

[Chairman: Mr. Stewart]

[12:16 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; I think what we'll do is carry on here and call the meeting to order.

We have, I think, two other members who are due to join us: Dr. Buck and Mr. Mitchell. Mr. Drobot, unfortunately, will not be able to be here; he's in St. Paul at the funeral of John Dahmer. Mr. Gogo is out of province at the present time.

So I'll call the meeting to order and refer members to their agenda and their book, with the backup material in respect to each agenda item. Before I call on the Ombudsman for item 3 on your agenda, we'll just attend to the matter of approval of the November 15 committee meeting minutes. They've been distributed.

DR. ELLIOTT: Will do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; moved by Dr. Elliott that the minutes be approved as circulated. All in favour? It's carried.

Well, may I extend a welcome to Mr. Trawick and Mr. Arcand, from the Ombudsman's office, being with us to consider the 1989-1990 budget estimates for the office of Ombudsman. It's a pleasure to have you here, as always. I know that your material has been distributed to all members. I know you've been away and unfortunately were therefore unable to get some of the materials to us a little bit earlier for our consideration, but I'm sure members have had an opportunity to review the proposed budget.

Just from a procedural standpoint, what we are going to do, as we did last year, is to receive your submission and go over the budget on a line-by-line basis, as it were, and allow opportunity for the members to ask questions and make comments with respect to them, and have a full discussion in that way. Our time limitation today is such that I don't think we'll be able to go much further than that. That will therefore give us an opportunity to consider it further and perhaps direct any further questions back to you and indeed maybe ask you to come back again on given items, depending on the course of discussions. But then we will in due course be reviewing it as a committee, and then back to you in respect to the budget itself.

We've had an opportunity, as I say, to look through your submission under your cover letter of November 28. I note the line-by-line items in there, some being up and some being down because of a number of factors that are evident in your office at the present time. I know you'll want to elaborate on that, so I think that without further ado I'll just turn it over to you, and you may comment, if you will. Then we'll open it up for questions and comments from members.

MR. TRAWICK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to go through some of the highlights and then turn it back to you so that people can ask questions, if that's all right.

I have also distributed a report letter on the activities of the office since April 5, which was the last time I reported to this committee on general activities of the office. I don't intend to deal with that right now; it's more for the information of the committee members. If anybody quickly looking through it has questions, I'd be delighted to answer them. But I think it's important for an office such as ours to produce some sort of summary as to what we're actually doing over there, perhaps on a twice yearly basis, so that the committee, simply because we're only required to report to the Legislature once a year, doesn't forget we're there, which I know you won't. But certainly I

don't think you should be confused as to what we're doing and why we're doing it.

In terms of the budget estimates, we have presented them. We are completely in line in terms of this year's budget as far as our expenditures go. We're within several hundred dollars of where we ought to be at this time of the year in terms of the money that we have expended, which I guess does say something for our ability to forecast last year and especially our ability to forecast something that's as difficult to get around as the Code investigation. I will be mentioning later on the fact that we will have to come back for a further special warrant -- why and what we think it's going to be -- before I finish my remarks. So last year's budget as projected seems to be working out fairly well for us.

Next year's budget represents a decrease over last year's budget, which of course it ought to, provided we can conclude the Code investigation by the end of this government fiscal year. But it also contains some requests for increases in particular areas that I think I should elaborate on, although we've provided some backup material, because this is going to be clearly a year of restraint, and we've got to make it clear why these things are necessary and what the reasoning for them is.

The first thing we are looking for is an increase in the number of our staff from the present time. That increase would be really in terms of three people, although one of them is presently on staff and working for what's called a wage position. That is, we are looking for an increase of one investigator in Calgary, to take our complement there to three, an increase in their support staff -- they at present have only one support staff; they have a stenographer there and need another one -- and thirdly, an increase in our typing staff in Edmonton to include the person we have presently there on a wage basis.

I'd like to outline the background of those to you. As you're probably aware from the annual report and from some of the material I've been providing from time to time to the committee, we are seeing a steady and very dramatic increase in interaction between citizens of Alberta and our office. When I say "very dramatic," in terms of our phone calls the increase is averaging 127 percent a year, which means more than double the amount of people each year. It's just an empirical increase, and it's now gotten to the point where it's impossible to handle without these additional staff.

You have to remember that in Calgary we've got a population catchment area of 710,000 people, and their calls go into the Calgary office. The two investigators there have a full load of investigations. I try to keep all investigators around 28 investigations, and that takes them out of the office, interviewing people, reviewing documents: what people would normally do. But now one of them or the other is fully on the phone all day to answer the oral complaints as well. It's resulting in a serious situation down there for two reasons, one of which is that they simply can't get their investigations done, and all of them, including the secretary, are working substantial amounts of overtime. I don't think that on a long-term basis that's acceptable. We're not paying for it; they're doing it voluntarily. But I don't think you want to stress people that heavily. Secondly, my most senior investigator in the office, Ralph Toews, who's in charge of the Calgary office, was off three months last year with a heart attack, and I'm not comfortable at all with him working the kinds of overtime that he's working. He's just come back and recovering from that, and I just don't think it's appropriate.

I think we have to get some help down in that office or the office simply is not going to be able to serve the area. Now, I

suppose we could attempt in some way to direct those up to the Edmonton office, but the Edmonton office is fully stressed as well. In the end result I think it's difficult to justify that people in the south half of the province should not have an appropriate level of service. We're not talking about a Cadillac service here; we're talking about an appropriate level of service.

The graphs that you see with the material will show you a number of alarming things which show that we need some additional staff. The first graph shows that written jurisdictional complaints since April of 1985 are up a very substantial amount: not quite double but close to it when you ignore the two peaks. The first major peak in that graph is the Principal Group complaints. The second peak is a particular complaint where a large group of citizens all wrote in at the request of one citizen, and of course it should not be taken into account; that resulted in only one investigation. But if you just simply look at the graph on the basis of a steady straight line, you will see that we are having a very large increase in our work in that area.

The second graph concerns me even more; that is, in each month our experience is that we're opening more investigations than we're closing. That's always a problem, because it shows that the work is not now being kept up with. It certainly was earlier, even though we had a large increase in work. But I can tell you, having come into this position from a private practice of law, where I think it's been our tendency to overstress employees in our offices, that these people are working just as hard as anybody I've ever seen. There is no question in my mind, going around to other government offices and seeing what they're doing and then coming back to ours, that these people, who are not government employees -- they're Legislative Assembly employees -- are working harder than anybody you're going to see in those sorts of positions in government.

There is an explanation under tab C as to what we do in terms of oral complaints. Those are what are starting to take a very large amount of the time in the office because people are now aware that the Ombudsman's office is there -- and I think that's in part as a result of the suggestion of this committee that we undertake some awareness building and the fact that we've done so -- and those complaints have to be dealt with. Since this is the only office that delivers service to the public that reports to the Legislative Assembly, we do not feel that the members of the Assembly would be happy if people were simply turned away, saying, "We don't handle that; goodbye," because that's one of the big complaints people have about government. So you will see, if you review this, that our people always attempt, even if they're nonjurisdictional, to find a place for them to go. And, of course, you can't cut off the telephone service if you have numbers in every directory around the province, as we do. If you look at the graph, you'll see the really astounding increase in those that are coming in all the time. We have a premier investigator and a second investigator on the phone all the time all day in Edmonton. And as I say, we have one on the phone all day in Calgary, and the Calgary people are not able to keep up.

The jurisdictional oral complaints are complaints we try to resolve without opening a formal investigational file. Now, this is controversial amongst some of my Ombudsman brethren in the country, and frankly I think it's controversial because statistically they don't show up very well for you. We're solving these people's problems and we're solving them informally, so we don't have to open a formal file and correspond with the deputy minister, which is the first thing we have to do in a formal file to get things going. My investigators are smart, and

they're entrepreneurial. They'll get the call; they will realize this person needs to meet with X over in government whom they haven't met but who can resolve the problem. They'll put them together and they will mediate between them if that's necessary, or they will assist the complainant by going over with them to explain. But it gets immediate results for people, which is something you don't often get from government. It's a system that my predecessor put into place that's worked very well. It motivates the people, and it gets our complainants handled. It's continuing to work very well, but it does produce a very increased workload, because naturally if one person is satisfied, then you get another. Again, you'll see from the graph a very dramatic increase since April of 1985; it's a line of about a 45 degree angle going straight up. We're at the point now where we simply are not able to handle it.

So in terms of that point, what we're looking to do is now take the office back to the staff complement it enjoyed at the start of Mr. Sawyer's regime. We're not looking to go past that. He appeared before this committee in the two budgetary submissions that he made and indicated that he could do without those positions for now. He felt uncomfortable with leaving them open, although generally in government that's what departments try to do because they're hard to get back. He was very forthright with the committee, and the committee very forthright back with him at these earlier meetings, that the positions could go for now to save the money but that he might need them back. Well, he is not here anymore, but I certainly need them back now. We can't operate without them. So that is the point of that.

I should mention a kind of interesting statistic that I just developed last evening that I thought you might like to know, and that is that in terms of the population catchment for our office, we are very far under what any other jurisdiction that has an Ombudsman does in terms of having the numbers of people. For example, in British Columbia you've got a population catchment area of 2.889 million, and they've got 38 staff in their Ombudsman's office. So that's one staff for 76,000 people. Conversely, in this province we've now got, at the current complement, one staff per 150,000 people. To add the three that we need, we're only going to go down to one staff per 131,000 people. Saskatchewan has one staff per 63,000 people. Manitoba has one staff per 97,000 people. Ontario has one staff per 74,000; they've got a staff of 122 in their offices. Quebec has one staff per 110,000. So we're really looking at still maintaining a very small staff to do a large amount of work. And none of the other offices handle oral complaints in the way that we do. They in effect turn people away unless they open a formal investigation, which I do not agree with.

So I think I can tell you that you are getting better and harder work out of our office than any of the other offices in Canada. What we're saying is that we will continue to provide that but that we have to have these people we're looking at to provide the level of service. Naturally, if there's just no way that can happen, we'll have to find another way to do things, but that way is going to result in some of the services being cut off that we're not statutorily mandated to perform, and I really wouldn't like to see that happen. So that's, I think, the point under that matter.

I realize it's not a good year to be coming back with that, but we're complaint driven. The thing that I think the committee has to always remember is that we are also different from other Ombudsman offices in that we do not have the discretion to turn down a complaint. My Act, under section 11, says that it is my

"function and duty" to investigate a complaint. Most of the other Acts in Canada say that the Ombudsman "may," and they utilize their discretion to turn down complaints. I'm happy; I think my Act is the right way, because I don't think anybody's complaint should be trivialized at the outset unless it's investigated. The office is there to help all citizens of Alberta, but we don't have a jurisdiction or discretion to turn down people just because we don't want to do that particular thing. So I guess we're a bit like the police force, if you will: you have to try to catch them all if you can possibly do it.

The second thing -- and again I'm very cognizant of this particular year and the fact of oil prices and other things that will impact on the Alberta government budget. We are looking for an 8 percent increase in our budget for investigators in order to bring the investigators just very barely into the bottom of what you might consider to be the generally accepted areas of investigative salary in Canada. Again, we've provided some graphs and some information under tab D to deal with that. But the disparity between salaries that are paid to my investigators, who frankly carry more responsibility than any other investigators in Canada, because they handle all complaints basically on their own -- I supervise them after the fact to make sure that they're done correctly, but not during -- and they handle investigations from start to finish rather than as part of a team. And rather than having a senior person review them and make the recommendation to the Ombudsman, they make the recommendations themselves. Frankly, I think these salary levels are shockingly low, to be honest with you.

An investigator in our office makes \$26,600 to \$36,276. You will see that Ontario and British Columbia both start higher than my people can finish. For example, I have an investigator in my office who is the longest serving one. There's a position open in British Columbia, and he's applied for it. He could go there, and he probably wouldn't start at entry level. But even if he started at the entry level as, if you will, a wet-behind-the-ears kid, he would still be able to increase his income very substantially. And that I don't think is appropriate. We are behind every other province in terms of the maximum that can be paid. Some of the provinces are slightly lower on the start, but of course they can move forward, and something can be done for them as they get more experienced. I'm kind of limited, because even moving my people into management positions, they can't get past the top level of the investigator in most provinces. Unfortunately, because the people that are investigating do liaise together across the country, which they're required to do to keep their own skills up, this is fairly well known.

The other problem I'm quite frankly having with these scales is that they've established a Michener Centre patient advocate, and that range is substantially above ours and, indeed, is the same range as our management people, and there are only two people in my office in that category. The duties of that position take over some of the duties we have in that institution and are probably not quite as onerous, and naturally that position has been advertised. Secondly, the new mental health patient advocate's office is coming on stream, and we received a call from Hospitals in our office that went to one of my staff. They said they wanted to get the job description for our investigators. The question was, why? They said, "Well, we want to beef it up, because the patient investigators that will be taking over in the hospital from you people we've realized we have to pay 25 percent more or we can't hire them." Well, it's a little difficult to motivate your people when calls like that are coming through from other departments of government, to say the least.

So we're in a position now where we don't want to get anywhere near what some of these other jurisdictions are paying, because I think some of them are too high. Frankly, some of the offices, I think, are bureaucratized themselves and are creating a difficulty. But I think we have to get the 8 percent that we need to get these people where we can work with them.

One of the other problems we had last year when we hired was that we had a number of good people that applied -- and we advertised the contract salary, which is 120 percent of this, because we did not think that we would get the appropriate level of people applying at the regular salary -- who were already employed in either industry or government. Once they realized that that salary was without benefits, they would not participate further in the exercise, and frankly they were most of our shortlisted people. We're in the position now where we seem only to be able to hire people who have retired from another occupation or are coming back into the work force. I don't think, given the tremendous responsibility in our office, that we should be limited in that way, and I think this increase might be able to do it for us.

I frankly think it's shameful that the people I've got in there on contract are not able to have long-term disability benefits and are not able to have accumulative sick leave benefits. I think it's inappropriate that someone who is working in a capacity like that doesn't have the proper sick leave and does not have any access whatever to long-term disability. You can buy long-term disability insurance, or you can get it for your people if you're a part of a group, if you're a company or you're government or somewhere. If you have to buy it on your own personally -- I don't know if any of you have tried to do that -- when you're not employed somewhere or are not part of a professional group, the cost is horrendous. So they can't replace it, and I don't think they should be, if you will, at risk for those sorts of things that any of us would normally consider to be proper employee benefits. If we could increase these categories, I'm sure some of them will transfer back to permanent staff, because the only reason for the contracting is to allow us to increase the pay scale, and obtain proper benefits. I'm especially concerned with people that have young children, and other situations like that.

So I know it's a bit of an impassioned pitch, but it's the one we said we would make in April if the figures we were doing in terms of the review bore us out. Frankly, when even Newfoundland seems to be doing better than we are, I think it's time we looked at doing something to bring this into line.

Now, aside from those two matters, you will see that we have a small increase in the Hosting category. Each jurisdiction in turn hosts the annual two-day workshop that is done for investigators from across Canada. I think those things are very valuable. Of course, all of our staff will be able to attend here because there won't be any cost to it for our people except two days out of the office, except for hosting the thing from the other province. We do send two or three. We sent two last year to the workshop, and the two that went in turn conducted an in-service for the rest of the investigators once they returned. There's nobody else in the Alberta government that works and does things like we do, if you will, and it's very helpful to get together these groups of the actual employees from across Canada that are doing the work and learn about new techniques and learn about how this goes. It's a very minor cost, at some \$8,000, and it will be incurred, hopefully, once in every nine years, there being nine offices across Canada. This is the first time we've hosted that particular workshop. But that is an increase, if you will, in the budget category.

As you will see, we've made some savings. Our word processing equipment is now off lease and is paid for, and that's given us some savings. We have some savings in other areas that we've outlined, and we're doing our best to do those savings. In terms of the support staff, we're now using standardized letters -- because the word processor is being used the way that it should, I think -- where we will only amend one paragraph or two to deal with the particularization of the complaint. We're using handwritten memoranda in the office throughout, which I'm a bit uncomfortable with because there is a possibility of mistake if one investigator picks up the other's file and can't read the handwriting. But it's the only way we can keep the secretarial load down to where we can function, with the additional people that we've proposed.

It's interesting to note that we're the only Ombudsman's office that has less than an even distribution of support staff to investigators in Canada. In fact, we're so far below that that we're about a third, and we will still be maintaining that complement of about a third support staff per investigator. That shows you how far our people go to minimize the use of support staff and to maximize the efficiency. We've got some very good secretarial people too, as well, which is very helpful.

So I guess that sums up the overview of the differences we're looking for in the budget. The only other thing I'd like to mention to you is the inquiry we're doing into the Principal Group of Companies. That's been very hard to budget for, as you're well aware, because we're driven, if you will, by an outside force we can't control, and that's the Code investigation. We have to monitor it. Certainly I've said before, and I think members of the committee agree with me, that the more of what we're going to look at that is demonstrated in public, the better for that kind of an inquiry. Our private processes of investigation are not terribly suited to allaying the public's fears, and the public investigation part of it is certainly very helpful.

We had originally budgeted \$200,000 when it opened. Of course, I'd been in office about seven days, and nobody then knew what was going to happen. We spent about \$138,000 out of that last year, and the remainder went back, as it will, to Treasury. We added to this current year's budget an additional \$180,000. We had thought that would be what the cost would be to go from April 1 of last year until August 31, and when we budgeted that amount, we figured that we'd be finished and would report on August 31. Well, we're not. It looks like we're going to run out of money. We have been able to make some cost minimization because of the fact that it's going on longer than we thought in terms of our monthly cost. It looks like we will run out of that amount in the budget about the end of December, and we will then need a special warrant of approximately \$70,000.

That hopefully will take us through to the finish; however, the one difficulty is going to be that there is \$20,000 budgeted in there for the publication of the report. It's unlikely that we are going to be able to publish that report until the report from the Code investigation is published. That may carry us over the government year-end, and if it does, we will have to special warrant the cost of that publication in next year. But there's no other way to do that. I'm uncomfortable with just adding a slush fund to next year's budget, and I think the committee should be as well. This is an unprecedented type of investigation, and I just don't think we should be doing that. I think it probably wouldn't hurt to have people know, on a from time-to-time basis, what it's going to cost. It's certainly not going to be the \$11 million or \$12 million that the Code investigation has

now cost.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry to interrupt. So you're saying that the amount that had been sort of set aside relative to publication of the report you'd utilize in any event for other matters within the current fiscal year?

MR. TRAWICK: No, probably it will go back. But you can't ever carry over, whether with special warrant things or other things. In other words, we're in the situation where it's an accounting exercise, I guess.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. TRAWICK: It would have to go back if it's not spent, and then we would have to get it back. And the only way we can get it back is by special warrant. It wouldn't be spent twice; I'm not looking at using that for other purposes. But it will be used up simply because we budgeted till the end of August. In other words, a special warrant will ask for that \$20,000 again, because we have only \$180,000 for that investigation, and our projection is that at just about the end of December the whole \$180,000 will be gone. We'll have used it up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

I might have made this comment earlier, but I'm sure other members will agree. I really appreciate the way you've set things out here, because it does give us a very good idea of a number of the specific areas that are line by line in your budget, giving the reasons for any change or, indeed, if there's no change. So we do appreciate that additional information because it's very helpful to us in reviewing the matter ahead of time. Certainly your oral comments with respect to it as well are very helpful.

Now, perhaps I will ask members if they have any specific questions on matters raised.

DR. ELLIOTT: Just for clarification. Do you have any vacant positions in your organization at all?

MR. TRAWICK: No.

DR. ELLIOTT: So when you're talking about adding staff, just like the Calgary office, that would be creating a new position and would be an expansion of the operation.

MR. TRAWICK: Yes, that's right.

DR. ELLIOTT: That would be both for investigators and for clerical staff.

MR. TRAWICK: That is correct.

DR. ELLIOTT: What did you say you might need there to bring it up to what you think would be adequate?

MR. TRAWICK: Well, we need to bring it up to the staffing level that was there when Mr. Sawyer took office. In other words, he abolished the positions we're now trying to get back, saying he had too much staff. But we need the three. We have a stenographer; the title, I guess, is word processing operator. But we have a secretary -- that's what I always call her -- in Edmonton that we have on a wage basis. We've been able to find

that much room in our budget. We have her there, and we can't operate without her. They're all operating at full capacity. We need to have that position, if you will, legitimized for next year. And we need, obviously, the additional secretarial position and the investigator in Calgary if they're to keep up with their work.

DR. ELLIOTT: Was there some reason, do you recall, why the positions were reduced?

MR. TRAWICK: Yes. He felt that the people weren't being fully utilized and that those positions could be done without. They had come vacant all at about the same time, and he felt that the office could carry on without the replacements. In fact, it did carry on and carried on quite well; he was right. But in terms of both oral and written complaints the workload is now almost double what it was when he took office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Speaking specifically of the Calgary operation, or totally?

MR. TRAWICK: Speaking specifically of the operation overall. And with the Calgary office, because they're doing their own orals down there, which they need to because they have to be close to the people if they're going to handle those on a quick basis, that is just empirical in terms of the amount of work that's necessary.

DR. ELLIOTT: Continuing on, can you identify some of the reasons why the workload is increasing rapidly, aside from the Code inquiry and those sorts of things? I was wondering: is your own personal tour program making people in Alberta aware of the Ombudsman's office? Is that being effective to the point where you're attracting attention? Maybe there's another choice of words there, Mr. Chairman.

MR. TRAWICK: When I went through the selection process, of course, the committee made it clear that we should be doing more in terms of public education and touring. I certainly got that message, and I've been doing it. I've had a lot of, if you will, gratuitous publicity as well, which I don't think has hurt a bit. And that's gotten people more aware of what the office is and what it's doing.

I think the other thing is that we're seeing a trend now. This trend started in the last year of Mr. Sawyer's term too; you could just see the trend start to take off. I think we're seeing a trend now where people are becoming more aware of their rights, and they are now accessing more of their rights.

One of the other things I've also tried to do with the annual report and with some other written circularization of information is that I've tried to alert and educate what I call the gatekeeper groups to the existence of the office. Those are groups that deal with people who would deal with government who maybe normally wouldn't know about our office. That would be groups that represent the mentally handicapped, for example, the mentally ill, similar groups to that. We're getting a lot of referrals through those people, and of course that's what the office was originally set up to do: to help people deal with government who didn't have the ability to deal with it themselves.

So we're seeing a coming together of all of those trends.

DR. ELLIOTT: Getting to the pay scales, you do comparisons between Alberta and other provinces, and I agree with you that they are dramatic. Did some of those other provinces make re-

cent adjustments, or is there an historical record of that difference?

MR. TRAWICK: None of the provinces has made dramatic adjustments. In fact, I had a survey available about two years ago and then I had this survey done just this spring, and the differentiation has always been there. Ontario has made more dramatic adjustments than anyone else; of course, we all know that Ontario is in a boom period. But for the others those scales have always been generally of that differentiation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Dr. Elliott.  
Mr. Ady.

MR. ADY: Yes. To the Ombudsman. You gave us some information on the number of investigators per 100,000 people in some of the other provinces. Do you have any information on the number of complaints that arise per 100,000 people in other provinces? In other words, does it follow that they would be similar clear across Canada, or might it be different here?

MR. TRAWICK: I attempted to do an analysis of the reports of each of the Ombudsmen to do exactly that. The difficulty is that our statistical record keeping is different from theirs, because we do the oral complaint work and they don't do anything unless they reduce it to a written jurisdictional complaint. So it's very difficult to get that workload and to spread it around.

I can say that in terms of formal written complaints, while my investigators do probably 40 percent of their time on oral complaints, I try to have each of my investigators handle 28 investigations, which is what I think is an appropriate workload at any one time. I'm the highest in Canada in terms of them doing that. Yet some of these other people don't have additional duties in terms of oral complaints.

So I think that's the best analysis I can give you. It really doesn't help you very much to look at the statistics, because they all report them differently.

MR. ADY: Okay. Well, you answered it to some extent through this number of actual complaints that they have at any one given time in relation to what other investigators have in the other provinces.

The other question that I had has to do with the salary increases. Are you asking for this 8 percent increase to be just put on the higher end of the salary scale, or are you asking for the whole scale to be moved, the beginning salary and the top or just the tail end?

MR. TRAWICK: We're asking for the scale to be moved, but we're budgeting at the moment for that to cost us in the next year about 8 percent by reason of some of the people we would like to move within that scale. In other words, not everybody is going to move. We have some people who are in the middle of the scale and who should be there and aren't going to get to the end of it for a while, and they're nowhere near the bottom. So they may not go anywhere. We have some people who have been at the top of the scale now for five or six years and have never received an increase, and we would like to move some of them up. So it will be selective, but what we have budgeted is that the actual cost, if you will, in terms of additional manpower cost will be about 8 percent.

MR. ADY: So what you're saying is that the beginning salary

of \$26,640 would move up 8 percent and the top of the scale of \$36,276 would also move 8 percent. Or that's not exactly what you're saying?

MR. TRAWICK: Well, we're not sure, frankly, how we would do that. The steps in the process, as I understand them, for somebody that's attached to these offices is that, first of all, we have to find out if the Legislative Assembly will give us the money. Then we go and meet with Mr. Dixon at PAO, and we decide exactly how we will amend these in order to get within it. It doesn't work the other way around because he frankly won't have his staff get involved in these kinds of comparisons and decisions about management classification and other things unless there's some possibility the money's going to be there. He's like everybody else: his resources are tightly stressed.

MR. ADY: Okay. Thank you.

MR. TRAWICK: My own preference would be to move the top of the scale up and probably leave the start where it is. Then you can continue to advance people rather than stop them, I think, too early. That would be my preference. If it's possible, I'd like to go with that.

MR. ADY: So you're not all that dissatisfied with the starting salary. You're just dissatisfied or feel an adjustment needs to be made at the top end so you can move people up closer to a competitive salary with the other provinces.

MR. TRAWICK: Yeah. If we have a proper range, then if we hire more qualified people, we can simply start them higher and justify it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just by way of further elaboration on Mr. Ady's point, in looking at the line-by-line on the budget, moving from what you anticipate under the Salaries Permanent Positions forecast of \$385,000 for the current fiscal year to an amount proposed for your budget of \$566,800, that would therefore include the new positions that you are asking for as well as the adjustment with respect to the investigators' wages.

MR. TRAWICK: That's correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So they're both in that component there. We can't look at that and say that's an 8 percent increase, obviously.

MR. TRAWICK: No, that's right. We have, of course, salary increases that are mandated. For example, a salary increase has just been announced that we have to pay retroactively for the year. We have no control over that. That's something that happens to you every year if you're looking at a budget. It has to be budgeted for next year; this year we have to find it within our budget. Of course, for small offices like ours that gets kind of tough sometimes. A larger office usually can find it, but we're faced with that almost each and every year. There'll be a cost of living increase of 2 percent or 3 percent or whatever, and you'll also be told that there's an availability of giving a performance increase -- this year it was up to 4.5 percent -- but they tell you that you must give it. In other words, you must consider your people that are eligible for it and give it to some of them. And you must give the other increase throughout, but you've got to fit it within your existing budget, which is an interesting thing to

be told, and I'm just getting used to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Mr. Fox, then Mr. Clegg.

MR. FOX: Can I just get an idea, Aleck -- I think it would help us understand the various salary-related requests, because there are three or four of them that kind of overlap. I'm just wondering about the structure of the office now. Reporting directly to the Ombudsman is Marcel?

MR. TRAWICK: Marcel reports directly to me; that's correct.

MR. FOX: Is there anybody else who is Marcel's peer, anybody else on that level? Maybe you could just run that past us, because I'm not sure how many investigators there are or how many supervisors.

MR. TRAWICK: Marcel, as executive director, reports directly to me, and all support staff report to Marcel.

MR. FOX: Okay. Is there anybody else on his line, in terms of the chart?

MR. TRAWICK: The two investigator managers are Ralph Toews and Ed Chetner. Ralph is in Calgary and Ed is in Edmonton. They will act as Ombudsman in my absence, as Marcel does as well in my absence. The investigators do not report directly to them, but they liaise with them in terms of managing investigation, getting advice: doing that sort of thing.

MR. FOX: They're called investigator managers?

MR. TRAWICK: Well, actually I don't think they are. I call them that, but I think Marcel can correct me. What do we call them now?

MR. ARCAND: Ed is now the senior investigator in Edmonton, and Ralph is called basically manager of the Calgary office.

MR. TRAWICK: As well, the one support staff in Calgary reports to Ralph. But they both really have the same level of position. They're always involved in major investigations in the office, for example. One or the other of them will spearhead them, and they work and assist the investigators and do some other administrative things like keeping track of file closings, reviewing files occasionally to see how the investigators are doing, whatever. Basically, all of the investigators and the two investigator managers report directly to me. In other words, there's not a reporting function for investigators to those investigator managers.

MR. FOX: How many investigators are there, then, besides the two you've mentioned?

MR. TRAWICK: We have five in Edmonton and one in Calgary, and you have to include within those the fact that one of them in Edmonton is the solicitor and one of them is the executive assistant, report writer, and investigator. Everybody does investigations in the office. So with that total we've got seven in Edmonton and one in Calgary.

MR. FOX: So there are eight people on the level of in-

vestigator, including the solicitor.

Okay, and then the support staff, the rest of them?

MR. TRAWICK: For support staff we have at the moment one, two . . . I guess we have six including Beth, but one of them is not a mandated position. So we have five including our accountant, who just works on accounting and statistics and handles the computer. But we have a sixth one right now who is on wages and who's been with us for about three months. Hopefully, we can continue to have her because we couldn't carry the typing load.

MR. FOX: Right. Okay; so there are five support staff who report to Marcel, eight investigators who report to you, and then a senior investigator and the manager of the Calgary office who report to you. That's the 16 people we see on the list.

MR. TRAWICK: Hopefully it comes to 16.

MR. FOX: Yeah, it does.

MR. TRAWICK: If it doesn't, I'll go back and go through it again.

MR. FOX: Yes. We didn't forget anybody.

Okay; then the requested increases for Manpower Costs, line (a): "to include salary increases granted to staff." Now, that covers everyone? Every one of the 16 is included in that?

MR. TRAWICK: Everybody in the office. Of course, we have mandated required salary increases for each and every one of them as a result of the recent directive, and we have annual increments to deal with for those who are moving on a scale within our scale set. In other words, some of them are at the top and they can't get any increase, but a number of them have started at the bottom of the scale and will move forward one step a year till they get to the top.

MR. FOX: So four of the eight investigators are still able to move?

MR. TRAWICK: Four investigators and four support staff are in that position.

MR. FOX: Okay; that makes it easier for me to understand.

Then (c) is just the requested increase in the staff complement?

MR. TRAWICK: Yes.

MR. FOX: Then (d) would reclassify the eight Ombudsman investigator positions?

MR. TRAWICK: That's correct.

MR. FOX: But not the investigator manager or the senior investigator?

MR. TRAWICK: We're looking, I believe, at reclassifying all investigator positions, including managers. It would not reclassify the solicitor, who is paid differently, and certainly not any of the support staff.

MR. FOX: But the manager of the Calgary office and the senior investigator in Edmonton, Ed Chetner, would be affected by that reclassification?

MR. TRAWICK: Yes, and should be.

MR. FOX: Yes. I'm just curious; I just want to know who . . .

MR. TRAWICK: It would difficult not to do them too. Their disparity is even greater than perhaps the investigator . . .

MR. FOX: Yeah. Where does Marcel's position fit into this, then?

MR. TRAWICK: Well, Marcel, because he transferred in and was an assistant deputy minister in another department, is what they call frozen over range. So he works forever for the same price he came in at, because the scale will never catch up with him probably. That was part and parcel of the transfer.

MR. FOX: Frozen over range.

MR. TRAWICK: Isn't that an interesting term?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It sounds like a disease.

MR. TRAWICK: I can tell you that he isn't frozen in the way that he works, but that's an awful thing to have to be tagged with.

MR. ARCAND: The range is getting closer. I have about four more years to go. Maybe I'll make it.

DR. ELLIOTT: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman; I missed the significance of that exchange. Could somebody repeat the topic?

MR. TRAWICK: Marcel is basically frozen over range. He was an assistant deputy minister in Social Services and Community Health, which the department was when the transfer was made. It was a trade. Alex Weir went there, and he came to our offices. He cannot have his salary reduced in those exchanges, but he is not eligible for any increases because he's above the range for the position he holds.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you.

MR. FOX: How do you manage to pay a solicitor within the -- and I assume the word "solicitor" means a fully qualified lawyer, a member of the Bar.

MR. TRAWICK: Yes.

MR. FOX: How do you manage to pay them within that \$26,000?

MR. TRAWICK: We don't. The solicitor position has always been in the office, and it is tied to the amount you would pay to the solicitor if they were working in the Attorney General's department.

MR. FOX: Oh, okay.

MR. ARCAND: Her salary isn't included in the Ombudsman

investigator salaries.

MR. TRAWICK: And her salary is not a problem. She's paid adequately, as far as I'm concerned. She was hired, as was the other solicitor, at the same rate as they pay at the AG's, and that's satisfactory.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Clegg.

MR. G. CLEGG: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. This term "investigator" -- when I look at the wage scales throughout Canada, I'm amazed at the difference, I guess because I don't know know what qualifications an investigator needs. Have you the same qualifications for hiring an investigator in Alberta? Maybe other provinces have different qualifications. I'm trying to get a handle on why there is an extreme amount of difference.

MR. TRAWICK: Well, I would say that we do. It's very interesting, talking about hiring investigators. I was recently, as probably most of you are aware, at the International Ombudsman Conference in Canberra. There was a lengthy discussion there at one of the sessions about the qualities in the hiring of investigators, and it's often something you see discussed.

There are basically no specific qualities for the hiring of investigators in terms of saying that you've got to be a lawyer or a doctor or an Indian chief. The qualities are that you must have someone who is, first of all, mature; they're able to go in and investigate and they don't fly off the handle or do something. They've got to have personal maturity. That usually means that you're looking at someone in their 40s. In general terms those are the types of people we hire, in that sort of age group, although we do have one or two that have been younger.

You're looking at someone who has been in some other areas that have given them, if you will, widespread exposure hopefully to both business and government, if you can find that. You're looking for someone who has had some experience at analysis of data, investigating, and in reporting. You're looking for someone who has the ability to write, because the closing correspondence, which often contains recommendations to ministers and whatever, is drafted for me by investigators. I certainly couldn't draft every letter in the office; they have to be able to write for my signature. We try to look for a mix of people that will give us fairly widespread experience of the types of things you would run into within the province of Alberta, because they are really commenting on all aspects of life within the province of Alberta.

I know that those things are nebulous. It's one of those things where you really have to go through the hiring process. You have to get personally involved, if you're the Ombudsman, in the final interviews, and you have to get someone you think will work. Looking at the backgrounds of our people, we have people who have no university degrees but extensive experience in the police force; we have people who have three university degrees. We have an ex-journalist. We have a person who worked all the way up through the ranks from the most junior secretary in the Ombudsman's office to now being an investigator and our intake analyst, who's been there the longest of anybody in the office and is as good. So you have a very wide background of people.

MR. G. CLEGG: Well, thank you.

MR. TRAWICK: But that's the same for the other offices.

MR. G. CLEGG: So every office is the same. You know, I'm just amazed that you can get somebody for \$26,000, if they're a good investigator, and seemingly you or former Ombudsmen must have gone over them tooth and nail. That's why I asked the question. It seemed like maybe there were different qualifications for other provinces. It's like a farmer; you don't need any qualifications to be a farmer. That's what you're really saying.

MR. TRAWICK: Except to be a good one. In other words, we would want good farmers rather than not good farmers. But you're right; there are no real qualifications.

We've been lucky. A lot of the people we have, of course, are on pension from other positions; specifically the RCMP, which has been the biggest contributor. While I think that's valuable, and none of the people we have on staff who have that background are anything but capable -- in fact, more than capable -- I don't think we should just be limited to taking advantage of the fact that people have built up a pension or have built up personnel benefits in other areas so that they can work for us. It's not a retirement position. They work very hard, and I think there's some requirement that they be paid.

As well, the longevity is a problem. In other words, if you bring somebody in and they can't move forward and we have no option to be able to move them forward and pay them appropriately after a few years, then they're going to move again. I don't agree with that. I think it always takes you two or three years in a difficult position like this to get people trained to where they're really valuable, and that's the time they're thinking about going. I think the cost of losing someone like that and training someone makes up for the entire increase we're looking for, in one year. But that's as a private employer that's had that experience, and I didn't have the budgetary constraints that we do.

DR. ELLIOTT: Just following along with that same line of questioning, how do the job descriptions or position descriptions for your investigators compare with similar positions elsewhere in the Alberta provincial service? Do we have any way of comparing these wage scales with other jobs within our own province, rather than going nationally?

MR. TRAWICK: I've spent a substantial part of the past year comparing job descriptions and positions, and it's very hard to find. You will have people who investigate, but then they don't do the other things that our people do. They don't mediate. They don't write lengthy letters for publication by the department. They don't have to do public education; all of my investigators are involved in public education and will do public speaking as requested. They don't have the decision-making powers that my people do. So it's very hard.

I mentioned this patient advocate at Michener and the patient advocate in the Mental Health Act. The point of mentioning that is that there is someone who is taking over in part a small part of the duties that any one of my investigators would have to be able to do every day, and they're telling us they can't hire anybody unless they pay 25 percent more. These people have to be able to do that with every department of government. Each and every one of them, when they're on the phones, has to be aware of the appeal procedures and the people to talk to in every department of government. It's a very onerous and difficult job, and it's certainly one I couldn't yet do very well.

So it's very hard to compare. I mean, any way you look at it,



the Ombudsman's office is an anomaly. It's not a public service office; it's basically an information, referral, conciliation, investigation, and recommendation office. The reason we've been able to get people in the first instance, which was another question, is because it is so interesting. There is a lot they can do on their own, and they're able to work on their own. For example, they're able to travel whenever it's necessary. Some of those bits of autonomy are one of the attractive features of the job for my investigators that you can't find elsewhere in the government service.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I don't know how the rest of the agenda will be handled, but I'd just like to say, Aleck, that if I needed somebody to defend me in a murder suit, I would hire you if you were available.

I would just like to say to the committee and to the Ombudsman that you and your staff represented us very, very well down in Australia. I was proud of that and proud of the fact that Alberta had such a high profile and eloquent representation.

I guess we have to have confidence in what you are asking of us, Mr. Ombudsman, because you are laying it out very, very plainly and very succinctly and telling us what you need and making no bones about it that you think you can do the job if you get the staff to do it with. So I think we will take that into consideration.

I guess the biggest problem we always have, and I've always had this in the private sector, is when we start looking at percentages. You know, politicians should be the last people to get hung up on percentages, but we all like to play a percentage game. So when we take this on and somebody says, "Well, look, you guys, you can't have 8 percent," I guess our job will be to convince the budgeting people that this is what they need. Somebody may be needing 24 percent, but it washes down at 8 percent. So I guess that's the job we have to do: to sell the people that you do need those positions filled.

So again, thank you for the representation you gave us at the conference. Like I said, we was proud of you, kid.

MR. TRAWICK: I think the way I'd like to look at it is that these guys are able to handle 257 percent more work than they did two years ago, and they only need this little bit percent more money. But I know that's not appropriate to say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just on that point with respect to the recent conference, Dr. Buck, we have on the agenda item 5. I think we would invite you to remain for that, and perhaps Dr. Buck may have some further comments to make with respect to the conference, or indeed you may as well. We'd like to hear from you at that point. Mr. Drobot has given us his written report, and that's in tab 6 of the members' agenda book.

But coming back to the budget, I just wanted to clarify whether or not there are any elements in your budget, Mr. Trawick, looking forward after March 31, obviously, into the next fiscal year, that relate to the Principal investigation at all. Are there any elements in here at all?

MR. TRAWICK: There is nothing in that budget that would represent any aftermath or anything further to be done on the Principal investigation. Now, Mr. Chairman, I have to be honest with you. We're uncomfortable because we're not controlling the process; we're following along. We're uncomfortable not being able to estimate more clearly what's going to happen, but it's just a fact of life.

It could even be, if the Code investigation is somehow muffled or withheld -- and court applications are going on to do that -- that we would go ahead and report in advance of them. I wouldn't like to do that, but we have people here on a per diem, if you will, the special investigators, to do the work. At some point you have to say to yourself that it's done and that they are gone, and we will do that if necessary. But I guess I just can't guarantee what's going to happen there. The only thing I can tell you is that we've minimized the cost while still being satisfied our investigation is thorough to date, and we're just going to have to continue to do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was my second question, really, the personnel component that you now have on a per diem basis. Is it contemplated that they will remain on staff and be part of the main personnel of the office for the next fiscal year?

MR. TRAWICK: No. They will both not be with the office at the end of the year unless the investigation is still going on and there are things for them to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They were hired as specialists.

MR. TRAWICK: One of them, of course, is our retired senior investigator, and he wants to get back to retirement. He thought he was coming back for a few months. I think he thinks he's going to die in harness. The other is in sort of private practice investigations, if you will, and wants very much to get back to it.

MR. ARCAND: As a point of interest, Mr. Chairman, their fees are not part of our manpower budget. Their fees can be found under the supplies and services part of our budget for Contract Services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, right.

MR. ARCAND: The \$127,000 which is currently in the budget this year and which has been reduced to its previous level.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; that explains it.

I had another question. You made reference to the graph Written Jurisdictional Complaints, and we looked at the two spikes. You made reference to the first of those two as being, I guess the one that occurred in the fall of '87, in respect to the Principal affair, and then you talked about the other one being a sort of group thing. This is the spike in early '88. One complaint had come in, and then other letters of a similar nature were encouraged to follow it. Was that in relation to the Principal affair as well or something totally different?

MR. TRAWICK: That was an environmental complaint. I think we had 105 letters of complaint, or something like that, that came in all at once. It was a particular group, fish and wildlife people. They all wanted to have their complaints registered. But it was actually a fairly simple investigation, so you can't look at those sorts of anomalies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I also wanted to ask you a question in respect to the opening and closing of files. Obviously it would be your hope that the manpower situation would come to grips with that, because obviously that's an accumulating type of problem. I'm just wondering if indeed the manpower situation, if that por-

tion of your budget is approved, will in fact get a full handle on that situation, or do you anticipate any required changes in your procedure in order to ensure that you're closing at least as many files as you open?

MR. TRAWICK: Well, it's really difficult to envisage a change in procedure, because you only close the file after a full investigation has been concluded and it's been reported on. I would really not like to tell my people to cut corners. I can tell you this, though, that if I can get . . . You see, I get two things if I get an investigator in Calgary. I get the rotation a lot better. I don't have 50 percent of my manpower on the telephone at any given time, so I really get a much more incremental movement forward by doing that. As well, because I have the investigators in Calgary so busy, many of the investigations that they would normally do Edmonton people are doing, and I've got a travel component there that is costing us a lot of time. In other words, people are living in Edmonton -- I had a chap yesterday that was down in Pincher Creek. Well, it takes him a long time to travel down there; it takes him a long time to travel back. That time is time he has to spend because he has to be there to do the investigation, but if I can do it out of Calgary, it could cut it down. So I've got a real increment there.

I've gone through this with my senior investigators, and they tell me that it will even out, that it will be enough. I would tend to agree with them. But that's where I get the extra component: I get people off the phones so I get them available in Calgary to do more investigations and I cut down the extra travel component, which is time that isn't investigating, out of my Edmonton office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. FOX: Have you, Aleck, any figures that would indicate what's been happening in the office since June or July in terms of written jurisdiction?

MR. TRAWICK: It's always slower in July and August, which it has been, in terms of openings, because people are on holiday. It's also slower in terms of closings, because staff are on holidays too.

MR. FOX: September, October, November: is the trend still upward? Do we still have more complaints coming in?

MR. TRAWICK: Yes. The trend is still the same. If you will, if you kept drawing a line, you could still keep on drawing it. Where it will level out I don't know. We're just starting to do our year-end statistics now because our annual report time is coming. I'd have a better idea for you probably about January 15.

DR. ELLIOTT: Just piggybacking on that question. It's with respect to certain areas like social service issues, workers' compensation. Would you have statistics by area by chance?

MR. TRAWICK: Well, we always do at the end of the year, but I haven't developed them. Frankly, you know, I would have to put an investigator on statistics analysis to do that, and I just don't have it at this time.

DR. ELLIOTT: I understand.

MR. TRAWICK: It will be done. My writer will do a complete inventory and analysis, and she's just getting started now.

DR. ELLIOTT: That's fine.

MR. TRAWICK: As I say, I'll have those available. In fact, the next time I report to this committee, I may give those to you, rather than waiting for the annual report.

But I can tell you that the traditional areas we've always had complaints in -- if you have more complaints, they generally are still the same percentage in the same traditional areas. The only big advancement that we see recently is the maintenance enforcement program, which is a new program that deals with a lot of people. Therefore, it's there as a major source of complaints, whereas it wasn't a couple of years ago because it didn't exist. But all the people programs produce solid and increasing numbers.

DR. ELLIOTT: Would it surprise you to know that your office just parallels an MLA office?

MR. TRAWICK: No, actually it wouldn't. But I'm sympathetic with your problems as well, trying to deal with them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any other comments or questions?

I think that's been a very good explanation as well as a good discussion with respect to a number of the important elements of the budget that's before us. As I indicated earlier, we will take those under advisement and as a committee will be discussing them further. Perhaps if there are further questions or further elaboration is required, we will be back to you in that respect.

Perhaps we might move on, then, in our agenda. We had another agenda item, Special Warrant Requirements for Code Inquiry -- Office of the Ombudsman. Now, you've made reference to that. Are there any other points or information that you wish to raise?

MR. TRAWICK: We thought we would have been out of money by the time we came, and we're not yet. I wanted to tell you what I thought our request was going to be, but it would seem premature to make it at this point. That's why we'd asked for the item.

MR. CHAIRMAN: At this point in time you would be anticipating something approximating -- I think I had \$70,000 down as a further special warrant.

MR. TRAWICK: That's correct, and we'll present the special warrant to you as chairman, as we've done before, for transmission. But I wanted the committee to know about it now and, if there are any problems with it, to be able to deal with it. But there didn't seem much sense sending it forward unless it's required, because they seem to get lost if you send them over early.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any other points at all with respect to the investigation that relates to the Principal Group of Companies that you wish to raise at this point in time?

MR. TRAWICK: No, I think not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's going pretty well, I gather, the way you anticipated. As you say, you're tracking the Code. Do you have

a full-time person at the inquiry?

MR. TRAWICK: No, I didn't think that was justified. We're hooked up with the closed-circuit television. We bought -- maybe there's an extravagance -- a television and a recorder, and we're recording all of the testimony so that we can make reference to it. Some days if there's an important witness one of my investigators will watch that, although generally we try to watch it after it's been recorded because you can fast forward a lot of it and save yourself some time. But I didn't feel it was justified having someone sitting there. So we follow it in that way. Then of course we're doing our own independent document search and review, and of course we're also interviewing people independently and have been all along. For example, the note holder situation: we're the only group looking at that; that's outside the purview of the Code investigation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions or comments from any members that relate to what is known as the Code inquiry?

MR. FOX: I'm just wondering under what conditions people appear before your investigators. Are people compelled if requested to appear, and do they testify with impunity?

MR. TRAWICK: Yes. Section 16 of my Act allows me to compel, and section 30 allows me to ask the court to penalize them if they don't. We haven't had anything like that. But, yes, they're required to appear. Some of them appear with counsel; some of them don't. Anything that's said to us, including the results of our investigation, is privileged from the court process and can't ever be used.

MR. FOX: So nothing that happens there is actionable.

MR. TRAWICK: That's correct.

MR. FOX: And in that sense it's distinct from the Code inquiry?

MR. TRAWICK: It may be.

MR. FOX: Because people who testify there have to be aware of future action arising out of their comments.

MR. TRAWICK: Well, maybe or maybe not; that's still up in the air. I don't want to get into a legal discussion with you, but I don't think anybody's really decided that. I can tell you that after it's over, you're likely to see some court applications that will raise that very point. They certainly are more at risk than they are with us.

MR. FOX: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right then, let's move to item 5 of the agenda, which is the Conference Attendance Report, Dr. Buck/Mr. Drobot. As I mentioned, John Drobot has given us a written report, which is under tab 5 -- I'm sorry; I think I said six -- which has come from his viewpoint, his impressions of the conference. Dr. Buck, would you like to add anything?

DR. BUCK: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I've given our Ombudsman and his staff their appropriate plaudits before, because I wasn't sure if we would be handling it with them absent. They did re-

resent us well.

On page 2 of Mr. Drobot's report it says, "However, Mr. Walter Buck and myself were there as observers and governed ourselves accordingly." I said very facetiously, when I was sitting beside Mr. Trawick and Marcel, "Well, all John and I are here for basically is to check attendance." The attendance was 100 percent; the Ombudsman's staff were there.

But I have several recommendations, basically to the Ombudsman and his staff. I felt the conference scheduling was absolutely too tight. As a self-employed professional, any time I go to professional conferences, you learn as much or more after the meeting is closed than you do sitting in the formal sessions, because you know that they are structured such that you can only get one question in and there is a limitation on time. So I felt that the agenda was too tight according to how we do it in North America. We only take a half-hour lunch and go right through and finish at 2 o'clock, and then you can socialize. There was no opportunity, I felt, for the elected people to intermingle with the Ombudsmen's people and even for the Ombudsmen's people to intermingle amongst their own people. There was absolutely no time for any participation in what the area had to offer. When you go from North America to the continent of Australia, you really would like to see something other than the four walls of the conference room.

I guess I can say this: John and I cut classes a couple of afternoons. Otherwise, I wouldn't have seen anything of Australia, had I not done that. So I'm sure the two gentlemen would probably second that, that the agenda was just absolutely too tight. So I make that observation because when we host a conference, Mr. Ombudsman and Mr. Arcand, we should work right through the lunch hour but give an opportunity for the people to intermingle, spouses and elected and Ombudsmen's staff. It would give you a great opportunity to discuss things internationally, which you are limited to at the formal conferences.

The people we did have a chance to discuss with really liked the select committee system that we have here. I guess a good example was when the Ombudsman from Northern Ireland said, "You know, when they don't like what I'm saying about the government, they just cut back on my budget." So I guess if we're going to lobby for the increase of the Ombudsman's budget, we as this committee will have to go to bat for the Ombudsman's office. This is why our committee was structured the way it is, the nonpartisan legislative committee. So they liked our select committee system of dealing with the legislative offices.

Basically, that just piggybacks on what John has got on his report. It's a long way down there, and I know how many miles the Ombudsman's staff and their people put on after the conference was over, going to the different offices in Australia and New Zealand. They logged more miles than I would ever want to log in an automobile and an airplane. It's a big country, and everything is about 600 miles apart in all the different major cities.

Finally, as a recommendation: save your money and spend it in Canada, because it's a long way to go if you want to go on a holiday. My wife's fare was \$2,300. Now, you can go to Hawaii for \$600, and that leaves you \$1,600 or \$1,700, and you can have a "helluva holiday" for \$1,700. So it was a great opportunity to go there, but if I was going to pay two air fares, I think I would go to Hawaii if I wanted a holiday. When we go on committees where the legislative offices -- I guess Bud Miller was the one that said, "Look, I'm not going to spend that kind of money for my spouse unless I'm going to get something

out of it." It was a great experience, but it's a long way from home. You have to look at the globe to appreciate how far it really is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Fox, and then Marcel can add as well.

MR. FOX: I don't want to be too vague, but I wonder if you had the opportunity to establish any links with Australia.

DR. BUCK: No, not one game. But I will tell you an amazing coincidence. We were in New Zealand, 300 miles from Auckland, and the last time we saw these people was in Australia, in Canberra. I walked off a golf course and Marcel walks on the same golf course, and we had no idea we were ever going to see each other till we got back to Canada. Now, that's quite a coincidence.

MR. ARCAND: Thank you for the golf balls.

DR. BUCK: Then the fellow from Ontario who applied for the Ombudsman's job -- I forget the young fellow's name. Anyway, we're sitting in a hotel in Honolulu; he and his wife and kids show up at the same hotel. They'd been to Australia, to New Zealand, and then were going back to Fiji. And here we show up. So it's quite uncanny when you run into people at random.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Marcel, have you got any additional comments that you'd like to make?

MR. ARCAND: I don't go way back, Mr. Chairman, as far as having attended these kinds of conferences before; this was my first attendance. I think I was as much interested in finding out what the world of the Ombudsman was like in other societies, in other countries. I came away, I think, with an appreciation that there are lots of different ways in which the Ombudsman's office is established and operates. In many of them, I think, Mr. Trawick and I and John Reid, who visited some of the offices in Australia, felt very comfortable. That's very much the kind of operation we have. I took a couple of hours out when I was in New Zealand and visited the office there, in Wellington, and came away also very comfortable. But there are some countries that have an Ombudsman's office that bears very little resemblance, as far as its day-to-day operations, to ours. I suppose that's as much as anything a comment about the way the world is too. So I think, in summary, that my horizons were broadened. I very much appreciated the opportunity and thoroughly enjoyed it.

MR. TRAWICK: When we were there -- I think Walter's comment is a good one -- the sessions were very tightly scheduled, and one of the things they seemed to include which I found rather difficult was sort of an opportunity for people to get up and make a speech or whatever, rather than responsive questions and answers to the sessions, which I think wasted some time. There is certainly value to being there, because there are things to be learned. I think there is also value to being there, frankly, from an international point of view, to show that we are the kind of democracy that has a democratized Ombudsman's office. I think that's an important thing that perhaps people don't realize, but it's very important to be able to say that every province in Canada has an Ombudsman's office, because a lot of jurisdictions are struggling to establish one.

Some of the Australian Ombudsmen, the New Zealand Ombudsmen, and myself have decided that -- and having proposed it, I'm always the sucker that has to draft it. But we're drafting a lengthy letter to set out how we think the format should be changed for Austria so that the particular Ombudsmen's offices that are similar in what they do -- in other words, they deal with similar types of government -- would have an opportunity for a day or so to interact amongst themselves and to learn something from what one or the other is doing. As Marcel says, it's interesting to see what an Ombudsman's office might do in a completely different culture, but you're not going to learn very much about what you can do in your own work from that. You would maybe want to have the exposure to it that we had, but we'd also like to have the chance to be a little more collegial with other offices that resemble ours. So I'm just in the process of doing that, and hopefully we can get the format changed a bit so that it will accommodate that.

Certainly the informal work together is worth while. Visiting the other offices, which we did in the week following -- we drove all over Australia to do it -- was very valuable once we got there, because it's really helpful to talk to somebody who's gone through a similar problem that you have who's in another country and has perhaps come to a more imaginative way of solving it that someone you might have access to in Canada.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Which states did you visit then?

MR. TRAWICK: We visited the Ombudsman's office in Queensland and New South Wales and Victoria. I can tell you where they're located; they're located in Melbourne and Sydney and Brisbane. But I have difficulty with state names in Australia.

MR. FOX: Now, those international Ombudsman conferences are every four years, right? And in the year in which they're held, the Canadian Ombudsman Conference is not? Next year's Canadian Ombudsman Conference is . . .

MR. TRAWICK: It's in October in Quebec City. I think it's the 29th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; any other comments with respect to the conference or the report?

Item 6, Other Business. Item 7, Date of Next Meeting. I think what we'll do is leave that to the call of the Chair. I don't want to let too much time go by without a meeting of the committee for further consideration of the three budgets that we've now received. I don't want to let it go any later than mid-January. I know that December is a very difficult time, but we would want to have, it seems to me, by mid-January our final recommendations with respect to the budgets. So that's the time frame I'm working towards.

MR. FOX: There are some items of unfinished business to deal with.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: They probably could be dealt with at the January meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, right.

MR. FOX: Do you want to try and set a date now?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, pardon us for carrying on with this business. May I just say again that you're free to leave now while we sort out this little business of other meetings. Thank you again for coming. Thank you for your report and for all the information that is included with your budget, which is very important. Thank you as well for the additional report relative to activities, because I think that is a very appropriate thing to do. That is something that's very much appreciated. It's important to the members of the committee.

MR. TRAWICK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any members of the committee who feel that we should meet once more in December?

MR. ADY: Would it replace the January meeting?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's hard to tell. If we were able to totally come to a conclusion with respect to all the budgets including our own budget, the committee budget, I would hope we would be able to do so in one meeting.

MR. ADY: Well, I favour that over the first week of January because I'm going to be away.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to throw another suggestion into the mix there. I think we should determine the importance of the agenda item vis-à-vis the budgets on which we have to make a decision and determine when our deadline date is for making that decision. If it's important that it be done soon, I suggest we meet before Christmas. If we don't have to meet that soon, then I suggest we meet in the third or fourth week of January.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think it actually could be left until the third week of January.

MR. FOX: We also have some salary considerations as well, don't we?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right.

MR. FOX: Wasn't there some investigation we had to do, some further information required?  
I'm unavailable January 24 through 26.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The 24th through the 26th: that's three days.

MR. FOX: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Other than that you would be available in January?

MR. FOX: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Jack?

MR. ADY: I've got some meetings scheduled during that week of the 16th. I could be here on the 16th, but the balance of the week gets cluttered up.

MR. FOX: That's Martin Luther King Day.

MR. ADY: I have some meetings on the 18th. I could be here the 17th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And Glen?

MR. G. CLEGG: Well, I won't be here the last two weeks in January for sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You will not be around the last two weeks of January?

MR. FOX: Where does the 17th fit in there?

MR. G. CLEGG: I don't know; I haven't got my calendar.

DR. BUCK: January sort of has about five weeks in it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, it does.

DR. BUCK: The third comes on a Tuesday, and the 17th is a Tuesday. It's sort of the third week, because it's one of those five-week deals.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Wait, you would be free . . .

DR. BUCK: I'm okay all January; it doesn't matter. Bob's got a problem.

DR. ELLIOTT: I'll not be here for the first two weeks. I will not be here until after January 16.

MR. FOX: So the 17th is okay for you.

DR. BUCK: The 17th or 18th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that okay for Glen?

MR. G. CLEGG: No, that's no good for me. I'll be gone then.

MR. FOX: Would you trust us to act in your absence?

MR. G. CLEGG: Yes. Well . . .

MR. FOX: I'll keep an eye on Jack.

MR. G. CLEGG: Okay. I'm not just dead sure yet anyway, whether I'll be here or not. I haven't made it definite. I just haven't made any appointments for the last two weeks in January. That's all I know. It might be varied a little bit that way, so what suits everybody else suits me.

MR. FOX: How's that for you?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, that'll be okay. So the 17th. I think we'd better start about 10 o'clock in the morning.

MR. FOX: Schedule from 10 until we finish?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, I think we'll probably have a good long session.

DR. ELLIOTT: From 10 till 4.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it may not be quite that long.

MR. ADY: Ten till whenever, eh?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

DR. BUCK: Ten till whenever, January 17.

MR. FOX: The writ won't have been issued by then, so we've got time.

MR. ADY: Are you guys going to the polls by yourselves?

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right then. May I have a motion for adjournment? Mr. Ady. In favour? Carried.

[The committee adjourned at 1:41 p.m.]