

DR. McNEIL: What I'd suggest is that we analyze the various documents that we print and come back to the committee with some ideas as to what could be done and the potential budget impact of those recommendations.

MS BARRETT: It does tend to be the private motions that are going to be . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: It's totally useless and redundant information to have one of those papers printed every day with 60 to 80 motions. Print them once a week; that's more than enough. It's just a waste of paper.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, that's one of the things that we can check out. Thank you.

MRS. MIROSH: Why is the Speech from the Throne so much more money? It was a short one.

DR. McNEIL: That was the bill. Really, \$400 was the cost of the short one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. And at the bottom of the page, again we have those prices in there for how much we pay to have question period covered live in our attempt to keep question period before the public of the province of Alberta. It's unfortunate that other media don't come in and volunteer to take the feed free.

MR. HYLAND: Is there any thought, because of the so-called evasive wise move in the judgment made by the commission - what's it called?

MR. McINNIS: The CRTC.

MR. HYLAND: . . . the CRTC, that we should send them a bill for \$53,000 for informing the public?

MR. McINNIS: Ask Keith Spicer.

MR. HYLAND: He talks about communication. He's been talking about it for the last two weeks.

MS BARRETT: I'm not sure we'll get it paid, but why not? I mean, it was a decision that we were unanimously opposed to, n'est-ce pas? Why not?

MR. HYLAND: That's what our motion shows.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's a big chunk of change.

MS BARRETT: I know, but all you have to do is type up an invoice and put it in a 39-cent stamped envelope and let it rip.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the Speaker will get the signatures of the three political parties, and the Speaker will have, in addition to the signatures, supportive letters from each of the three caucuses.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, I wouldn't mind. I mean, I object to their stupidity. It might have to come under a separate motion now, but I really object to that.

MR. HYLAND: To my motion, or to what he did?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: This sign language interpreter: is that the cost of the interpreter?

DR. McNEIL: Correct.

MRS. MIROSH: Or is that just the cost of the Videotron coverage for the interpreter?

DR. McNEIL: The addition there, the increase, relates to the cost of the sign language interpreter for the Videotron coverage.

MRS. MIROSH: But we didn't have one in 1990-91.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct. That's why the . . .

MR. R. DAY: We let Videotron absorb the entire cost of the extra camera and all the equipment required to sign. This is simply the fee to pay the signer over an entire session, spring and fall.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Three thousand dollars.

DR. McNEIL: So it's \$3,000 additional cost for that service.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Page 17, Clerk's Hosting; nothing there. Sergeants-at-Arms Conference: no conferences due. We hosted it this past year.  
Page 18.

DR. McNEIL: No changes on 18 or 19.

On 20, this is a reduction related to . . .

MS BARRETT: Well, can I make a comment, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely.

MS BARRETT: Most MLAs have, I assume out of their own constituency budgets, bought statutes and paid for the annual updates. I certainly do. But does it not occur to anybody else on this committee that your own copy of the statutes is, like, essential to doing your job? Why do you have to buy them out of the constituency budget? Surely the statutes, the laws of Alberta, should be automatically provided to the office of each MLA, and I don't care if it's a constituency office or the Legislature office. And if that MLA doesn't run again or is defeated, then those statutes go to the next MLA. We're not talking about waste here; we're talking about, you know, the obvious instruments essential to doing your job. Don't you get calls where you have to say, "Oh, just a sec; let me get the Act."

3:29

I'm not sure the comment is relevant here, but at some point I'd sure like to see . . . You know, I see provision of statutes,

18 copies. I don't know to whom they're going, but I know one thing: as an MLA, if I want statutes, I have to pay for them. That's nuts. That's just bizzaro. You don't charge us for the *Gazette*. Right? I mean, it's the same thing.

MR. WICKMAN: I don't know why you're being penalized. I don't pay for mine.

MR. HYLAND: Well, we get a year supplied to us, don't we? A statute update?

MS BARRETT: No, you pay for that out of your constituency budget.

MR. HYLAND: When did that start?

MS BARRETT: As long as I've been here. I pay 60 bucks a year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't know the answer to this one.

DR. McNEIL: We'll research that. I'm not certain of the answer myself.

MR. HYLAND: I thought you got one; not necessarily one for here and one for the constituency office, but I thought you got one.

MS BARRETT: I don't think so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Michael Clegg, does this ring any bells?

MR. M. CLEGG: No.

MR. WICKMAN: Now and again you get one.

DR. McNEIL: Sure you do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, we have the item flagged, because I see a lot of blank expressions around.

Okay. Then we had talked about page 20 before. Okay; section 4, Speaker's Office. Robert Day.

MR. R. DAY: Well, Mr. Chairman, they shout loudly.

Mr. Chairman, the budget reflects the same items, really, that the entire LAO, the Legislative Assembly, is under in that the office had market and merit increases to a total of 11.6 percent. In order to hold the line, we reduced Supplies and Services by 22.7 percent. Specifically, and I'm looking at page 2, Administrative Assistant and Ministerial Secretary have been both transferred to Contract Employees from Permanent Employees; that's why you see the decrease there.

The page 3 is that we split the salary of the secretary of Mr. Schumacher, as Deputy Speaker, for the services she provides to the Assembly. Again there were market and merit increases there on the one half of the salary and the benefits.

Page 4 shows the two positions transferred from Permanent to Contract, and I, as a contract employee, am included on this page as well.

Page 5 shows the result of the market and merit increases on the first three items and on the last three shows the increased premiums we're facing with dental plans, Alberta health care, Blue Cross, and workers' comp. Those increases are comparable to the wage increases. Staff Training reflects primarily word

processing training that is taken by the ministerial secretary and the administrative assistant and is the actual reflection of what we were expending in that area.

On page 7 there are three vehicles provided: one to the Speaker, one to the Deputy, and one to the Deputy Chairman of Committees. This reflects a rate increase received from Public Works, Supply and Services. Then in order to meet the objective of a no-growth budget, the travel by the presiding officers and the staff reflects two things: actual costs being incurred and a maximum not to exceed in the '91-92 year.

Page 8 is Insurance, the \$500 deductible on the three vehicles.

Page 9 is Freight and Postage, which has been in prior years not properly budgeted. It's been running significantly above \$700 not only in '90-91 but in '89-90, so the \$1,800 is an actual reflection of freight and postage costs in the office.

Page 10. Again we have a very old, obsolete, tired, well-used photocopier that really had to be replaced, so that significant increase reflects the new photocopier that was installed. The fax increase again was just an item that was not properly budgeted; the fax rental is actually \$1,200 per annum. Then the requirement for mobile telephones is no longer required in the office, so that item has been eliminated in its entirety.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With both Fax and Photocopier, we're also handling material for some other offices.

MR. R. DAY: Yes. We support Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's office, so there's a significant requirement there both for fax and photocopying. She does not have her own fax machine, so we receive and send all her faxes for her. Then when there's a copying requirement for her office, we undertake that as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 11.

MR. R. DAY: Long-distance tolls again is an accurate reflection of what is being expended, and consequently the 19 percent decrease.

Page 13. We did not have any provision for wage employees to cover those periods where either the ministerial secretary or the administrative assistant was absent for any extended period or to cover us through holiday periods. So there is a \$3,500 increase, and that's what you see in this budget. It's to cover temporary staffing.

Page 14. Under Hospitality again is the desire to reduce both travel and hospitality costs as they are two areas that can have a major impact on the budget. Consequently, this one has been reduced by 50 percent and will be reflecting actual usage in those areas.

The next page . . . I'm sorry, it has no page number on the bottom, but it is page 15. These are the Speaker's, Deputy Speaker's, and Deputy Chairman's salaries. There is no increase there: zero percent. The page 15 Materials and Supplies that shows from a percentile standpoint a significant increase again is an actual reflection of what has been expended in the office over the past two years and in prior years just had not been properly budgeted in this category. But the overall impact, Mr. Chairman, is that there is no increase in the Speaker's office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are there any other questions at this time?

MR. McINNIS: I take it that this is sort of a final figure, that it would not likely be adjusted as we go along in the year.

MR. R. DAY: What do you mean by that?

MR. McINNIS: Well, all of the caucus offices are put as a zero figure, but that's just because we haven't figured out what we're doing.

MR. R. DAY: That's right.

MR. McINNIS: This one is zero even with the increases built in like pay adjustments, that kind of thing.

MR. R. DAY: This budget for the Speaker's office was put together with the objective and the direction that we had to do more with less, and that's what it reflects.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In actual fact, the direction I gave the staff is to try to take it down 5 percent. They may have been sharpening not just their pencils but their knives. From our point of view, I think we're further ahead in our budget preparations than we have been in some time. Okay?

MR. BOGLE: Just one observation, building on John's comment. We aren't going to get into the three caucus budgets at this time, but we all know that over 80 percent of the costs of, I believe, all three caucuses rests with manpower.

MRS. AINSLIE: Closer to 90.

MR. BOGLE: Closer to 90? So the greater your expenses in supplies and services and other things, the greater the ability to live within a zero base budget. So we'll have to come back and address those concerns.

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. So we skip over the next few. Then we come to item 8, Legislature Committees, bearing in mind that Leg. Offices, for example, haven't had a chance to meet with their three main components.

3:39

MR. BOGLE: We've had the preliminary meetings. We've asked them to go back and come back with other scenarios of their budgets closer to the zero increase.

MR. KOWALSKI: I'm sorry, Bob. Which one is that?

MR. BOGLE: That's Leg. Offices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've come to section 8 now.

MR. KOWALSKI: Oh, Legislature Committees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clerk, if you'd like to take us through this one.

DR. McNEIL: Do you want to go through each committee?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Briefly, yes.

DR. McNEIL: Okay. The third page is the Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries. For information, it indicates a '91-92 estimate of zero. Again, these budgets are all draft because none of them has been finalized.

The Heritage Savings Trust Fund projects a 5.5 percent overall increase. That reflects an increase in travel expenses and a decrease in pay to members as a result of the projected number of meetings. All that reflects is a transfer of funds. Some of the travel funds were in the pay category; now that's moved into the appropriate place in the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the case of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, have they themselves had a meeting to look at their own budget process, or has this been in consultation with the chairman and the vice-chairman?

DR. McNEIL: This has been in consultation with the vice-chairman and chairman. I'm not certain whether they've had a specific meeting on the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But our general practice is to meet with the chairman and the vice-chairman of the committee. They give the projections.

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. KOWALSKI: That's really quite an incredible increase in Travel Expenses.

DR. McNEIL: If you look on page 2, some of those travel expenses in last year's budget were under Pay to MLAs. Therefore, that has been moved from that category, where it was inappropriately placed, into Travel.

MRS. MIROSH: Does page 2 include, though . . . That's just heritage?

MR. BOGLE: Well, can you explain what you mean by that: moved from Pay to MLAs?

DR. McNEIL: Part of the expenses of the committee meetings in the past were travel expenses, and last year there was \$37,500 budgeted under expenses for salaries in relation to committee meetings where they traveled to a number of the heritage-funded sites. That really is an inappropriate place to put those expenses, because those expenses were travel related, like air fare.

MR. BOGLE: They showed up someplace else under heritage fund?

DR. McNEIL: Yes, on page 7.

MR. BOGLE: I'm sorry. I don't mean to jump ahead there.

DR. McNEIL: No, that's okay. It took me a while to find the right page. On page 7 of the same heritage savings budget, under Salaries there you'll see Meeting Attendance, Expenses, and Chairman's Salary.

MR. BOGLE: Yeah, because the overall expenses for the committee are recommended to be up by 5.5 percent.

DR. McNEIL: Correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It also raises the issue for the committee to decide, probably by the end of tomorrow, as to whether we want

to have the chairmen of the various committees come before this committee again to speak to their budgets, because in many ways they are subsumed under this committee.

Clerk, carry on. Which page are we at now here?

DR. McNEIL: We're on page 3, I think, and then we're moving on. Most of the rest of the expenses in this budget are pretty well the same as they were last year. It's just that transfer that created the concern.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the Hosting for Meetings, page 6. Where does that go with actual costs?

MRS. BLACK: Where are you?

DR. McNEIL: We're on page 3, and we're going through the rest of heritage. I indicated that there was very little change in the rest of the heritage committee budget projected for next year. Unless there are any questions, we can move on to Public Accounts.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the comment was made: with Heritage Savings Trust Fund, do you actually use the \$1,000 in hosting on page 6? So that's one of the areas when we're in the next meeting. We've got the forecast figures, and if we have the chairmen of the various committees come, then we can talk about whether they can move some of their stuff down.

Page 7: there's a flow-through of some of the previous material there.

So now we're on page 1 of Public Accounts.

DR. McNEIL: The increases in the salaries, wages, and employee benefits area relate to membership fees and registration fees for the chairman and deputy chairman in the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation which had not been previously budgeted.

Under Travel Expenses there are a couple of conferences that were not previously budgeted for which the committee is requesting budget approval.

MR. KOWALSKI: On these committees, Mr. Chairman, who makes the decision as to who goes on these things?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee.

MR. KOWALSKI: The committee. They select two people to go? What do they have to go to Australasia for? Is that a question you can ask of the Chair?

MR. BOGLE: Well, it's an appropriate question to ask Barry Pashak when he comes, but this did come up at the Comprehensive Auditing conference that I attended this past year. Australia has for the past several years been sending delegates to the Canadian conference, so it's a request by the Public Accounts Committee to do something they haven't done before, and I think Barry will have some arguments to make as to why he thinks it's appropriate.

MR. KOWALSKI: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Again the point is to be borne in mind as to whether or not it's been approved by a committee too.

MRS. MIROSH: This committee?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, their committee coming to us, and then we give the final approval.

Okay, so this is really scanning for information.

DR. McNEIL: The other significant item change there is the projection of a 175 percent increase in salaries for meeting attendance and conference attendance on page 7. That relates, again, to those meetings that are an increase in travel expenses, and I'm not certain under the out-of-session meetings as to the basis for that.

MR. BOGLE: Do you meet out of session?

MRS. BLACK: No, we don't meet out of session.

MR. BOGLE: Well, that's something we can ask the chairman and vice-chairman when they come.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The Standing Committee on Private Bills.

DR. McNEIL: Fairly straightforward there in terms of increase, traveling charges for the chairperson's vehicle.

3:49

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the advertising.

Refresh my memory. The chairman of this committee is now . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Pat Black.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pat Black. Well, for sure we'll have that chairman here to answer to the committee.

Okay. If we may scan over, then, to page 1 on Legislative Offices. We have the chairman of that committee who will be held accountable by the committee.

MR. HYLAND: Bob is chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chairman, are you prepared to defend your budget today?

MS BARRETT: We're just finding out about you, that's all. Keeping track.

MRS. BLACK: We can go back to Private Bills. I was just talking to Michael. I think we paid for muffins last year, but we really don't host a lot of things.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm sure that between now and the next meeting of this committee, for budget purposes you will have worked all that through and pared it down as far as you can.

MRS. BLACK: Well, no butter this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Chairman of Leg. Offices Committee, any comments you want to make about this section as it is at the moment, or we'll just pass it by?

MR. BOGLE: I think it should wait until the others, unless there are some general questions now.

MR. McINNIS: How come that committee costs twice as much as this committee?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, one of the reasons is that this committee doesn't travel. Years ago there was an intent of the committee to travel to other jurisdictions to compare, but that has never transpired.

MR. HYLAND: I remember making that motion a few years ago.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee on Members' Services. This is an initial draft, and as a committee this is where we need to see whether we want to knock this down or change it in other ways. This is an agenda item for later, so I don't know whether you want to take a look at this now. Since Members' Services is here in the book, why don't we scan it now and save ourselves some business later?

Travel Expenses for the committee, estimated as being down 8.6 percent. That still carries with it the factor of increased airfares and so forth. Hosting: you'll notice today you don't have sandwiches; instead you just have those other diabolical things known as nanaimo bars. Then the matter of the pay to members of the committee. These reflect the actual costs, and so we'll have those other figures in forecasts. Does that first page seem all right on the surface?

AN HON. MEMBER: Uh huh.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 2 gives the breakdown of the travel, but hopefully you won't break down while traveling. Hosting for Meetings. That seems all right? Okay. And page 4 shows that the committee is taking this section down by 16 percent. Okay?

So it would show this particular committee overall decreasing by 13.8 percent.

MR. BOGLE: Pardon me. Did you cover Expenses, dropping from \$6,400 to \$2,000, on page 4?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 4. From \$64,000?

MR. McINNIS: Isn't that the same story? It doesn't belong under Salaries?

MR. KOWALSKI: Sixty-four hundred to \$2,000: a reduction there of 68.8 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right. Expenses of the committee: minus 68 percent, David.

DR. McNEIL: Oh, I think that relates to the fact that . . . I can't tell you the specific figures.

MR. R. DAY: Most members are here when Members' Services meets, so there's not a requirement for them to come from their various constituencies. So it is more of a reflection of what is actually happening versus trying to budget on the basis of . . .

MR. BOGLE: Are we talking about travel expenses? Or what would happen in a number of cases is that a member just claims

the trip, whether it's by air or by car, under their - what? - 52 trips a year.

MR. R. DAY: Or the scenario where you came up and it was a two-day meeting and you had overnight expenses, meal expenses, et cetera, because of this committee. They're just not being utilized.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It also would reflect the fact that some days a number of you have been meeting with the Electoral Boundaries Committee or Leg. Offices or whatever, so you're already here in Edmonton. However, then when we do the listing, maybe we should put behind there - in expenses we need to put, e.g., travel, or something. Okay?

Section 9, Legislative Interns. Clerk, on this section?

DR. McNEIL: We just projected no change in budget on the assumption that the salary range for interns is a competitive one, that there be no change in Travel Expenses as most of our travel expenses are paid by contributions we get from external sponsors. Therefore, all these other expenses that we incur will remain the same. The only difficulty we would face in this budget would be if our sponsorship was not continued.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that far enough for today, folks? That leaves us tomorrow with . . .

MS BARRETT: I nod off agreement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: . . . 10, 11, and 12, and also coming back to section 2. If you want to just quickly check with your agenda, you now can check off item 6(d), our own committee. So we'd be coming back working with (c) tomorrow and a number of the other issues.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, are we meeting here in this room tomorrow?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, the same room.

MR. BOGLE: Everything's secure. You can just leave things.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: I'm not sure if the room is booked for tonight, so I'd recommend moving your books with you.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, I agree.

MR. WICKMAN: And we're meeting tomorrow from 9:30 until what time?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the progress we've been making, it looks like we'll certainly be done by noon.

MS BARRETT: Hear, hear.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But 9:30 is still the firm start time?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All righty. And for tomorrow we'll continue through with the budget information before we go back cleaning up other items on the agenda.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.



MS BARRETT: I'll phone you and give you a wake-up call, Bogle.

Calgary-Foothills that we stand temporarily adjourned until tomorrow morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair recognizes the motion from

[The committee adjourned at 3:58 p.m.]

