

[Deputy Chairman: Dr. Carter] [2:05 p.m.]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, do you have your expense forms? Shuffle them up before the end of the afternoon. Hopefully we don't need to be too long this afternoon, but we thought we'd like to deal with a couple of housekeeping items in addition to what we have. The chairman sends his regrets, because he's in the midst of a contested nomination. There are two real estate fellows from Grande Prairie who are opposing Bob Elliott. We told him to stay there and keep working on that. Mr. Gurnett, I assume you've had your nomination?

MR. GURNETT: Yes, I have.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You're well ensconced. Mr. Hiebert is in by acclamation; that's good. Mr. Anderson is in by acclamation. The vice-chairman is in by acclamation. Of course, the vice-chairman doesn't know how to handle not having to fight a nomination.

For purposes of the record, I would like to voice my own personal word of appreciation to both Bud Miller and John Thompson -- how much I personally am sorry they are not seeking nomination again. Hi, Dennis.

Good God. How are you?

DR. BUCK: Gentlemen, ladies.

MR. HIEBERT: I believe in Santa Claus too.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let's see now. Buck is the name. I've just been making the introductory remark that the chairman is away because he's being contested for his nomination.

DR. BUCK: That doesn't concern me. He's supposed to be here.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Get a load of the fellow who just turned up for the first time.

MR. MILLER: My, he is sanctimonious.

DR. BUCK: I just want to make sure you Tories are running this government the way you're supposed to.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now that we have our ancient historian.

DR. BUCK: I won't be miserable to you, David, now that you're feeding me.

AN HON. MEMBER: But, Walter, we wouldn't know how to deal with you.

DR. BUCK: Sorry for interrupting, Mr. Chairman. I really thought you wanted to get Mr. Anderson and myself here at the same time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, we know that it has to be noticed on the record that both of you are here. Have you been nominated, Dr. Buck?

DR. BUCK: I thought this was a legislative committee.

MR. THOMPSON: We're just taking a poll here.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We're just faking little housekeeping remarks here.

DR. BUCK: No, I'm having the glorious event on February 18.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We notice that Dennis and Al Hiebert are in by acclamation. That's good.

MR. HIEBERT: The [inaudible] doesn't happen till the 10th.

DR. BUCK: My philosophy is that if you can't win the nomination, you don't deserve to win the election.

MR. THOMPSON: I think that follows. If you can't win the nomination, you aren't going to...

MR. ANDERSON: You likely won't win the election.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Anyway, now that we've settled through the fluster, I was saying on behalf of myself and, I hope, on behalf of the committee our appreciation for the years of service to the Assembly that both John Thompson and Bud Miller have given, and my

sincere regret that they're not running again.

DR. BUCK: Bud, aren't you running?

MR. MILLER: No.

DR. BUCK: I didn't know that. You didn't check with me, Bud. I thought I told you . . .

MR. MILLER: Oh, didn't you know?

DR. BUCK: That's too bad. I'm sorry to hear that. John too. Sorry for interrupting again, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MILLER: Quite a change having you here, Walter.

DR. BUCK: I can tell you really missed me, David.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay, we now have unanimous agreement on that. We've had a very sincere moment here at last, for all of one second.

If you'd like to turn to your agenda, the first item of business is an ongoing item, as far as I understand, that Dr. Elliott was going to pursue and that had to deal back with Michael Clegg and the Assembly. Louise, have we any further information on that one?

MRS. EMPSON: No, not that I'm aware of.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: So item 1 will carry over. Item 2: there should be a letter in front of you.

MRS. EMPSON: I'm short; I don't have one.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Would you like to share?

MRS. EMPSON: And Dr. Buck and Mr. Anderson.

MR. MILLER: I've read mine.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right, Dennis. If you could share with John.

MR. MILLER: Dennis, you can have this. Or here, Walter.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You will recall from your perusal of the minutes and from your attendance at previous meetings that we decided it was time to change the auditor of the Auditor, since that person had been in place for some length of time. As a follow-up to that, Bud Miller and I contacted the Auditor General and requested a list of names. Out of that there were about five names. We decided to have the retiring Auditor General make some kind of indication as to an Edmonton firm that they would be happy with, that they thought would know the workings of the Auditor General quite well, that they would have confidence in, and that would not create any kind of illusion of conflict of interest or so forth.

So we have this recommendation that the firm of Reid & Cameron, chartered accountants, be appointed as the auditors of the Auditor General. It shows there that if approval should be processed, hopefully at this meeting, arrangements could be made for the audit of the fiscal year ending March 31, '86.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, how big a budgetary item is that? Does anybody know?

MR. MILLER: I think it's less than a million.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Less than \$10,000 for the fee.

DR. BUCK: Yes, that's what I meant.

MR. MILLER: Oh, I see.

MR. THOMPSON: I think it's about \$9,500, if I recall.

AN HON. MEMBER: About ten grand.

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Chairman, how long was the last firm there?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Approximately nine years, I believe.

MRS. EMPSON: Since '77.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, if I may, it was explained by the Auditor General Mr. Salmon that it's wise to have a bit of continuity. He didn't suggest that they should be changed every year, but after a certain length of time it is

wise to look at another firm.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is there a motion?

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Chairman, I will move, but before I move, as the vice-chairman and having met with Mr. Salmon, do you feel comfortable with the recommendation that has been made?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. HIEBERT: Then I so move according to the recommendation from the letter before us.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That Reid & Cameron be appointed.

MR. THOMPSON: Personally, I don't even know these fellows. I don't know whether they're good, bad, or indifferent; that's beside the point. But I question the process. I understood that we as a committee were supposed to be given a shortlist of names and that we'd do the picking. The way it looks here, to me the shortlist is far too short because there's only one name on it. I'll vote for Reid & Cameron at this time, but I'd just like it noted that my interpretation of what was supposed to happen was that there would be a shortlist of two, three, five, or whatever, and that the committee itself was the one that made the appointment from that list.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There was a shortlist of five firms, and it was my understanding that we'd go back and do some clearing to make certain that this was a firm that would be able to function well within not only the confines of the prerequisites of the Auditor General's department but of Treasury and other departments. But if you want the list of the other four names, I can go out and raise those easily enough.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, the point that Mr. Thompson is making, I think is very, very important in that as this system of standing committees keeps evolving, I really think exactly what Mr. Thompson says: it's a responsibility of this committee to select that group. We've gone from where, before the committee system was struck, a minister responsible for a department, or somebody, always came. Somebody was responsible for

that, and they did whatever governments do to select that person. Now that we have taken that responsibility upon ourselves, the point that Mr. Thompson makes is very valid: the appointment of that person should be in the purview of the committee. These committees seem to become more long-standing, and there are more and more meetings. So I guess if we're really going to serve a useful purpose as a committee, that will be our responsibility. But I'm like John. I go along with the recommendation, but I think...

MR. THOMPSON: In the future.

DR. BUCK: ... if we're going to be a committee with any teeth -- which will always interest a dentist -- then those teeth should be used to select that person or group.

AN HON. MEMBER: I have no difficulty.

DR. BUCK: If you wish, to maybe make it a little more unanimous -- both sides of the House -- I or Jim would second the motion of Mr. Hiebert. John, you just spoke to the motion.

MR. THOMPSON: I just spoke to the motion, and in view of the fact that there's an implied deadline, I think we should go ahead with the motion.

DR. BUCK: I will second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Further discussion? All those in favour of the motion?

DR. BUCK: If it were \$100,000, Mr. Chairman, I'd ask him for the colour of his card.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Item 3 on your agenda. We hoped to have the Minister of Advanced Education here today, but at last report I understand he was on the way back from the ministers of education and advanced education in Winnipeg. So I assume we'll leave this as a pending item for purposes of the committee, unless you have any further information, Louise.

MRS. EMPSON: No, I don't.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Was item 4 carried out by the chairman?

MRS. EMPSON: Yes, it was.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That was to thank you for that last meeting, when we were over there. Any comments from committee members who were able to attend upon the Chief Electoral Officer?

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I was quite impressed with the way Pat is looking at his job, especially when I got that list of electors for the Cardston constituency. It would seem to be about half the size of -- and if he saves seven tons of paper, to me it looks like he is going about his job in the right way. I was impressed with the fact that he is a new man in the job, but he is really taking a hard look at what happened in the past and not throwing it all out. But just the same, if there is change that he thinks is good, he does it. So I was impressed with what we saw over there that day.

DR. BUCK: Just along that line, Mr. Chairman, may I ask a question? Maybe Mr. Thompson can answer this for me. I know that in the last census or the -- what's it called?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Enumeration.

DR. BUCK: Enumeration. I don't know if it happened in the city, Al, but it did out in Fort Saskatchewan. You'd go down 9801, John Smith; 9802, Mrs. Brown. It was a dog's breakfast. There was nothing alphabetical. John, did he sort that out, where when they enumerate, it ends up in our hands alphabetically and the person's address is behind it?

MR. THOMPSON: I didn't really look to check that part out. I looked at the list. It's written on both sides, and it's this size of paper instead of foolscap. But I never checked it out for alphabetical order.

MR. HIEBERT: I think it goes by the numerical sequencing of the streets, as they go down the street rather than by surname, because your surname could change and one name could throw the whole thing out of whack.

MR. THOMPSON: The address is the important thing.

MR. HIEBERT: I think it's been done by sequence of address as to how they canvass the particular poll.

DR. BUCK: What I'm really trying to say is that I've been around here long enough, gentlemen, to remember when we didn't even have a Chief Electoral Officer, when the Clerk of the Assembly did that plus his job. So we've expanded it from that, and the population hasn't quintupled, to where we have all these hired guns, giving them big salaries. Surely it's not asking too much of them to put these things in alphabetical order so that when the list comes out, when I'm looking for Hiebert, h-i-e-b, the thing comes out alphabetically.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You want it both ways. You want it alphabetically as well as by address.

DR. BUCK: Yes. Between elections they really have four years, guys, to do nothing but pick their noses. Like I say, we've gone from Bill MacDonald, who was a Clerk of the Assembly, handling the thing to all these people. I know that all of us in this room would have great difficulty finding something to do with four years between elections. So they could probably sort those out for us alphabetically as well as numerically.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: In addition to all the financial records.

DR. BUCK: Let's check on the thing.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All the lists of electors have been given to the provincial parties. Have you received yours yet?

DR. BUCK: I just looked at the thing, and I can't remember -- the same as John -- if the thing was alphabetical or not. I know there's a criticism with some of the people who are working at the polls and stuff as well. They would go down the list and be looking for Mrs. Brown, and they can't find her because she's in 8612 - 95A St. They have difficulty finding her on the voters' list. It caused problems at the poll.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I see. You're talking about the poll list when you go in to vote.

DR. BUCK: Yes. It was not alphabetical; it was numerical.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It's quite different from this list of electors. We're now talking about a polling station list.

MR. THOMPSON: I can understand the difficulty Walter is talking about. The only thing is that I was so impressed with the saving of seven tons of paper; they'd maybe save only one ton if we put out the double list. From my point of view, it's not a big thing. But obviously if you had your phone book set up on your address system, you would never find a telephone number.

DR. BUCK: Right. This is the problem people working election day are having.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That raises the question that we can check with the electoral officer about how the list will be presented on election day at the polling station.

MR. GURNETT: I was just going to add further to it. I know people have always been confused as well when an election is called and they're checking that their names appear on those lists put up in the post office. People don't know where they live. In small towns particularly, most of them have never learned the numbering system. They know they live on so-and-so's block. So there would be real advantages to that, although as you say, John, it loses the benefit that sounded so good of having the paper used. Certainly technology should make it an easy thing to do now I would think, Mr. Chairman, compared to any time in the past.

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Chairman, maybe this could go forth as a recommendation to explore the idea of taking the current whole list, which is by street, and converting it by use of a small computer. It wouldn't take much of a program. They could have those things converted another way, and they would be beneficial on actual election day. You'd have the benefit of both. I would suggest we go forth with the recommendation to see what the cost

implications are, what the problems might be, and if in fact it is feasible. We should at least explore it.

DR. BUCK: In city multiple polls it is quite a problem for those people. A lady comes in and says, "Which poll am I in?" "What's your address?" "Well, my address is such and such." The person has to try to get him in the right pew.

MR. MILLER: You've got me confused. I was always under the impression that polling lists were alphabetical when you go to vote. They are in Kitscoty.

MR. THOMPSON: They are in Cardston too, but we're unique.

MR. MILLER: This is just a problem for the cities, is it?

MR. HIEBERT: Maybe they do convert it and I'm not even aware.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It must be converted.

MR. HIEBERT: I think in terms of the one we receive in our possession after the enumeration is done is in street form.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: So the list of electors we have is done in street form at the polling station. I think you're quite right. Everybody else's is done by alphabetical listing in the polling station. Those are two separate things. Do I hear you, Walt, asking that you'd like to have a copy of the alphabetical in addition to your list of electors?

DR. BUCK: Well, not so much me. Of course, it would be easier for us because we wouldn't have to sort the thing out, but I think it is most important for the people working in the polls that day.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We'll double-check it and see where it is.

DR. BUCK: Just check it and see if they have made the change.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay.

DR. BUCK: Because that is the criticism that was brought back to me by the people working at the polls on election day.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay. How about if the vice-chairman consults with the Chief Electoral Officer, gets clarification on it, and gets back to you? Then, of course, if those of you who weren't able to make the last meeting over there want to drop by sometime, just give them a buzz; they'll only be too happy to take you around and show you all the [inaudible] and stuff.

May we go on to item 5? This farewell dinner, again from previous meetings, is to be arranged probably just prior to the spring sitting, whenever that's going to be. It was to be seen as being a meeting of this committee to pay tribute to the retiring Auditor General, as we've done before with other officers. I have no dates on that one. When I talked to Bob Elliott, he didn't seem to have any dates either, so we'll just have to let that go as a pending item as well.

The next item is the minutes of December 19.

MR. THOMPSON: I move we approve the minutes of the 19th.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. A seconder? Mr. Hiebert. Any discussion of business in the minutes? All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously.

Item 7: there are copies of a letter before you with respect to this.

MRS. EMPSON: Copies of the letter were distributed prior to the meeting, but I have extras here.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This is the one about the request from the Auditor General's department that they can go ahead and plan a special evening for Bill Rogers' retirement -- a figure of up to \$2,000. An operative line is the bottom of the page:

The Director, Disbursement Control, Treasury Department has stated the above approval by the Select Standing Committee is satisfactory for the processing of payment documents . . .

And the line above that:

. . . \$2,000 is parallel to similar requests approved by Treasury Board Minutes for Senior and Deputy Ministers [upon time of retirement].

They also are going to be charging towards the evening.

That's basically an in-house evening. They come to us to have the request ratified by Leg. Offices Committee to conform with the Treasury Board minutes. So I place that before you for your consideration. It may cost them less.

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Chairman, it would appear then that our farewell function would probably come after this event.

MR. MILLER: I think it's in line with past practices that a certain amount of money be put forward for this sort of farewell. In view of the fact that Bill Rogers has served the government for 35 years, I think it's in order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: May I take that as a motion?

MR. MILLER: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Secunder? Thank you, Dennis. Any discussion, gentlemen?

MR. HIEBERT: What expectation would there be for some representation from this committee at that particular function? I know it suggests in the last paragraph that we're contemplating having our own. But regardless, from this committee's perspective ought we to have representation at the function?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That's a thought. It might be useful to send at least the chairman, if he's available. That could form the basis of a second motion. Could we deal with the motion that's on the table first?

MR. HIEBERT: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion with respect to the \$2,000 expenditure, please signify. Thank you. Carried unanimously. Would any of the rest of you care to comment on Al's suggestion?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I'd support Al's -- well, I don't know if that was Al's position. I think he stated it without opinion, but I would agree with the suggestion that we should have some representation. I don't think the whole committee need go. I'd even say that the chairman and vice-chairman would at least represent us there and ensure that those in the department and others who are involved feel that we have the respect for Mr. Rogers that we do.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this is probably the politest way I've ever been told not to go to something. Basically, I'm uncomfortable going somewhere where I'm not invited. I feel that this is an in-house party for the people who work in the Auditor General's office to show their appreciation to Bill. If the rest of the committee feels that we should show the flag, so be it. I think we should concentrate on our own party and let them have their own party.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I suppose there's also the middle ground that we could give the approval and then see whether or not we're going to be invited.

MR. ANDERSON: I don't know if we need a professional diplomat to interpret the language here.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any other discussion?

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to make a motion to get a decision. I move that the committee have representation by the chairman and vice-chairman or designates at this particular farewell function on behalf of the committee.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Gurnett. Further discussion? All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried.

MR. THOMPSON: We better tell them that if we don't get an invitation, they don't get the \$2,000.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: May we move on to item 8? We had this put on just as a notice of

what's coming ahead. As you recall, in the course of the year there are various conferences associated with the legislative officers. One that is coming up in July, to which we have traditionally been sending the chairman of the committee, is the conference of auditors general, or whatever it's called, generally held in Toronto. The chairman and vice-chairman of Public Accounts have gone to the same meeting. So that one would be a pending item that we'll have to get cleared up sometime. We haven't got notification of that yet.

This Ombudsmen's conference is also here for your information. Generally speaking, it's been held in June, so they have a slight departure in timetable into September of the year.

In the first week of December there's the conference on ethics that the Chief Electoral Officer goes to. That's scheduled for what city in the United States, Al? Do you recollect the next one?

MR. HIEBERT: Connecticut, isn't it?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay. In addition to that ...

MR. HIEBERT: I think it's Hartford.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: In New England. At about the same time is the other conference on comprehensive auditing.

We'll have those show as ongoing items on the agenda. Again, it's just put on here for information of the committee, and we'll see what happens in the course of the year.

Any other business?

MR. HIEBERT: Will we be getting that list when it starts to firm up?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. HIEBERT: Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: I move we adjourn.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have a motion to adjourn, unless there are any other motions being cooked up by two members over here. All those in favour, please signify. Carried unanimously. Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 2:37 p.m.]