

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

[6:05 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, let the record show the meeting now commencing, and the first item is the approval of the minutes of our meeting held on Wednesday, October 25. Does everyone have a copy of the minutes? Okay, we should briefly go through it then. Pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5: any errors or omissions in the minutes? Can we have a motion to accept the minutes as presented?

MR. ADY: I'll move it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, Jack, thank you. All in favour? Opposed, if any? Tom, I can't see whether your hand's up or is that your foot? Carried.

MR. SIGURDSON: If that's in *Hansard*, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's kind of unfair, isn't it, when the Chair rushes the committee like this? Can't even have some lasagna.

MR. HYLAND: We would gather, then, that the Chairman must have been here early, since he ate first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Touché.

Okay. First matters that we have to deal with: Business Arising from the Minutes, Discussion of Approval Lists; that's 3(a). As you recall during our last meeting, we had an extensive discussion about the Foothills, or was it the General?

MRS. GAGNON: No, it was the Charles Camsell.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Charles Camsell. And that was the group listed: Charles Camsell Provincial General Hospital Volunteer Association?

AN HON. MEMBER: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And we had asked for a list of all of the various volunteer groups that currently fall under the auspices of the Auditor General? That was just for information.

I think we'll hold 3(a) until later in the meeting when we're joined by the Auditor General. The Auditor General will be here to discuss with us item 5(a) under New Business. Possibly, since we have Karen with us, we should go right to 3(e), which is a discussion of the committee's 1990-91 budget estimates.

MISS SOUTH: Did you want me to run through the budget as drafted or just handle any questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's do that first, Karen. Does everyone have section 3(e)? Okay. Would you just lead us through that, Karen? If there are any questions, we'll stop Karen on each section and deal with them. We're doing this tonight for preliminary purposes. We'll come back and finalize it once we've finalized the budgets for the three officers who report through the committee. Karen.

MISS SOUTH: Under Salaries, Wages & Employee Benefits we have a fairly substantial increase for the conference attendance fees. That reflects increased fees, and some conferences that

never used to charge fees before are now instituting that policy. As well, we've added in this year payment of fees for non-delegates, which includes fees charged for spouses to attend conferences. I believe there are two or three of the four conferences that now charge for spouses as well as the delegates.

Under travel, four conferences are listed and the amounts of money for each conference. The amount there varies from year to year depending on the locations of the conferences.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll go into that in more detail in this discussion. Do you wish to do that now or wait until we get to page 3 for further detail on travel expenses?

MISS SOUTH: Oh, I'm running through the individual pages as opposed to - the front page is a wrap-up of the individual.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Well, let's deal with it in a more detailed way right now, then, and talk about why the substantial increase over last year.

MISS SOUTH: To start with, the public accounts conference, the first one listed there, was held in Edmonton last year. I don't believe anyone from this committee attended that conference, so there were no funds budgeted. I think neither were funds budgeted for this conference. Obviously, the conference location in Newfoundland is going to entail a substantial increase for that particular conference. The Ombudsman conference was an international conference last year, was it not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: In '88; it was in Australia.

MISS SOUTH: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This year's Canadian conference was in Toronto or Montreal.

MR. TANNAS: This year, in '89, it was in Calgary.

MISS SOUTH: No, Quebec City.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Quebec City.

MISS SOUTH: So, again, Halifax is an increased cost. Comprehensive Auditing Foundation is, as I understand it, generally held in Ontario or Quebec, so that should be pretty much the same amount of money as was budgeted last year. The Council of Governmental Ethics Laws was in Florida last year; it's Alaska next year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's New Orleans this year and Alaska next year.

So we have travel for conferences going up quite substantially?

MISS SOUTH: But also we included this time, which has not been included before, travel for spouses to attend the conferences.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right.

MISS SOUTH: Which, in effect, doubles the amount of money.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could we also note for the record that in keeping with the practice followed in Members' Services

Committee, we now are recommending it be two delegates plus two guests rather than two MLAs. Now, there may be the odd occasion when we want a staff person to go to a conference, as is sometimes done in Members' Services. This gives us latitude.

MISS SOUTH: In addition, under the travel budget, pursuant to a Members' Services order passed in August, all committee A chairmen are entitled to a vehicle and expenses relating to gas, oil, et cetera, for that vehicle.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is one area where I've asked if there can be some clarification. I believe there is more than one person who serves as the chairman of a committee A who receives an automobile through another activity. I do, so I've asked the question: do we really need to show an extra \$4,000 of expenditure if we don't intend to use it? That's being checked on, so we can possibly come back to that at some time between now and the time we finalize our whole budget process.

MRS. GAGNON: Bob, this is not the time to discuss the substance of any of this. We're strictly going through the numbers right now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you mean like the merit of traveling to conferences?

MRS. GAGNON: Yes; merit of guests, for instance. Here we're talking just dollars.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we discussed the merit of guests at our first organizational meeting. If you wish to go back to it, I think it could be done now because we're going through the budget. So this is a good time to do it.

MRS. GAGNON: I'm just wondering. There's been a lot of criticism of that. There has been in recent years, but recently the public is really alarmed when they see a government with some deficits and so on and the guests are being allowed to travel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A guest primarily refers to spouse, but we haven't used the term "spouse."

MR. NELSON: I hope not.

MR. SIGURDSON: It could be the child of a member.

MR. TANNAS: Exactly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's one of the reasons that we've gone away from it. But it's intended as spouse or someone very close to the delegate. We've broadened the definition now, or are proposing to broaden it, from MLA to delegate so that it could in fact be someone other than an MLA who is traveling. Our travel expenses code would be in line with those used in Members' Services Committee.

MRS. GAGNON: That'd be right. I recall that. It was just to make it consistent. The theory was that it's healthy to be able to bring a family member or whatever to a conference.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Many of the conferences have activities for a guest. I don't know if other members of this committee could

relate to conferences they've been on this year or in past years. Is that not the case? It certainly is in CPA.

MR. HYLAND: As I remember, at the last Members' Services Committee they discussed this. I remember the comments by Nick Taylor, who was the Liberal member on the committee then. He felt very strongly on this, and he used his time in the private sector to support this. They often found that traveling with a spouse cut down on the expenses.

MRS. GAGNON: So?

MR. HYLAND: Because their spouses were along, they were paying attention to business and touring with their spouses.

MR. NELSON: Instead of going out catting at nighttime.

MR. HYLAND: He said he found that in the private sector it was in the long run far cheaper with the spouse along. He supported it very strongly in spite of concerns about it.

MRS. GAGNON: I guess it's just a caution. I think people are going to be getting very careful and looking at every dollar. Someday we may have to justify that decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, if we can't justify it now, we shouldn't do it. I've been around here in boom times, and I've been down here in times of restraint. You have to justify it regardless of the economic time you're in.

Don first. Tom, was your hand up?

MR. TANNAS: I don't know at which segment of this committee we had the discussion, but when Derek Fox and I were planning to go to the Ombudsman conference in Quebec City, we agreed to pay our spouses' way, and we did and paid our spouses' registration fee as well from our own resources. I thought that was - well, we were happy to pay it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that was your choice.

MR. TANNAS: Fine. Yeah. I like that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We dealt with this at our organizational meeting, and I don't recall your stating a position, Don, but Derek said, "Regardless of the flexibility that the committee has given, I choose to pay for my spouse." We did have, in fact, the resources; we could have paid for the spouses on that trip. Did we not?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: We might have been able to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Might have?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: We're not finished with the fiscal year yet.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, okay. I understood we were. Anyone else? Any other questions on the travel code?

MR. SIGURDSON: On travel, I know there are some members who would prefer not to fly, and I'm just wondering. I see in all of the conference travel - although there may not be anybody on this committee who prefers not to fly.

MR. HYLAND: That's Members' Services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's an excellent point.

MR. SIGURDSON: But in the future there may be a member who may want to take a vehicle to a conference meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I take it as a given that if a member chose another form of travel – if they chose to use their own automobile, if they went by train – I assume they'd be reimbursed on our standard mileage program. Have we had that experience in the past?

MISS SOUTH: There have been people who have traveled to conferences who have driven their own cars to conferences, and there are provisions to make claims in that case.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good.
All right, Don?

MR. TANNAS: Just on that point. Not to be miserable about it, but if one is driving to New Orleans and back, I would think that would be a substantial amount of money on a mileage basis compared to even an open ticket on the airlines, let alone an advance booking ticket.

MISS SOUTH: Well, it's subject to my checking, but I believe that what you do is you claim an equivalent to the airfare.

MR. TANNAS: Great. Okay, that's what I was getting at.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you like Karen to look into it a little further just so that we're satisfied, so that we're very clear on the process?

MR. TANNAS: I would think so. Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, good.
Any other questions or comments on the travel code? Okay.

MISS SOUTH: Page 4 relates to insurance, and that again is strictly related to the provision of a vehicle for the chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MISS SOUTH: Page 5 is the chairman's vehicle. There's provision as well for the rental of a mobile phone.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is a phone standard in all of the chairmen's cars? Because we as MLAs have the right to use our allowance for a telephone if we wish.

MISS SOUTH: I believe that is included in the Members' Services order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: My gosh, we're sure running up the bill for a car which I don't intend to have to use in this committee. That's almost \$6,000.

MRS. GAGNON: But I suppose the point is that it could be, not this year but at some time in the future, where the chairman

would not already be chairing something else. So we're going to set a precedent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As I mentioned, I've asked that that be checked to see if it affects other committees as well.

MR. HYLAND: [Inaudible] when you take over. It's got to go down twice before it affects . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.
Okay, mobile phone charges, \$1,200, page 6. And repairs.

MRS. GAGNON: I guess the concern with having that in the budget and it won't be used this year is that it's as though the budget is being padded with an expense that this committee during this term will not undertake.

MR. NELSON: Quite frankly, I think we should take it off.

MISS SOUTH: This is for next year, and it is put in partially because the committees are reappointed each year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Karen has no choice other than to do what she's done in our book. I'm trying to find out if there's a way we can deal with the issue because it may affect more than one committee, as I earlier mentioned. If it can be identified, then fine, but Karen can't do anything other than she's done.

MISS SOUTH: As well, the committees are reappointed each session. The chairmanship, although traditionally it does not change – and this chairman does not need a vehicle. The next one, should there be a change, may want a vehicle.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, but another approach may be, if we get an understanding through the Speaker and the Executive Council, just to take it out, and if it's needed, then it comes in as a supplementary amount. Because I have the same concern about the dollars being put in the budget if, in fact, they're not needed.

Okay? Whereabouts are we?

MR. ADY: I'm unable to understand what you were referring to.

MISS SOUTH: That was page 6.

Page 7 relates to repairs of the chairman's vehicle. Page 8 relates to the audit of the Auditor General's office.

MR. NELSON: I'd like to hold that for discussion, Mr. Chairman, until we talk to the Auditor General. I think that's atrocious, that increase.

MISS SOUTH: The actual cost this year was \$16,800.

MR. NELSON: I have some questions for the Auditor General.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We want to come back to that issue.
All right? Hosting of meetings.

MISS SOUTH: That's to provide for dinners such as this evening, coffee for the meetings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MISS SOUTH: Again, the increase on page 10 for payments to MLAs relates primarily to the changes that were instituted through Members' Services in August.

MRS. GAGNON: Excuse me. Could we go back just for a minute, for instance, to hosting? We don't see any actual for the year '88-89. We have no way of knowing if this is in the ballpark or not. Where would I find the actual?

MISS SOUTH: As of November 28, \$324.25 had been expended.

MRS. GAGNON: We're looking at a calendar year.

MISS SOUTH: Fiscal.

MRS. GAGNON: Fiscal. Okay.

MR. HYLAND: That number we won't know until fiscal year-end either.

MRS. GAGNON: Uh huh. But we're already almost at the end of December. Again, I'm just wondering if it's a little generous, you know, based on the actual.

MISS SOUTH: It may be. The last few years we've been close to \$500.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could we put an asterisk by that, then, Karen, for a review based on past performance and projections for this year and based on the meetings we have yet to hold, whether that figure could be lowered?

MR. TANNAS: So an '88-89 actual is what we're looking for, is it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've got '88-89; it's \$324.25. So what Karen's going to do is go back and look at the year prior to that as well.

MISS SOUTH: The '88-89 was \$442.05.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we may well be able to go down to at least \$500 and still be in range, but I think you should look at the meetings we've scheduled between now and the end of this fiscal year just to be satisfied with that.

MRS. GAGNON: I don't want to be picky; it's just that I've sat in on very large budget meetings for a number of years and I always found that if you didn't have an actual, you just were blind. You didn't know if it was in the ballpark or not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yolande, you've raised an excellent point. That's good.

Anything else on page 9? Okay. Karen.

MISS SOUTH: Page 10, as I said, primarily relates to the Members' Services order with respect to payments to MLAs, and in addition are the payments to the chairman, his monthly salary, which is new. It also, I believe, is more reflective of the increased activity of this committee. It is now meeting more frequently than it has in the past. As well, it includes the attendance of members at conferences, which was not specifically

laid out before.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any questions on page 10? All right. We've dealt with the budget tonight on a preliminary basis. Karen will double-check a couple of factors, and we're going to come back, as well, to the audit of the Auditor General's office subsequent to a more detailed discussion we'll have on that issue. Anything else for us, Karen? Okay. Thank you very much for your attendance and help.

Going back, then, to the agenda. The Auditor is here to deal with the appointment of the Auditor, so we should wait till he comes. So it appears that items (b) and (c) should await the arrival at 7 p.m. this evening of Mr. Salmon, the Auditor General.

Item (d): Discussion of Re-appointment of Chief Electoral Officer.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move we hold that item until after we meet with the Chief Electoral Officer, I think. To do it before wouldn't be right, and we should wait until that meeting with him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. There's a motion that we table item 3(d) until after we've had our discussion with the Chief Electoral Officer.

MR. FOX: Is it your intention, Mr. Chairman, that this be a discussion of whether or not this is done or what the process is?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Both. You recall I've raised it on previous occasions, and I'm assuming we would discuss the process and where we go.

Okay, are we ready for the vote on the tabling motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried. Now, down to item 4, Report on Attendance at Conferences. The first item we had was the Canadian Ombudsman Conference. Don and I spoke of this earlier, and unfortunately Don's notes are not here. Derek's notes aren't here either?

MR. FOX: I've got my notes in my office, but I understand the item was tabled till Monday's meeting, so I didn't bring them with me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that a motion then, Don, that we table that till Monday?

MR. TANNAS: Yeah, I would move that we table item 4(a) till Monday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

MR. FOX: Is it the committee's request, Mr. Chairman, that that be a written report or a verbal report?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It'll be in the transcript.

MR. FOX: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation. Tom Sigurdson.

MR. SIGURDSON: I can give a brief oral report, Mr. Chairman. The conference was held November 19 through 21 in Toronto and attended by over 500 delegates from all over the world but primarily from Canada: a number of members from government in Canada, from provinces, those members who were active on Public Accounts committees in their respective jurisdictions.

There was a great deal of information given to all delegates about public-sector accountability, about the comprehensive auditing procedure. This was the 10th anniversary of the foundation, and they had more or less a review of how comprehensive auditing has come to be accepted in our lives and how at one time, 10 years ago, it was thought to be a practice that wouldn't be widely accepted.

As a member of the Legislative Offices Committee I attended. Alberta is the only jurisdiction that has a Legislative Offices Committee. The other publicly elected members who were delegates to this conference came primarily from Public Accounts committees. I think the application of the information being handed out at the conference might better be used by members of Public Accounts committees. That's my opinion. I would hope that perhaps the next conference - we just received the letter today from the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation. The next conference is going to be held November 4 to 6 next year in Ottawa. I would hope we would broaden the scope or include a member or two from our Public Accounts Committee to attend this conference as well as a delegate or two from here. I see we've looked at budgeting for two delegates to the next conference from this committee, but I think there would be better use for members of the Public Accounts Committee to attend that conference. It's that committee that really has the opportunity to address questions to ministers about accounting procedures and accountability, and I just think those folk on that committee ought to be included in this process.

MR. HYLAND: The chairman of Public Accounts doesn't attend that?

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, the chairman of Public Accounts did attend this conference, but he attended it as a presenter. He presented a paper, along with the chairperson of British Columbia and the Chair of the Ontario Public Accounts.

MR. HYLAND: That's right. He's chairman of the Canadian public accounts association this year, isn't he?

MR. SIGURDSON: Yes, but those three individuals attended as the Chairs of their committees presenting a paper to the foundation. I don't know if normally they would attend the convention as delegates, and I've not had the opportunity to speak to Barry about that.

MR. HYLAND: I agree with you. They could pick somebody out of the committee if the chairman or vice-chairman can't go.

MR. SIGURDSON: There was certainly worthwhile information to be gathered; there's no doubt about that. I believe I learned a great deal, but I'm wondering if other members of the Legislature, primarily those in Public Accounts, wouldn't better be able to employ that information that's offered in our legislative process here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Derek.

MR. FOX: If I might quickly, Mr. Chairman. As someone who's been to one of those conferences before, I can understand Tom's concern. But I disagree somewhat. We all may at one time or another have responsibility on Public Accounts, so whether we serve there now or not is something to consider. But it seemed to me, as someone going there, that the realization that value-for-money auditing is something that's becoming the trend in government and the kind of procedures advocated by the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation are being implemented at the federal level quite widely through Kenneth Dye and will be coming at the provincial level - it's important for us as legislators to have some understanding of that. While some of it seems fairly technical and perhaps mostly of interest to those who are active in the chartered accounting profession, I found, subsequent to my attendance at the conference, the information I gained to be most useful, and I'm confident you will too. So as a member of the committee, I think it's important that at least one of us attend that conference as well.

MR. SIGURDSON: I'm not suggesting that the information I gained won't be useful to me later on, but I'm just thinking it might be more useful to a person serving on Public Accounts. And if we're going to get value for our money as taxpayers, then I would . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: It seems to me we don't need to decide tonight the attendance at next year's conference.

MR. SIGURDSON: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We might want to give further consideration to your suggestion, Tom, and keeping in mind Derek's concern, maybe there's an opportunity for a representative from each committee to be involved and then reassess it once that's been done. But I think that's a future discussion.

Anything else on the conference itself, Tom?

MR. SIGURDSON: No, other than the fact that I picked up a booklet that was prepared by Winston Baker from Newfoundland, Darlene Marzari from British Columbia, Aileen Nicholson from the federal government, and Ed Philip from Ontario: Guidelines for Public Accounts Committees in Canada. If members of this committee want copies of it, I'll certainly arrange for copies to be made and distributed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anything else then? Any other questions for Tom? Okay.

Thanks very much, Tom.

John, could you give us a report on the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws Conference?

MR. DROBOT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Council on Governmental Ethics Laws, or COGEL as it is called, held its annual conference on the 6th, 7th, and 8th in New Orleans. A total of 112 delegates were registered from most of the states, as well as Canadian federal and provincial representatives from Alberta, Quebec, Ontario, and Newfoundland. This is not taking into account other personnel who were registered but were not part of the elected process. Orientation for new members and first-time conference attendees was the first-day item.

One of the keynote speakers was Michael Josephson of the

Josephson ethics institute. The institute is a nonprofit public benefit corporation. Its mission is to improve the ethical quality of society by teaching and advocating ethical decision-making. It's an activist organization concerned with conduct rather than theory. The institute became active in 1987 and since has conducted workshops for over 10,000 influential leaders and legislators. I might add that their claim is that by holding conferences, study groups, et cetera, many legislators are not familiar with what they can really do and what they can't do, and this is one of the reasons that perhaps things happen; they are not aware of things they cannot and must not do.

Concurrent sessions the first day included Jean-Pierre Kingsley, Assistant Deputy Registrar General of Canada. He's a very volatile speaker. He spoke on lobbying. Campaign financing was addressed by Ronald Gould, Assistant Chief Electoral Officer for Canada. So I can say that Canada was well represented on the speakers' platform.

A panel on freedom of information was interesting and very informative. A later session dealt with freedom of information versus privacy: where does one begin and the other end. In many cases there was information that perhaps has to be withheld to some extent to prevent people from making use of it for their benefit, et cetera.

The conference on Thursday dealt primarily with computer use, definitions of legislators' family members' problems and how their family members have restrictions placed on them – which perhaps isn't fair – and solutions as involved in government, and roles of executive directors. Personal financial disclosure is a big topic in the U.S. There were reports dealing with the ethical restrictions of elected officials, which vary from state to state. They also vary, of course, from province to province. Electoral campaign financing, conflict of interest, as I mentioned, varies from province to province.

Canada instituted a Lobbyists Registration Act in September of 1989. The principle is that lobbying is a legitimate activity that helps public officials become aware of the views of individual groups and organizations. The second part is that it's best reviewed if there isn't any mystery surrounding the identity of paid lobbyists and their clients.

Thirty-five of the 50 U.S. states have now adopted an ethics law. This law requires all elected and appointed officials to disclose the source of their income each year from any and all sources.

Freedom of information, which was brought in by the federal U.S. government about two years ago, gives access to government records in the computer age, and this is also causing them some great concern. This was another interesting panel discussion.

There were many at the conference, as I've stated previously. There were other sessions running concurrently on campaign finance, public interest groups, judicial ethics, lobbyists and their relationship with legislators, and other topics.

The conference was finalized by a luncheon on December 8 honouring the 1989 COGEL Award winner, Pierre Côté, the Chief Electoral Officer for the province of Quebec.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Committee on Legislative Offices for extending to me the privilege of attending this very interesting and informative conference. I'm quite prepared to answer any questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, John.

Questions of John regarding his report? Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: I'm just wondering if there was a paper that was presented in the latter session that dealt with freedom of information versus privacy. Was there a paper?

MR. DROBOT: No, it was a panel discussion.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. Maybe we'll just talk privately about that then.

MRS. GAGNON: I have a question. Were there any papers from those states which have adopted an ethics law? Were they circulating copies of their ethics law, where they have to disclose . . .

MR. DROBOT: I'm sorry. With the fan blowing and losing my hearing aid in New Orleans, I have a problem. Could you repeat the question, please?

MRS. GAGNON: I said, did any of those 35 states which have adopted an ethics law have a copy of their law available?

MR. DROBOT: Well, yes. If you follow the American system, it varies so much from state to state. You have a Senate, which is similar to our federal, and then, of course, you have your state representatives.

MR. CHAIRMAN: John, was there an opportunity while you were there – did any of the states bring literature, including their legislation?

MR. DROBOT: Yes.

MRS. GAGNON: I'm just wondering if any of that is available.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is any of that available to us? I think if we wrote to a particular state, we could get it.

MR. DROBOT: I have some, and I could no doubt obtain most of it because . . .

MRS. GAGNON: Yeah, okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Jack.

MR. ADY: Having attended that conference last year, the leader of the pack with that sort of thing is Florida, which has the so-called sunshine laws. They would be happy to send you anything you might want on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sunshine laws?

MR. ADY: Yes; open.

AN HON. MEMBER: They let the sunshine in.

MR. ADY: Yes.

MR. TANNAS: Not sunset.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How could they be any more open than Montana?

MR. ADY: I don't know. At that conference it was indicated

they really were the leaders with that type of legislation.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I attended a meeting with legislators in Montana, and by law their meetings are all completely open. So if we were in a room like this, people could wander in and out at leisure and sit – either lobbyists, other interest groups, members of the media, what have you.

All right. Anyone else?

MR. HYLAND: Sometimes there are more people coming and going than there are sitting in there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What was that, Alan? Want to be on the record?

MR. ADY: That was one of the reasons the conference was destined to be in Florida a year ago, because of their significance in that type of legislation.

MR. DROBOT: And of course during the conference there was a lot of get-together and discussion from state to state, provincially, et cetera, on what way they're different and the problems they're having and how they overcome it or try to. The freedom of information – they have to have a judicial order to get information. Even the Kennedy tragedy – there's information coming out now because of the freedom of information that was never made public before, so it has . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: Is each request made through a judicial order?

MR. DROBOT: Right.

MR. SIGURDSON: Each one? Holy cow. That ties up the courts though.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions of John? Well, thanks again, John, for your report to us.

Of course, we'll go back to the Ombudsmen's conference report on Monday. Our other items on the agenda tonight require the attendance of Mr. Salmon, so I suggest we take a short coffee break. When Mr. Salmon arrives, we'll reconvene.

[The committee recessed from 6:48 p.m. to 6:57 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We'll reconvene.

Let the record show we welcome Mr. Salmon, the Auditor General.

There are a couple of agenda items we wish to deal with and we would like Mr. Salmon's input on. The first is a new agenda item under New Business, item 5(a), and it really relates to the question of audits of subsidiaries of provincial corporations by the Auditor General. This is a matter which Mr. Salmon brought to my attention several weeks ago. I suggested that we would put it on the agenda so that we could have a thorough discussion not only of the particular incident but, in a more general way, the question of auditing of subsidiaries.

If there's any point in time, Mr. Salmon, you feel we need to go in camera, we'll certainly do that.

MR. SALMON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So if you'd like to deal with it in a more general sense . . .

MR. SALMON: I think maybe when we talk about the specific one, it's better not to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll do it in camera.

MR. SALMON: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. So we'll have a general discussion first, and then when we're ready to go into specifics, we'll go in camera, with the permission of the committee.

Welcome, and please proceed.

MR. SALMON: Okay. Thank you. I'm happy to be here and meet before the committee.

This is not an easy matter to deal with, because it's a fairly complicated and involved situation that's existed for a number of years. It hasn't been a problem if you go really back into the discussion of subsidiary companies of provincial agencies. Back in 1978 there were none that existed, and I don't believe that when the Auditor General Act and the Financial Administration Act were written there was even any contemplation of subsidiary companies. Since then, of course, it's grown, and we now have some 23. In fact, I can probably name you a couple more too. It's an ongoing thing. There are other provincial agencies that are doing them as well, for various reasons.

It is not a question of whether or not they should have subsidiary companies. That's strictly a matter of policy and a matter of the organization having their legal right to incorporate or to establish these. That's not the matter that's before us. The matter is more a philosophy aspect. It's one in which, with the mandate of the Auditor General, I have felt it was essential that anything to do with the economic unit of a provincial agency should be audited by the Auditor General in view of the accountability process – back to the Legislature; this is public money; all of the aspects of that – and there hasn't been a problem. We have been the auditors of all the subsidiaries that have been developed since the first ones came into being a few years ago, and without question, because the entities recognize the Auditor General, the auditor by legislation, we have been appointed the subsidiary auditors and moved from there. We have, of course, used the agency situation in a number of them because of the need.

There are some peculiarities in some of the organizations. If you have all the material, you'll see that some of them don't even exist in Alberta. My letter to Mr. Bogle talks about how we're handling those. We have handled those very discretely so that there were no problems jurisdictionally to be able to obtain the financial audits and to work through an agency situation and sometimes under a process which is a little bit easier to handle where you're out of Alberta, where we actually got into a joint audit arrangement because of the jurisdictional situation.

However, this last year we've had a problem in that one of the provincial agencies has developed a subsidiary company and has decided that because of the nature of the organization, they'd like to split it off. They do not want the involvement of the Auditor General because this would mean possibly an unfair advantage to them in that my mandate requires a little more than just a financial audit; I've also got the responsibility to have an accountability process back to the Legislative Assembly. They've indicated in their letters and correspondence that they

do not think this is right. Although we knew there was a technicality because the legislation of the Auditor General in fact did not mention subsidiaries, we were able, because of the nature and the understanding of everyone, to move without that technical change. We're now in that position where one has decided that legally we're not able to be the auditor and has taken a stand.

Interestingly, this matter has been discussed with the Treasury management as well as, in this particular case, with a deputy minister of the department involved, and they are very much in favour of the accountability process remaining with the Legislature, through the Auditor General, so that the organization can't, you might say, peel off a portion of its operations where it's not accountable and not easily accessible by the department itself. So they are actually taking this stand. This is just from the management point of view. Again, it hasn't hit the cabinet or anything like that at this stage, although I think it's getting fairly close from a departmental point of view. So maybe that's a rough overview without mentioning names.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. All right.

MRS. GAGNON: Now, if we want to have names mentioned, we go off the record?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was going to ask if we could have a motion to go in camera, recognizing that we can't pass anything.

MR. NELSON: I'll move that the committee go in camera for further discussion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, a majority. Any opposed? Right.

[The committee met in camera from 7:03 p.m. to 7:22 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are reconvened as a committee.
Stan.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to just make a motion: That the committee recommend to the Treasurer that the Auditor General Act and the Financial Administration Act be amended to include subsidiaries of provincial corporations for the purpose of being audited by the Auditor General.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any question on the motion?

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question has been called. All in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Was that unanimous?

HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Let the record show it was carried unanimously. Thank you.

Now, if we could go up to item 3(c), Discussion of Financial Statement for the Office of the Auditor General as Prepared by Kingston Ross. I would ask that we have another motion to go back in camera.

MR. NELSON: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Stan has so moved. All in favour? Opposed, if any? All in favour? I only saw one hand up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Opposed, if any? Okay. We're back in camera.

[The committee met in camera from 7:24 p.m. to 7:39 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: That concludes our discussion on item 3(c).

Are there any other matters the members wish to raise with the Auditor General tonight, recognizing we will be meeting with the Auditor General and some staff from the office tomorrow at 9 o'clock when we review the budget?

MRS. GAGNON: Could I ask a question, please? It's going back to this matter of auditing of wholly owned subsidiaries and so on. My question may reflect some lack of experience or whatever. When you do that kind of thing, when you can and you do audit wholly owned subsidiaries like Gainers and so on, what do the regulations say and what does the Act say about making any of that public? It is not necessary for any of that to be public or . . .

MR. SALMON: You made a statement that Gainers was a wholly owned subsidiary.

MRS. GAGNON: And it isn't?

MR. SALMON: No.

MRS. GAGNON: What portion of it did the government take over? [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: We're all ears.

MRS. GAGNON: Okay. Maybe I'm getting into a different area altogether, but I mean you are involved in some audit of some of that company's . . .

MR. SALMON: We'll wait until Mr. Chairman [inaudible]. Do you know what she's on to? I mean, are we in camera or are we out of camera?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, we're not in camera.

MRS. GAGNON: It's just a general question. I've got to study the Act, I guess, to know what it says basically, because I don't understand just what your function is in that case, where there's a government takeover of maybe a part of a company if not the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you like to move we go in camera,

and we can go into it in detail?

MRS. GAGNON: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yolande has made the motion. All in favour? Opposed? All right.

[The committee met in camera from 7:41 p.m. to 7:46 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, if we could move on to the list. Alan.

MR. HYLAND: This accounting item; did we decide what we're going to do with it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's coming back, Alan, under item 3(b), Discussion of Appointment of Auditors – Office of the Auditor General. That's a matter the committee will deal with. We must decide how we're going to deal with it. We've not done that tonight, but we are moving up to item 3(a), Discussion of Approval Lists.

MR. SALMON: I'm not sure what you've got.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're not sure what we want you to do?

MR. SALMON: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: When we dealt with the Charles Camsell Provincial General Hospital Volunteer Association . . .

MR. SALMON: Ah, as a new . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, as an addition to the list. There were questions about what other organizations are included and what are the guidelines for including a body in the list. So it's a general information update. Committee members and Louise, do you recall it in that way?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you.

MR. SALMON: That's fine. I was just not sure.

MR. ADY: It was in the minutes.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: In fact, you may recall Mr. Hyland requested a list of all of the entities that were being audited.

MR. SALMON: And they all have this list?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. SALMON: The list before you is printed every year in the annual report of the Auditor General. I suppose they're what we call audits under section 12(b) of the Auditor General Act, which are those that are approved by the standing committee because the organizations have asked the Auditor General to be auditor for various reasons. Of the 14 on the list, the majority of those organizations are connected with a provincial agency such as a hospital, as you can tell, or one of the educational institutions. It has really been established in the majority of times as a charitable organization which functions as an indepen-

dent organization because of the way it was established, and therefore we don't come under that as a 12(a), which is as a provincial agency.

We have chosen to accept these, on approval of the committee, because of convenience and the fact that in many instances the actual accounting records are handled by the hospital or the educational institution itself. It would mean someone else coming in, looking at the records again, not understanding, and probably charging more than we would charge, although we don't usually charge if it's just a little charity. These are not large; they don't take a lot of time, and that's the kind of thing we've sort of brought before the committee.

There are a few we've had for a long time, such as the Sulphur Development Institute of Canada. We probably never had to accept that one, but it was accepted many years ago because of the nature of the business and the investment of some money from the government as well at the time. It has basically ceased operations because the sulphur industry is not too active right now. We spent very little time on that one, but the company still exists.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. SALMON: That's a good background of it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Questions?

All right. On behalf of the committee, thank you very much for joining us this evening. We look forward to seeing you tomorrow morning at 9.

MR. SALMON: Thank you very much. I appreciate your support on that one item.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's our pleasure. Thank you.

Derek, you and Don have discussed whether or not we might take the matter we've moved to hold over till Monday and deal with it tonight? Is that right or is that wrong?

MR. FOX: Yes. I'd like to apologize, Mr. Chairman, for my being a little late. The roads from Calgary were getting pretty treacherous.

I've located . . .

MR. NELSON: What's the matter? Can't you drive?

MR. FOX: I beg your pardon?

MR. NELSON: What's the matter? Can't you drive?

MR. FOX: I can; safely too.

MRS. GAGNON: I thought you lived in Vegreville.

MR. FOX: We were stuck in an hour-and-a-half traffic jam on the way down on Tuesday morning because there were 30 cars piled up on the highway in front of us.

MR. HYLAND: Did you hear what Yolande said?

MRS. GAGNON: I said I thought you were coming from Vegreville.

MR. FOX: No, we had meetings in Calgary.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, I've located the notes we've prepared from our attendance at the Canadian Ombudsman Conference in Quebec City, and thought it would be prudent to make that report to the committee now rather than Monday, considering the length of our agenda that day. Perhaps I'll just say a few things, and I'll jump in when appropriate.

We did attend the conference on behalf of the committee from Sunday, October 29, to late evening Wednesday, November 1. It was quite an experience for both of us. We very much enjoyed Quebec City. The hospitality and the enthusiasm shown us by virtually everybody we bumped into from the moment we got off the plane till the time we went back was really gratifying. To see and have contact with people in that part of Canada was for me very, very special. The Ombudsman's office was represented by the Acting Ombudsman. Ed Chetner and his wife, Mavis, were there, and Brian Carver, an investigator from the office, was there as well. We were able to meet with them on frequent occasions and share notes on what was going on.

The Canadian Ombudsman Conference was held in Quebec City, le Congr s des Ombudsmans Canadiens. Monsieur Tannas and I are both bilingual after having attended that conference, because I'd say 90 percent of it was en fran ais and we had simultaneous translation, which enabled us to gain that facility in a short time. Anyway, the reason they requested the conference be held in Quebec City was that it coincided with the 20th anniversary of the establishment of their office, they being I think the second jurisdiction to establish one in Canada; the first, of course, being Alberta.

They have an interesting name. The term for Ombudsman there is "le Protecteur du citoyen," the protector of the citizen. The people refer to the Ombudsman as the citizen's protector. If I could characterize what we understood about the operation of that office, it is much larger both in size and scope than ours, and people refer a lot of things to them as the citizen's protector. That was the focus of the conference. The question asked was: what about people? I guess they were trying to provide in this conference the opportunity to review the function of Ombudsmen across the country, the idea being that now that the function had been provided for some time, it was appropriate to re-examine the role and make sure the people who were meant to be served, the people at large, are being best served by the Ombudsman's office. The conference was sort of organized around that theme.

It was a huge conference in comparison to the one we hosted in Alberta in 1988. I think that's largely a function of the size of the office in Quebec, because a lot of the participants were from Quebec. They also had some people in other jurisdictions that performed Ombudsman-like functions, whether it be in a school setting or a hospital setting. There were even some people from the United States and Europe there as well. So it was much bigger and certainly a much splashier affair than what we hosted in Alberta.

If you want me to go briefly over the agenda and some of the things we dealt with, I'd be happy to do that, Mr. Chairman.

The sessions dealt with the systemic approach, whether or not we should be advocating the systemic approach; that is, rather than an Ombudsman being reactive, waiting till citizens' complaints come forward and acting on them, if the Ombudsman's office has a role to play in going into departments of government and doing an analysis of their procedures to determine if there's inadequacy there, and if there is, can it be corrected before it causes too many people too many problems? There was a lot of really intriguing debate on that.

Then the sessions on the Ombudsman and the media: the role the media has to play, whether it's positive or negative; what obligation the Ombudsman has to relate to and deal with the media. I should note that some of the participants were people who operate at the federal level in an Ombudsman-type role: the Privacy Commissioner or the Information Commissioner, people like that. We talked about the implications of the Charter of Rights in terms of the function of Ombudsmen in Canada. Should Ombudsmen be playing an active role in the development of charters of rights and amendments thereto? So it was all pretty intellectual stuff and very challenging and interesting – a session on administrative fairness, which is basically what the Ombudsman attempts to achieve to make sure that departments, in the performance of their duties, are being fair to the citizens they're meant to serve.

Just a general thing toward the end of the conference on the effectiveness of Ombudsmen: what can be done to embellish or develop or change the role of Ombudsmen so the Ombudsman is more effective in meeting the needs of citizens in terms of their interaction with governments that are becoming a lot more complex and much larger at every level?

I might conclude by just pointing out that the Ombudsman in Quebec, M. Daniel Jacoby, was a most gracious and enthusiastic host. He'd organized a fabulous conference with a lot of depth and breadth, I'd have to say. We were able to represent the province at a number of functions hosted by the mayor of Quebec City, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the Quebec National Assembly.

I'm not sure, Don, if you have anything you want to add there.

MR. TANNAS: Well, one of the things I noted was the attendance at the sessions. It was almost continuously 100 percent. You just didn't at any time see vacant seats for more than the polite bathroom break kind of thing or the smoke break at the back. It was hard to concentrate for prolonged periods of time – at least, I found it difficult – listening to a translation, because you don't get the flow; you get the ideas coming through broken up. Then some of the people were so excited about what they were talking about that they would speak rapidly. The translator would say, "The translator begs your forgiveness, but he's going much too fast," and ask somebody on the stage who spoke English to please slow the person down because you were listening with the earphones. That was kind of interesting.

I think Derek mentioned it, but in Quebec there are so many people who fill the function of Ombudsmen. That was a rather interesting thing. When they got into some of the discussions, it seemed to me there was a whole lot of arbitrariness about their way of governing in order to give rise to all these people acting as Ombudsmen. I don't know if that's a misunderstanding on my part, but they seemed to have a fantastic number of them, and they were advocating more of them. When they got into the systemic approach, there did seem to be a real watchdog of everything, a much more proactive idea of what I would assume an Ombudsman to be.

Good feelings on the part of almost anybody you met, whether it was the taxi driver or the person in a small restaurant or any of the people that were attending the conference for Alberta. Alberta's stock seems to stand pretty high, doesn't it? We're not saying the Alberta government, just Alberta as a place and Albertans as people. Again, the hospitality was just perfect.

MR. ADY: It's probably the Alberta government.

MRS. GAGNON: It's probably the delegates.

MR. TANNAS: I'm sure it's a reflection of the government, but I'm saying not necessarily.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All kidding aside, it's been fostered for many years of . . . You know, the provinces that stand strongest on provincial rights are Quebec and Alberta, and there's an appreciation in Quebec for Alberta.

MR. FOX: If I could add just a little plug for the committee. When you go to a function like that and meet the other Ombudsmen and get to talk to them and understand how they function, you realize just how high the integrity of the office in Alberta is and how important the function of our committee is. It's an all-party committee. It's not something they have in most of the other jurisdictions. We're involved in an Ombudsman selection process right now, which again is all-party. But we met Ombudsmen there who were appointed by the Premier of the day who needed an Ombudsman, so he phoned up his best friend who ran his campaign and they had an Ombudsman.

MR. NELSON: That's fair.

MR. FOX: Well, you say that in jest. It's not fair to the Ombudsmen either, because it undermines the integrity of the process and doesn't give them the freedom to feel like they're acting on behalf of the citizens in their province, and ours does. You know, I'm not often in the position of patting the government on the back, but I think it was . . .

MR. HYLAND: Speak louder.

MR. FOX: Well, it speaks well for the process. The Legislative Offices Committee in Alberta, being an all-party committee that has an impact on the budget of the officers and does the hiring when the need arises, is a process that's not in widespread use in Canada in other provinces, and they'd all like it to be. So I want to point that out.

As well, we did attend a reception hosted by the Hon. Gilles Lamontagne, the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, at their Assembly and then a banquet for legislative Ombudsmen and elected members by the Speaker, Pierre Lorrain, again at the Quebec National Assembly. For those who haven't seen the Parliament buildings there, they're just fabulously beautiful. We had a chance to go in and see where all the controversy developed when they had a gunman in their Chamber and sort of relive a little bit of that horrible occasion.

MR. TANNAS: Yeah, I would pick up a little bit on what Derek said about the all-party thing. With most of the provinces who don't have that system, that seemed to be their envy, that that is an excellent thing, and if Alberta was the first to have an Ombudsman, we're also the first to have this all-party thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tom and I have noticed the same thing re several of the other western provinces on their Chief Electoral Officers.

MR. SIGURDSON: I would just add that I noticed at the Comprehensive Auditing Foundation that comments came about the Legislative Offices Committee of Alberta appointing the Auditor General.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Alan.

MR. HYLAND: Just a comment or question maybe to Derek and Don. When you talk about the Ombudsman going in before a complaint, going in early somewhere, that would seem to me almost like removing the effectiveness of it to deal with individuals. If you have an Ombudsman going in early and an Auditor General going in way later, what do you need the officer or the department for? There isn't a lot of space in between that they haven't covered.

MR. FOX: It's a difficult consideration. I mean, the Auditor General deals with money and the Ombudsman the complaints of citizens, but the systemic approach . . .

MR. HYLAND: Well, I guess I'm talking like in the federal system where the Auditor General makes comments about value related to money more than if it's spent right.

MR. FOX: The Ombudsman in Alberta has done investigations that can be described as systemic too. Something relating to prisoners - I just forget the exact scope of his investigation, but when they get a number of complaints that seem to indicate a particular administrative deficiency in a department, then the Ombudsman has the right to go in and make a separate report on the function of that department, and maybe something can be altered in the administration that alleviates 50 complaints every year from that point on.

MR. HYLAND: Even in that case, it was started because of the number of complaints. He didn't just go and start it. It was started because people felt there was something wrong.

MR. SIGURDSON: Yeah. The number generates the investigation.

MR. HYLAND: The number generates the investigation.

MR. FOX: If we want to go into that at length, we could debate the merits of it.

The Ombudsman in British Columbia, Steven Owen, has produced a number of reports that relate specifically to the issue of administrative fairness in government departments. It's quite a progressive approach. There is some controversy about whether it's warranted or within the legitimate jurisdiction of an Ombudsman, but he's gained a lot of credibility and done a lot of good things in that regard. I think that was part of the purpose of this conference, to discuss the implications of a sort of extended role and mandate for the legislative Ombudsman.

MR. HYLAND: In your feeling, in Quebec with that big an Ombudsman staff, do they lose the drive when the individual asks them a question, compared to ours when it's slim and lean and we get after the investigations quickly and the individual is utmost in their minds? When it gets bigger, is that lost?

MR. TANNAS: Just to sort of clarify what's big and what's bigger, there are a great many Ombudsman-like people, but they're unconnected with one another. A school may appoint one, but they aren't allied with the Ombudsman's office.

MR. HYLAND: I'm just talking legislative Ombudsmen.

MRS. GAGNON: The other thing is that there are 8 million people in Quebec. I mean, they need a hell of a lot bigger department than we do here. You know, it's a totally different population.

MR. FOX: Maybe I could answer that just by explaining one intervention I made in the debate when I got up and asked a question and spoke, I think fairly, on behalf of our committee and the way we understand the function of our office here. They were talking about getting to the point in Quebec where the government would refer proposed changes to legislation or proposed new legislation to the Ombudsman for review so an opinion could be rendered and legislation maybe altered prior to introduction to avoid administrative unfairness, if you will. I tried to make the point that legislators make laws. I mean, it's up to us to make laws. We have people to whom we turn for advice. But laws and regulations must be seen as innocent until proven guilty, because laws are only as effective as the people who interpret and implement them and not . . . I mean, I think we'd be creating an office beyond any reasonable proportions here if the Ombudsman were to have to review all proposed legislation to render a judgment in respect to its fairness. So I made the point that laws should be innocent until proven guilty, and if there is a problem in the administration and it's evidenced by citizen's complaints, then we're got a role to play. I don't know if that helps answer the question.

MR. HYLAND: If he comments on it first, how can he comment on it again in reality? If he's had initial approval, how does he comment later that it's not working?

MRS. GAGNON: Good point.

MR. HYLAND: That might be a good way if you wanted to shut an Ombudsman down, to give him a shot at it first and then he couldn't comment on it later.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any closing comments? Either Don or Derek?

MR. FOX: Well, I learned a great deal at the conference. I enjoyed the conference, and I think it fair to say that members of the committee have an important and legitimate function there in terms of providing that liaison with the Ombudsman and gaining a greater understanding of the function of the office. So I just would like to thank the committee for sending us.

MR. TANNAS: We were there as representatives of the Alberta Legislature, not as members of specific parties. We could talk about Alberta, and I think we had a lot to be proud of, given this particular office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

In preparation for tomorrow's meeting – first, are there any other . . . We've covered all the agenda items that were on the list for today. Anything anyone wishes to raise before I deal with the matter in preparation for tomorrow?

Yes, Yolande.

MRS. GAGNON: Have you set a deadline for tonight? Might I suggest that maybe we continue and get one more out of the way, since it's only 10 after 8?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we haven't gotten one out of the way, Yolande, in that tomorrow at 9 we deal with the Auditor General, and then at noon we deal with the office of the Chief Electoral Officer. We don't reconvene until 1 p.m. on Monday to deal with the office of the Ombudsman. So the three officers are scheduled, and once we've done that, it's our intent to come back and finalize our discussion on our own committee budget estimates.

MRS. GAGNON: Okay. So we can't do any more tonight, basically.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think by moving the report . . . I appreciate the work both Derek and Don did in bringing the report on the Canadian Ombudsman Conference forward so we could deal with that tonight rather than Monday. It will free up a bit of time on Monday.

MRS. GAGNON: How long do you think we'll be tomorrow?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm new at this part of the process, but we've tried to schedule ourselves so we have up to two, two and a half hours per office.

I wanted to talk a bit about the process. You'll recall we did have some preliminary discussions that we would invite – and let's use the Auditor General as an example, because he's first up. When the Auditor General comes tomorrow, I assume he will come with one or several staff individuals. We'll ask them to sit at the end of the table, give them an opportunity to make overview comments, and deal with their requests. We'll then go into a general question-and-answer session. Once we're satisfied we've asked all the questions we want to ask, we'll then thank them, excuse them, and carry on. Unless there's a very specific reason, I don't see us going in camera for any of that part of the discussion. We as a committee are performing a function with the Auditor General very similar to a function performed by a full Legislature when it's a minister – i.e., the Minister of Agriculture – and that's not done in camera. So unless there's something very sensitive that a member feels should not be raised in a particular way – I think in that case it'd be nice if we had some advance consultation, as we did tonight with the agenda items we dealt with in camera, always keeping in mind that when we're in camera, we can only discuss matters. We can seek further clarification, but we cannot move or pass motions. We must come out of camera in order to do that.

MR. HYLAND: It may only be 8 o'clock . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pardon me?

MR. HYLAND: I say it may be 8 o'clock, but some of us started in meetings this morning at 9 or 8:30. I know our two NDP members had caucus for part of the day before they got here. So it's not as if we just started at 6 and ended the day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. So again I ask: is the committee comfortable with the process whereby we would ask them in, the Auditor General would give us a brief overview, give us whatever lead-in he and his officials wish; then, using the documentation, we proceed with a question-and-answer session, much the way we do with any estimates, in a more detailed, less philosophical manner?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Louise, would you pass out . . . You'll recall that at one of our last meetings the committee asked Louise and staff in the Legislative Assembly offices to prepare a very in-depth review and a comparison of the Auditor General positions across Canada, and the same with the Ombudsman positions and the Chief Electoral Officer positions across Canada. Louise is going to distribute that breakdown to you at this time. It's very in-depth. It gives the jurisdiction, the salary range, the actual salary, the initial term, whether or not they're eligible for reappointment, the staff complement, the current budget, and the job description. You'll find there's quite a variety and variance between various jurisdictions on the duties, the scope of the function, the number of staff involved,

and so on. That's part of our responsibility as a committee in terms of reviewing. That's being distributed now for information purposes, and we do have an item on each agenda re the salary review.

MRS. GAGNON: That's great.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay? Any further questions before we adjourn?

Yes, Alan.

MR. HYLAND: I move we adjourn.

[The committee adjourned at 8:16 p.m.]

