

9:07 a.m.

Tuesday, December 18, 1990

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, ladies and gentleman. On the agenda we have for today, the first item of business is the completion of Constituency Office Signage. The other piece of business to be done is security mechanisms in constituency offices. Ms Barrett has phoned. She has car trouble and will be half an hour late, but since we have a quorum and representatives from each of the three caucuses, I think we'll begin. If we get to the item on security, the Sergeant-at-Arms can speak to it because he's had initial conversation with Ms Barrett.

Okay then; where are we with regard to constituency office signage?

MR. BOGLE: We have a motion, Mr. Chairman. I'll read this into the record. Move that the motion to amend the constituency services order presented by Mr. Day on July 19, 1990, be amended in section 2 by adding the following after subsection (7):

- (8) All constituency office signage, present and future, must comply with the foregoing by April 1, 1991.
- (9) Failure to comply will result in the office not being recognized as a constituency office and hence funding for the constituency office will cease until compliance of the order.

The purpose of the motion is clear. It extends the grace period in the original motion made by Stockwell Day from January 1 to April 1, 1991. We are speaking clearly of a constituency office, so the only portion of a member's allowance which could be affected if there's a failure to comply with the order would be the constituency office portion. Clearly, all signs in constituency offices should follow the guidelines previously adopted by this committee.

MRS. BLACK: Question.

MR. McINNIS: Do you have a question, or are you calling for the question?

MRS. BLACK: Well, calling for the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That's usually the role of the chairman, Edmonton-Jasper Place. I appreciate your help. Thank you.

Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: It seems today that the intention of the government is to require that some funds be spent to redo signs that have already been put up; that seems the intention of it. I maintain that there are a number of offices which are certainly inadvertently offside with respect to a motion like this. It's been said before that there are two members who are particularly targeted for this, both of whom are members of this committee. One is not here at the moment. I wonder if I could request that this matter be tabled until Ms Barrett gets here.

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

Next item of business: Sergeant-at-Arms, would you like to speak to the matter of security.

MR. LACOMBE: The Member for Edmonton-Highlands

approached me yesterday indicating that she has in her office a personal constituency alarm system whereby you can summon help if you get a deranged person in or whatever. We've had some problems in constituencies: one gun, a knife or two. What I've told the people there is not to publicize it because you have a copycat effect.

I went out to Westec Security Systems, and they can install these things for about \$700 throughout the province. Then there's a \$25-a-month monitoring charge. They have four types: a pendant, wrist, or garage door type, or something you have on your desk that you can just push and it'll activate this system. It'll go to Westec, and they get hold of the RCMP or the city of Calgary, Edmonton, or whatever. There are approximately eight firms that do this type.

That's basically it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Where have the various incidents been occurring? Is it mainly in the cities?

MR. LACOMBE: No; all over. We've had break-ins at two rurals and one last week in the city.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Edmonton-Whitemud, and then Grande Prairie.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, just a couple of comments. First of all, this matter was brought forward by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. I had no difficulty in proceeding with the last one in that member's absence, but with this one I do have some difficulty, because she's the one that brought it forward. Obviously she has some specific concerns. Has she addressed them all to the Sergeant-at-Arms?

MR. LACOMBE: What she indicated to me is that she had an incident in her office. There was a letter spike, and the deranged individual came in and was going to utilize that as a weapon to get at one of her constituency office people.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I've spoken to the Sergeant-at-Arms about security in Edmonton-Whitemud. Little incidents like that do occur. Even at city hall it wasn't that unusual to have people come in that were a little out of touch with reality, I guess is the best way of putting it. I'm not sure there's any way of totally preventing it. Is it of major concern to the Sergeant-at-Arms?

MR. LACOMBE: Yes. Anything that we can do to protect those people - they're sort of the front line. I visit most of the offices, and they all have some concerns. Anything we can do to protect them I'd certainly go along with.

MR. WICKMAN: So is it your suggestion that this be sent back and studied and come forward with some specific recommendations, maybe budget implications, maybe options for individual MLAs to consider?

MR. LACOMBE: Yes, that could be one way of looking at it.

MR. WICKMAN: I think it would be impossible to try and make those types of decisions this morning, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed. I think the matter is for discussion.

DR. ELLIOTT: I have a question, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering if the Sergeant-at-Arms' observation is that these were street level, front door, opening onto the street constituency offices as opposed to something like we have in Grande Prairie.

MR. LACOMBE: No. You can get it in any office. We've had one in Calgary where they were on the second floor and quite a ways back. It happens in just about any constituency office. It doesn't matter if it's a working-class area or a better area; it happens all over. We've had several of them.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, the Sergeant-at-Arms has visited the Grande Prairie office. Would you think this discussion applies to the setup we have there?

MR. LACOMBE: It could if that girl were left alone for some time, depending on the individual, how he observed your operation, and how he wanted to attack, molest, or whatever.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: I merely wanted to add to the information which has been placed on the table this morning by the Sergeant-at-Arms and others. Pam and I discussed this yesterday during one of our coffee breaks. I'm sure we're not going to make any decisions on the issue at this time, but my recollection of what she is requesting is some assistance in the annual operating cost of the system. I think she indicated that approximately \$200 to \$300 per year is the charge to maintain the system. It's plugged in with the police.

9:17

MR. LACOMBE: City police, or RCMP in the rural areas. What I've got on the cost is approximately \$700 for initial installation and \$25 per month monitoring after that. So possibly what she was referring to was the \$25.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, we now have two subcommittees struck, haven't we? I'm not sure of the terms of reference of the two committees.

MR. McINNIS: One doing communication allowance and the one yesterday was just the mail in the building.

MR. BOGLE: I was wondering if this could be piggybacked.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Members' Services budget estimates, the committee under Mr. Wickman?

MR. WICKMAN: You mean the committee that's looking at the communications aspect? Are we broadening that to encompass the constituency budgets? I'm willing to do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry. The order has Communications/Constituency Allowances Guidelines for your committee.

MR. WICKMAN: Oh. Okay. Sure, I'd be pleased to do that.

MR. McINNIS: I think my colleague indicated that they haven't solved this Westec system where they have the panic button, the

alarm situation. It was a question of how to pay for it, because the budgets being what they are, the money is extremely tight. It may very well be that some have to purchase new office signs again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's not part of this motion.

MR. McINNIS: No, it's not yet determined by the committee, but it was a budget item. That's why it's here before the committee today. I think it's appropriate to put it in the budgetary context.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Foothills.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Sergeant-at-Arms knows, we've had a couple of instances in our constituency office. We're probably one of the most ideally set up, because we have an entranceway where there's a main reception. There's a grouping of offices that this main reception services, and then our office is back in the corner. Even with that kind of structuring we've had a couple of quite frightening instances that have occurred.

I think it's imperative that members realize that when we run for office, we know there are some risks, but when we hire staff, we should not expect them to be faced with those same kinds of risks. What we've done to address them is talk to the building people, and we've installed a security system in the building. It will be reflected on a pro rata basis on our rent for our portion of that. We've already gone that route. I don't know whether it can stop a bullet or whatever, but it's amazing how much more secure we do feel when we're there after hours or on weekends by ourselves now that the security system is in place.

I think it's important that you do provide, even through location, the best possible security for your staff, and possibly there are configurations that could be looked at and worked up. I think that in Calgary I would be a little leery of having a storefront office in a shopping centre. I had a campaign office in a storefront, and it was burglarized a couple of times. That was why, for security purposes, I made the decision to go into the configuration that I went into.

So I think maybe the committee could look at the best types of configurations that we should be moving our space into and the types of security. I know that we've gone ahead with it and that it certainly makes our staff feel much more comfortable being in that environment.

MR. LACOMBE: There are several incidents that have occurred with weapons and physical as well. I'm not mentioning any specific constituency offices, because I don't think I should. In one constituency office the guy walked in, had the girl cornered, grabbed her by the blouse, and stuck her up against the wall and said, "Now, do something." This is just one incident, and there are several as well where there is not a weapon involved but just straight physical and threatening, like leaning over their desk, that type of thing. So you come up with several different scenarios.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Edmonton-Highlands, come and grab your cup of coffee. What we're dealing with at the moment is that issue raised by yourself yesterday on security.

MS BARRETT: Oh, good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There have been comments around the table, and the general feeling is to have it referred to the committee that Mr. Wickman chairs that's dealing with communication and constituency allowances and report back to the next meeting. We'd like to have your comments when you get a chance.

MS BARRETT: Well, I'll just sit and do it right now, if I'm the first one up. What I would suggest is that the problem is rectifiable by a security system that can be installed by a number of electronic security agencies. What it usually involves is a small pendant that one wears.

MR. McINNIS: We actually had that report from Oscar.

MS BARRETT: You know about that.

MR. LACOMBE: Yeah, there are about four types.

MS BARRETT: Right. Now, I installed that in my constituency office a couple of years ago at the expense to my constituency budget. The ongoing cost is around \$65 to \$75 every three months. I consider it a necessity. There are crazy people everywhere, and there are some angry people everywhere too. What I would suggest is that we approve in principle the notion that this should be an expense incurred by the Assembly on behalf of all constituency offices which wish to subscribe to that security system and that we take that into account when we get into our budget process. I just don't think it's fair, you know, that we have to absorb the cost of basic security out of a fixed allowance.

MRS. BLACK: On that point, Mr. Chairman, I would be opposed to the Legislature assuming that expense. We had an increase in our constituency allowances last year. I think that for the sake of our staff the onus is on the individual member to make sure they're secured. Now, there will be some members that will elect not to have that security system. I have it in my office, as I said earlier, and it's going to cost me every month, but that is a responsibility that I have assumed and I have chosen to assume. I would be very much opposed to adding that on to anything but the constituency office expense.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, congratulations to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands for her part in their decisive win there last night. You weren't here earlier, Pam, when we passed that kind of stuff around.

MS BARRETT: I was sitting in Riverdale in a car that first stalled and then flooded. Sorry, folks.

MR. WICKMAN: I saw you on TV this morning: 3 o'clock in the morning and still partying.

MRS. BLACK: What were you doing up watching TV?

MR. WICKMAN: Hoping it would change. There were still two polls to come in.

Mr. Chairman, I think the economic aspect should be addressed in the total overall budget per constituency allowance and communication allowance for the next fiscal period. Again, I would say that it should be referred to that committee,

addressed at that aspect. If anybody wants to do it on an immediate basis — normally this time of the year we start looking towards March 31 and saying, "Are there any things we need that we may have put off," waiting to see how our constituency budgets were going to operate or how they were going to conclude. So I would have hesitations on any expenditures at this time until we address it on a global basis.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Is someone about to make a motion to refer it to that committee?

MR. McINNIS: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Edmonton-Jasper Place. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Now, we'll return to the other item. Taber-Warner, if you'd like to speak to the issue once more, it's on the table here.

MR. BOGLE: Well, I believe Pam has a copy of the motion which was made. It's self-explanatory. John proposed tabling the motion until you arrived, and that was agreed to.

MS BARRETT: Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: We're just now ready to get into the actual discussion on the motion.

9:27

MS BARRETT: Do I take it from this motion that because I broke a rule that I didn't know existed, that in fact didn't exist, I now have to absorb the cost of changing my sign for having offended a rule that didn't exist at the time my sign was made?

MR. BOGLE: Well, if the hon. member would go back and read *Hansard* of July 19, we discussed that very carefully and thoroughly.

MS BARRETT: I did.

MR. BOGLE: We looked at the orders which have existed since the constituency offices first appeared in the early 1980s.

MS BARRETT: No. There was no prohibition against . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. Wait a minute; wait a minute, folks. If this is going to be back and forth . . .

MS BARRETT: All right. Go ahead. Sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If I have to, it'll be just speak once on the motion, and then we'll call for the vote.

MR. BOGLE: That's fair enough.

The reference in our orders is to constituency office. There is no reference to community offices or anything else. They're constituency offices.

Now, if a member wishes to put up some other kind of logo, if they wish to have a Neighbourhood Watch sign in the window or someplace else, there's nothing preventing a member from doing that, but the actual signage is the issue we dealt with at our meeting of July 19. We passed a motion; we moved ahead. If there is any concern raised as to whether the motion meant

for new office signage only or old office signage, the purpose of the motion today is to be perfectly clear. It is directed at present and future offices, and there's a provision that if a member does not wish to comply, then the constituency office ceases to exist until the member does comply.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I understand the sledgehammer approach here. What I'm asking is this: I broke a rule evidently . . . I've got another question before I get to that. Did you just say that if you choose to have a sign like Neighbourhood Watch in your window, that's okay?

MR. BOGLE: I indicated that in my view of going back and reading the original motion put forward by Stockwell Day in July, there are a number of things which are permissible on a constituency office sign. If a member wishes to have something in addition to what has been listed, there's nothing stopping you from putting a little Neighbourhood Watch sign, as an example, because that's what was used before, in a window or some other such thing, but the actual signage indicating what the office is – there are matters, the name of the member.

MS BARRETT: No, I get it.

MR. BOGLE: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Additional comments, Edmonton-Highlands, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

MS BARRETT: Well, I guess my question is this: is the committee satisfied that it is fair to say that a new rule comes into force – and basically one of prohibition, because what it does is outline explicitly what can be there, whereas before there was no rule that was explicit. It was just: this is a constituency office, et cetera, et cetera. This is a redefined concept obviously, because it took a motion and an order to do it, of what is permissible and therefore excluding what is not permissible. Is it fair that when I had my signs made a couple of years ago, long before this motion was sponsored on July 19 and approved and an order subsequently drafted, that I should pay out of my constituency budget to change my signs to conform to a new rule?

MR. BOGLE: My response, Mr. Chairman, would be that it is not a new rule. The order drafted in the early 1980s refers to constituency offices, not community offices. The reason the matter arose in the summer of 1990 was as a result of a routine check by one of the Speaker's staff members who reported back to the Speaker that several offices had signs that did not refer to constituency offices. That's how the issue came to the table. Whether you did this two years ago or five years ago is irrelevant. As soon as it came to the attention of the Speaker, the Speaker brought it back to this committee and the committee dealt with it.

MS BARRETT: You do understand that what I'm saying is that if it was so obvious that it should not be called a community office, it would have been obvious in the prior order and in any prior motion. In fact, that was not obvious.

MR. BOGLE: It's very unfortunate, Pam, if you're suggesting that around each motion we have to build such a high fence to keep members in. Normally you assume that members can

follow a practice and know the difference between right and wrong.

MR. McINNIS: I object to that.

MS BARRETT: So do I.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, hon. members, you get your turn. I need to point out one thing though: the original constituency signs as issued – and I still have the one that was issued to me in 1981 – says "constituency office." That was a decision of the original Members' Services Committee dealing with it.

MS BARRETT: Yes, I understand, Mr. Chairman. My point is that just because it is called X did not mean under interpretation that it was exclusively X. In other words, you could not . . .

MR. BOGLE: No? Then a question back, if I may, Mr. Chairman. Why didn't you come to the table and ask? Other members have come forward and said, "Is it permissible?"

MS BARRETT: I was just going to give you an example.

MR. BOGLE: But did you on this point, on the signage?

MS BARRETT: No. But you know what? I do turn in my MLA reports, which say right on there: Edmonton-Highlands community office. No one ever said, "Hey, we're not going to pay for these." You see my point? So it's not like, you know, I'm holding a big secret here, folks. The sign is very prominent. My MLA reports say: Edmonton-Highlands community office. No one sent out the police before. Anyway, I think I'm going to lose the vote.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Objection, hon. member.

MS BARRETT: Oh, what's the matter, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The police have not been sent out.

MS BARRETT: Well, I guess I'm referring to the police . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The committee is adjourned for 15 minutes.

[The committee adjourned from 9:33 a.m. to 9:47 a.m.]

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, in response to some of the comments that have been made by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands and the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, please correct me if I'm incorrect, but when I was elected as an MLA, I was sent a sign – I believe it was from the Legislature; I'm not quite sure who it came from; it was sent to my constituency office – that said that it was the Calgary-Foothills constituency office. It in fact had the coat of arms on it, and it was to be used as a sign for my office. I don't believe it was charged against my constituency allowance. In fact, I believe it was paid for by the Legislature. As I say, please correct me if I'm incorrect. So if the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is that concerned that he's going to be out of pocket by putting the appropriate signage up, he could look in his files and pull out that sign and remove the one he has and use the one that was provided by the Legislature.

MR. McINNIS: I didn't receive one.

MRS. BLACK: I think the same would apply to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. I don't think I was a unique member that received this sign. I'm sure all members received it.

MR. McINNIS: I didn't receive one.

MRS. BLACK: So I think the argument that this is going to cost them out-of-pocket expenses is just not valid. I believe the motion should proceed as worded. I really don't know what the big to-do is about frankly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clerk, with further regard to the signage.

DR. McNEIL: We will provide a standard sign at the member's request, which we pay for.

MS BARRETT: What size?

DR. McNEIL: Oh, it's quite a small sign just with the name of the MLA and the constituency with the crest on it. It would be a sign that you'd put in your window or on the door.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, if we only get to speak once and not ask questions, I might as well get it over with. There is a comfortable lie that signs that were installed that say something other than "constituency office" were done improperly or outside of the rules or in some fashion beyond the scope of any authority. That, of course, is completely false, because it was done, it was done properly, and all concerned who were involved with it acted in good faith. Any suggestion to the contrary or any imputation by an hon. member that some who may be offside of this new retroactive legislation have done something wrong is, I think, very unparliamentary to say the least and should be treated accordingly. What was done was done, and it was done in good faith by all of those concerned.

Now, my concerns about this are from a number of perspectives not because I'm out of pocket, Calgary-Foothills, because I'm not. This is the taxpayers' money that we're talking about. It's not personal, although the manner in which it came to the table does suggest that there are two members in particular who somebody wants to discipline in this regard. There are a large number of offices that are offside with the present rule. I was intrigued that the Member for Taber-Warner came out today and said that actually he thinks posters are okay, even if they don't meet the formula where you get the name of the member, the electoral district, constituency office address, telephone number, directions, and the coat of arms of the Assembly.

MRS. BLACK: That isn't what you said at all.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you.

MRS. BLACK: That isn't what he said at all. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place has the floor.

MR. McINNIS: Well, it's an interesting notion, because there are members who do display various posters from time to time

in support of worthwhile community endeavours. I thought I heard him say that it was not the intention to interfere with that practice through this motion, but in fact it does that because there isn't even a definition of a sign. Administratively it's going to be difficult, but we'll see how it's done.

The plain reality, and the government knows this, is that it will cost in my case somewhere between \$1,200 and \$2,000 to redo the signs that are there. They know that. They know that that's the cost. They're not prepared to make any provision for it other than to say: oh, the taxpayers can pay that, because we're on a political mission here, and we don't really care. I think that's the plain fact of what's before us today.

Now, I think it's wrong. Might is not right. Just because you've got votes on this committee doesn't mean that you have the ability and the right to do things like this. This is a retroactive order by another term. Yesterday government members of the committee voted down a retroactivity clause because they didn't think they had authority to do that under the legislation. Today they come back with something that says: oh, well, we're not going to make it retroactive, but we are going to confiscate 100 percent of your constituency office budget if you don't comply with this order effective a certain date. That's a fairly heavy penalty to attempt to undo something that was done properly and within the rules at another point in time.

The question put forward by my colleague for Edmonton-Highlands is a valid one. What's being suggested here is that something has to be done at considerable expense to gain compliance with a rule that did not exist at the time that the alleged rule was broken. There is nothing much more dangerous than that in terms of the heavy-handed government, and ladies and gentlemen, what we have here is heavy-handed government. Even though this is a Legislature committee, we're only people. We operate under legislation, and what's being done here or what's purported to be done is a pretty grave matter, and I think you should think again if you think it's just a simple administrative decision. It's not.

The designation "constituency office" has never been in any Members' Services order, and therefore it's entirely natural that a fair number of members don't use it because the term is awkward. It's not well understood within the community. My constituents have no difficulty understanding the difference between my legislative office and my community office. They know which is which, and I think they have a reasonable understanding of what takes place at each of them. So it's quite natural that members don't have it, and I think you will find not "community office" but other designations throughout the province. Nobody's talked about that; nobody's made any move to change them. It will be interesting to see if the enforcement of this particular provision goes against only two particular members and not others who may be offside as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional? Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I've maintained a very, very consistent position on this matter from day one. I'm not offended by the signage reading "community office." That doesn't bother me. I realize that I'm referring to a Member of Parliament, another level of government, but it's been pointed out before that a constituency office of a Member of Parliament is referred to as an action centre. Whether it's constituency office or community office to me isn't any big deal one way or the other.

Fortunately, my office complies, although I guess I could have been in the situation where it didn't if I'd slipped a little. Nevertheless, if it's going to be so stringent from here on in that every "i" has to be dotted and every "t" crossed down the road, let's put that into effect as of April 1, but then any costs that have to be borne to make that change should not come out of that member's budget. For all I know, some of the eight members in the Liberal caucus - there may be some of those out there where some little minor thing is wrong. Those signs can be very expensive. At the Petrolia shopping centre, where we have our signs, I think it was in the neighbourhood of about \$1,200 for our plastic signs out in front that would have to be replaced. Fortunately mine does comply, but I can't guarantee you that every Liberal constituency office complies. I don't know if every Conservative constituency office complies. Because we're becoming very, very stringent, it means changing signs, changing letterhead, changing other documentation at a very excessive or high cost, I think those cost implications should be evaluated, Mr. Chairman, and should not be charged against a constituency budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Additional comments?  
Summation, Taber-Warner.

9:57

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is regrettable that motions such as the one before us today have to be put. It's regrettable that some members choose not to go back and look at the guidelines. We've had examples where members of the Assembly have either contacted the Speaker or the Speaker's office or, in fact, have come to this table, asked for clarification, and made suggestions on variations they'd like to have considered. That is indeed the appropriate way to go.

The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place asked the question as to whether or not we were certain that there were only two constituency offices that had signs that would not comply with this particular motion. I'm not at all certain of the answer to that question. There may indeed be other constituency offices that have signs that will have to be altered, and they may be government members. That is not the point. The point is that members of this committee have inherited a privilege established in the early 1980s by our predecessors when constituency offices were first established. A building process took place which would allow us as members to work with our constituents, to give our constituents greater accessibility to us and to services of government. That is a privilege we must be very careful to protect and not in any way violate the intent. I think anyone who has difficulty seeing the difference between a constituency office and a so-called community office had better go back to even more basic training in terms of our role here as MLAs and our functions with our own constituents.

Yes, it's unfortunate, Mr. Chairman, that motions like this have to be put forward. It's unfortunate that members can't follow the rules approved by the committee either in recent history or further back. Clearly, if we're going to have other examples of violation of a trust which has been given to us, then appropriate action will have to be taken.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That was summation.

Those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed? The motion carries.

MR. McINNIS: A recorded vote, please.

[For the motion: Mrs. Black, Mr. Bogle, Dr. Elliott, Mr. Hyland]

[Against the motion: Ms Barrett, Mr. McInnis, Mr. Wickman]

MR. McINNIS: Probably because nobody believes that stuff anymore.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member. The Chair . . .

MR. HYLAND: Well, what about your side? What makes you think they believe that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MS BARRETT: We didn't violate . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Just to correct something in the record. In the Legislative Assembly green book, Edmonton-Jasper Place, for item 23 the heading is Constituency Office Allowance; 24 is Constituency Office Space; 25 is Constituency Office Staff.

MS BARRETT: I think we were talking about constituency signs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The member mentioned that the word "constituency" wasn't used.

MR. McINNIS: I said no such thing, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Then I'll check the record to make sure.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In terms of the last year and a half, the Chair does feel that legalism begets legalism, and we're certainly experiencing it in this committee. Now, that makes it a bit difficult for everybody concerned.

MS BARRETT: What does that comment refer to?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just the matter of greater need for definition with various issues that have come before us. Sometimes, as is the case for all of us, we use the law to argue both sides of the argument almost at the same time, certainly from one issue to the next.

MS BARRETT: You'd also acknowledge, then, revised definitions.

MR. McINNIS: From time to time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The comment still holds.  
New Business. Dates of the next meetings.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, do we have to move orders from motions that were passed yesterday, or do we hold them till the next meeting?

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, could I just distribute these, and I'll explain to members how they will operate?

MR. CHAIRMAN: While that's occurring, you already have it in the record that the next meetings are January 14 from 1 to 5, Tuesday the 15th from 9 to 4:30, February 19 from 9:30 to 4:30, and February 20 from 3 until 7 p.m.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry, February the what?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The 19th.

MR. WICKMAN: All day?

MR. CHAIRMAN: From 9:30 to 4:30. If required, Wednesday, February 20, from 3 to 7 p.m.

MR. WICKMAN: Right. Then in January, Mr. Chairman, you said the 14th from 1 o'clock on and Tuesday morning, the 15th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you.

While we're waiting, could I ask Bob – Dianne's not here – do you want the subcommittee in the early part of January?

MR. BOGLE: Yesterday you indicated that you'd call our offices. My secretary has my schedule. I can't do it without Dianne.

MR. WICKMAN: No. I'll have to wait till Dianne's back.

MR. BOGLE: Book with her secretary.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay.

MR. BOGLE: I had a question, Mr. Chairman, and it related to Tuesday, February 19, I believe it is. Is that the day following Family Day?

MS BARRETT: Uh huh.

MR. BOGLE: The meeting that we previously agreed to was to start at – what is it? – 9 in the morning?

MR. CHAIRMAN: On Tuesday, 9:30.

MR. BOGLE: Would members be agreeable to make that – I was going to suggest 1?

MS BARRETT: That is what I had down, I should say.

MR. HYLAND: I think I had 1 o'clock down.

MS BARRETT: I had 1 to 5, yeah. I mean, I just changed it, but . . .

MR. BOGLE: If we can make it 1 . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tuesday the 19th, with the agreement of the committee, at 1 o'clock till 4:30.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you. It allows me to spend Family Day with my family.

MR. WICKMAN: Now, Pam, I've got to ask you, because you're on – no, John's on that committee with me, not you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, perhaps you could do that when we break up in just half a moment, if we do.  
Calgary-Foothills.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if we could make a request for an agenda item?

MR. CHAIRMAN: For when? The next meeting?

MRS. BLACK: Well, for whenever it would fit in with the agenda. I wanted to discuss the computer systems, and I was wondering if we could possibly have Mr. Gano.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is this for operation or for increased equipment? What are we after here?

MRS. BLACK: Internal control and security systems.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. The next meeting can be arranged. Clerk, take note of that.

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Members' Services orders. These have been drawn up in accordance with yesterday. Yes, Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: I had a question, Mr. Chairman, with respect to scheduling. So long as my name's on the list, I'll come back to it, if it's all right, or whenever you call it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, that's okay right about now if we're dealing with scheduling of the next meetings.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, in the eight years I've been around here, there are two things that I've noticed have been rather difficult, and I've tried to juggle my life to fit them. That is that January and July are two months when it seems very difficult to try to get people together. I've made it my business to make sure I am here every day of the year, more or less, except for January and July, when I reserve for myself the opportunity to do those other things. So I have to serve notice now that I won't be here for the January meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you, hon. member. Who knows, we might be able to go through the budget in one afternoon in January and save everybody else the time too.

Okay; the first Members' Services order is the briefer one of the two, which raised the rate from 21 cents per km to 25 cents.

MR. HYLAND: I move we accept Members' Services Order 8/90.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Discussion? Those in favour of the Members' Services order, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Second order, 7/90. Sorry to do them in reverse order, but in this case, Mr. Clegg, it's basically putting in here the 21 cents to 25 cents, increasing the rural/multimunicipality constituencies from 45,000 to 60,000 clicks, also putting into account the other motion as passed yesterday with regard to, if you will, trading off one trip for 1,500 kilometres. Also in there is the spouse/friend/family member increase from four functions to six



round-trips. This carries out everything that the committee yesterday wished.

10:07

MR. BOGLE: And the rent-a-car in lieu of taxi.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you; the rent-a-car. All right? This was gone over with a fine-tooth comb.

Yes, Mr. Clegg.

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to explain for members the way in which I've made the apportionment for the increase in mileage for rural members. In item 2(d) you will see that there's a special provision with respect to the present fiscal year. It is increased to 48,750. The increase to 60,000 commences the next fiscal year. That figure has been reached by taking the increase of 15,000 and prorating it for the three months following: January, February, and March. A quarter of that is 3,750, so the total then becomes 48,750. That particular portion comes into effect straightaway, and item (c), as stated overleaf, is coming into effect on April 1. That's the way I structured that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional comments or questions? Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: So that I'm understanding correctly, this is the order that allows rural members to rent cars in Edmonton and Calgary if they deem it to be less costly than taking a taxi.

MS BARRETT: No; he's on this section here, John.

MR. McINNIS: Okay. It increases the rural mileage by some \$5,550 a year, and increases the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, if you want to use that in kilometres.

MR. McINNIS: Well, that's what it works out to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's fine. I'm just reading what was in the order, thank you.

MR. McINNIS: It adds two additional spousal trips, taking the total number to six, and this on the day when the committee sticks me a bill for \$1,200 to change my sign.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was done yesterday, hon. member.  
Edmonton-Highlands, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

MS BARRETT: When we vote on this, are we just voting to record accuracy?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MS BARRETT: Just accuracy. Okay, because it's difficult otherwise. I couldn't vote in favour if . . . [interjections] All right. Those votes were yesterday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No; it's accuracy. It was prepared by legal counsel under the direction of the committee. Thank you.  
Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Parliamentary Counsel.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, let's make it, you know,

very, very clear here. I think as an individual I've been fairly tolerant at some of the comments being made here, but I'm starting to lose any sympathy for the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. The motions were here yesterday. He supported the thing.

MR. McINNIS: I did not.

MR. WICKMAN: He made the amendment to 33,000 for the urban.

MR. McINNIS: I didn't support it.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, then your colleague supported that.

MR. McINNIS: I didn't support it, Percy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, the amendment was made to increase the urban to 33,000. Now, I'm not sure what that member is saying. If it's good for the rural, then we've got to have it for the urban?

MRS. BLACK: He's just whining.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please, Calgary-Foothills.  
Parliamentary Counsel.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, can I ask for that vote from yesterday as to who supported the 60,000?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Those minutes are in the other office, but we'll have it there in the record.

MR. WICKMAN: Because I was sure the chairman said . . .

MRS. BLACK: Everybody did. It was unanimous. The 60,000? Sure.

MR. McINNIS: Is that what he's talking about?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, the 60,000.

MRS. BLACK: Well, that's what the order is.

MR. McINNIS: No, it's not. It's a lot more than that.

MRS. BLACK: From 45,000 to 60,000, John. That's what it says.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Parliamentary Counsel.

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, there was just one very small change which I did make after discussion with the Member for Taber-Warner to make sure that the provisions would be interpreted in accordance with the committee's wishes, and that is in 2(e) on the third line. The 1,500 kilometres is stated to be "for each of the 5 air trips not taken," which is slightly different from the wording of the resolution, but I think it was agreed by everybody that that's exactly what is meant. Apart from that, the order contains exactly the same words as are in the motion.



MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. Mr. Chairman, I want to clear up one other thing, the reference that's made here to six trips for spouses or relatives or whatever the exact expression is. I read comments in the *Edmonton Journal* this morning that a spouse could end up with one more trip than the member, but it was pointed out here very, very clearly yesterday that there are situations, like the opening of the House, for example, where a member from rural Alberta may bring up three family members. That's the reason to accommodate that, not to give the spouse one extra trip. Let's lay this stuff out the way it was discussed here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's accurate, hon. member, but as always, one cannot dictate what occurs in other people's reading of what occurs. Thank you.  
Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Well, to respond to that, if you have, for instance, no children but one spouse, I think the comment is very accurate.

MR. WICKMAN: It was done to accommodate people with families, Pam.

MS BARRETT: No, dear. No. I'd like to point out to the member, Mr. Chairman, that it was done by motion to have the policy conform to its original status as sponsored by Cypress-Redcliff, who said that originally there were six round-trips, and that was why the motion was sponsored.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to argue the point, but it was made very clear that if three family members come for one function, that's not considered one trip. That's considered three separate trips.

MS BARRETT: Yes. If.

MR. WICKMAN: Let's make it clear, Pam. Some of us, because we don't have a large family, get robbed of one trip, if you want to use that expression. Quite frankly, last year I didn't use any of them. But if I can accommodate somebody from rural Alberta, I'll do it and not whine about the damned thing.

MS BARRETT: I think that's not the point. You're the one who raised this and said that this is to accommodate families, et cetera, et cetera. In theory it is very clear that if you have one spouse and no children, that spouse is entitled to up to six round-trips per year. That exceeds by one the number of round-trips that MLAs are allowed to take within the province outside of constituency travel.

MR. WICKMAN: Talk about playing the letter of the law.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion to approve this Members' Services order was moved by?

MRS. BLACK: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Foothills.  
Edmonton Jasper-Place, additional comments?

MR. McINNIS: I don't know where to begin to respond to this scathing attack by the Liberal member this morning, but I think the order speaks for itself in terms of what can and can't be accommodated in terms of spousal travel. The reference is to six round-trips per year. Whether that's six family members traveling once or one traveling six times is up to the member, as I understand it. But the figure is six, and the figure for some urban members, at least, is five. Percy, the concern over this is that it lacks balance, and I think I'll leave my comment at that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: Can I just ask one question of Parliamentary Counsel? On the second page, 3(a), the second line, "the reasonable travelling and living expenses of the spouse, family . . ." Should that say "family member"? Would it make it clearer if it said "family member or guest," to make them all singular?

MR. M. CLEGG: That probably would be better. It could be improved, yes.

DR. McNEIL: It improves it, I think, a little bit by making sure that . . .

MR. M. CLEGG: At this moment I can't tell you whether this is an error of transcription or whether it was in the original motion, but it would be better, I think.

MRS. BLACK: It wasn't in the original motion.

MR. M. CLEGG: It wasn't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that taken as an amendment? Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Now the Members' Services order as amended: those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Motion to adjourn? Cypress-Redcliff. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried.

[The committee adjourned at 10:16 a.m.]

