

[Chairman: Mr. Bogle]

[10:07 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm pleased to declare open the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices meeting. Today our agenda consists of approving the minutes of our meetings of December 14, 15, 18, and 21, Approval of Attendance at 1990 Officers' Conferences, and then finally under item 5 there are two requests for transfers of funds between budget elements, one by the Chief Electoral Officer, one by the Ombudsman, and then we have a matter to deal with on Acting Ombudsman pay.

So if we could begin by going up to Approval of Agenda. Are there any items that any member would like to see added to the agenda?

MRS. GAGNON: I move that we approve the agenda.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yolande moves that we approve the agenda as presented. Ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All in favour? Carried unanimously.

If we could then move on to item 3, approval of minutes, beginning with the meeting of December 14: pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

MR. ADY: I'll move that we approve them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Jack moves that we approve the minutes as presented. Ready for the question?

MR. ADY: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question has been called. All in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

Okay. Moving on, then, to December 15: pages 1, 2, 3, 4.

MRS. GAGNON: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yolande moves. Ready for the question.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question's called. All in favour? Carried.

I'm assuming all members have had a chance to scan through the minutes in advance.

Monday, December 18: pages 1, 2, 3, 4, and the final page. Do we have a mover? Tom. Thank you. The question. Derek's nodding yes. All in favour? Approved. Thank you.

December 21: pages 1, 2, and 3.

MR. NELSON: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Stan. Thank you. Ready for the question? The question's called. All in favour? Thank you.

Moving on, then, to Business Arising from the Minutes, the first item to deal with relates to upcoming conferences. It's important to note at the outset that our committee may be altered, in terms of its makeup, by our various caucuses. This matter obviously is subject to the committee staying as it is. If there are changes made, then there would have to be consideration given to attendance at various conferences.

I did ask each member to indicate which conference he or she

would be interested in attending. A number of you have responded with suggestions. I also have a list of those who were able to attend conferences last year, and I might turn to that first. The Canadian Ombudsman Conference was attended by Derek Fox and Don Tannas. The Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation meetings were attended by Tom Sigurdson. The Council on Governmental Ethics Laws Conference was attended by John Drobot. Alan Hyland had indicated he wished to go and was registered but at the last minute was forced to cancel and, therefore, did not attend the conference.

We have requests for conferences this year. Stan Nelson and Derek Fox have indicated they would like to attend the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws Conference. At the moment I don't have any suggestions by members for the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation meetings. For the Canadian Ombudsman Conference I have Yolande Gagnon and Tom Sigurdson. For the Conference of Legislative Auditors I have Jack Ady and myself.

Now, I note in those not present today that both Don Tannas and John Drobot have attended previous conferences. The one where there are openings, the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation, is not scheduled until November. If it's the wish of the committee, we could approve the attendance as listed to date for the three conferences and hold open the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation. As you know, unless there's some special emergency, we won't be meeting when the House is sitting. Sometime in late June or early July, I assume, we would be coming back as a committee. We could then address the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation conference and its attendance.

MRS. GAGNON: I would move the attendance at the conferences as listed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Further discussion on the motion? Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question has been called. All in favour? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

MR. FOX: Under Business Arising from the Minutes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. FOX: I wonder if it would be appropriate to find out how we're doing with our budget as a committee approaching year-end.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

MR. FOX: And find out whether or not our submissions for the coming fiscal year were approved through Members' Services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excellent point. Louise was able to bring me up to date. As you note, we had budgeted for 1989-90 and . . . That included the special warrant?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The budget from 1989-90 did not include

the special warrant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did not include the special warrant.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: But then Members' Services . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You should lead us through this. Obviously, you understand it better than I do.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Okay. The original figure that had been approved by the committee last year was \$32,952 for the 1989-90 fiscal year. Because of the Members' Services motions in August approving increased committee rates, et cetera, there was a need for a special warrant, which was given to the committee, in the total of \$5,941, which then gave the committee an increased figure of \$38,893 in budgeted funds. For the 1989-90 actual expenditures you'll see that the committee is very close to it. Even with today's expenses we'll still come in under budget. We're still also expecting a refund from the COGEL conference, from Mr. Hyland's cancellation, of \$350 U.S. So the committee will have enough funds to operate this year.

MR. FOX: Well, nothing to note, Mr. Chairman. An anticipated expenditure of \$5,300 is due to the extra cost of the independent audit of the Auditor General's office, which, all things considered, means we were almost bang on in terms of our budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. I think we can give thanks to Louise for running a tight ship in terms of forecasting and the actual expenditures. Any other questions on the information presented? Derek, that was a good suggestion that we review the matter. Okay. It's given as information, and we don't require a motion.

MR. FOX: Do we have information, Mr. Chairman, on the coming year's budget in terms of what was approved, or has that been dealt with yet by Members' Services?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, it has been. Our budget was approved as submitted. We have a budget total of \$78,972 for the 1990-91 year. Travel expenses are up, and payments to MLAs are up. Think we should get extra copies of that?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: I'll get them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you like a copy?

MR. FOX: I'd appreciate that.

MRS. GAGNON: A question on that. It's double what we spent this year. Surely the increases and so on would not double. What are you projecting?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The travel expenses went up considerably. If you recall last year, one conference was not attended at all, and one was being held in Edmonton, so the expenses were really low.

MRS. GAGNON: Oh, I see.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: This coming year, all conferences are pretty far away - Newfoundland, Alaska - so the fees went up

there. We also have registration fees that they never had before, and of course the payment to MLAs went up as well.

MRS. GAGNON: Also, this assumes that if members wish to bring their spouses at committee expense, it's allowed, but it's not absolutely necessary. It's at our discretion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, that's correct.

MRS. GAGNON: But two times last year's budget does seem like a lot.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One of the issues that Members' Services wrestles with is that if - and I'll use an example. During the current fiscal year the Commonwealth Parliamentary conference was held, I think, in Barbados. Next year it's in Zimbabwe in Africa. The cost of getting people to the conference and other expenses causes there to be quite a bump in the budget for conferences, and that's one of the things we wrestle with. If there's a conference held in Alberta, then obviously the costs come way down. The next year, if it's in Halifax, you're looking at quite an increase.

MRS. GAGNON: I would suggest that there be a note, possibly in our minutes, just explaining the projected budget. It should be self-evident, but in case it isn't. Because when people look at the bottom line and see that it's doubled, they wonder how fiscally responsible we are.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was our intent to deal with this at the first meeting following the approval of our budget. We submitted a budget to Members' Services Committee, as did other standing and select committees. The Members' Services Committee dealt with all budgets and then presented it to the Assembly. Assuming it's approved, then when we have our meeting post session, it would be appropriate to deal with it. What I would ask Louise to do is to get a copy of this sheet and distribute it to all members for their information, because the figures contained are figures in the minutes we've approved today from December 14 through 21, part of our budgetary process.

Anything else on budgets? Okay, then. Moving on, the Chief Electoral Officer is on his way, so we'll move down to item (b), Transfer of Funds Between Budget Elements - Ombudsman. What I would recommend to the committee is that we go in camera for items (b) and (c), discuss the matters very fully, and then come back out to make our appropriate motions. Do we have a motion to go in camera?

MR. ADY: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Jack. All in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The committee met in camera from 10:22 a.m. to 11:11 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're going to deal with Transfer of Funds Between Budget Elements - Ombudsman. Were there any remarks you wanted to make, Mr. Ledgerwood, before we move in camera? We will deal with the detailed discussion in camera. Then we come back out of camera to make whatever appropriate motions are needed.

MR. LEDGERWOOD: No, not at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Motion to move in camera? Is that your point, Derek, or something else?

MR. FOX: I'm just wondering technically if we have a quorum until Mr. Nelson returns.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, there he is.

MR. FOX: Then I move that the committee move in camera.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All in favour? Carried.

[The committee met in camera from 11:13 a.m. to 11:23 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll deal with the motion. We'll then take a short break, and if Harley's not ready, we'll come back.

MR. ADY: We're going to deal with this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. We've had a detailed explanation by the Chief Electoral Officer of a request to transfer funds from one budget element to another. Are we ready for a motion? Yes, Tom.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Chairman, I would move that \$27,000 be transferred from the Enumerations element to the Manpower element of the Chief Electoral Officer's budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Discussion on the motion? Are you ready for the question?

MR. ADY: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question has been called. All in favour? Let the record show it's approved unanimously. Thank you very much.

MR. LEDGERWOOD: Thank you very much. A technical point. It's actually the Administration element. I don't know whether you want to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Administration element? All right, let the record show it's the Administration element and not Manpower.

MR. FOX: I thought that's what I heard Tom say.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you.

[The committee recessed from 11:25 to 11:43 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to go back in camera?

MR. NELSON: I'll move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thanks, Stan. In favour? Great.

[The committee met in camera from 11:43 to 11:54 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are we ready for a motion? Jack.

MR. ADY: Yes. With reference to the budget of the Om-

budsman, I would move that the committee authorize the transfer of surplus funds of up to \$94,000 from group 1, Manpower, to groups 2 and 3, Materials and Supplies and Fixed Assets respectively.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ready for the question?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question's been called. All in favour? Carried unanimously. To further matters.

MR. FOX: I'd like to make a motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. FOX: I move that the committee approve a salary adjustment for the person who served as Acting Ombudsman from the period September 16, '89 to January 31, '90, and that that salary adjustment reflect the change in position from manager III to the lowest level of executive manager II, understanding that that salary adjustment for the four and a half months would be in the neighbourhood of \$6,700.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Discussion on the motion?

MR. FOX: May I speak to the motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, please do.

MR. FOX: I think it's clear, appropriate recognition - this would be minimum recognition - by the committee of the additional responsibilities incurred by the senior investigator in the absence of an Ombudsman, and I make that recommendation to the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Further discussion? Ready for the question?

MR. SIGURDSON: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question's been called. All in favour? Carried unanimously. Thank you.
Now to another matter. Yes?

MR. FOX: I'd like to raise, perhaps for discussion at our next meeting, Mr. Chairman . . . I think the motion we passed at an earlier meeting requiring officers to appear before the committee to request transfer of funds is a good one, especially when we're dealing with significant numbers of dollars. But there may be times when there are minimum requests of transfers just required to accommodate sort of the normal administrative things that go on in the functioning of any office. There may be occasions when calling the entire committee is not justified for the amount of dollars being moved, and I think it appropriate that when the deliberations aren't particularly significant, the chairman have the power to make some decisions on behalf of the committee.

I mean, it may be that an officer would find a need to move \$2,000 year-end from one element to another, otherwise somebody doesn't get paid. That's a fairly minor item, and the chairman should be given some discretionary power to deal with that sort of thing, as long as the committee is apprised. So I just

raise that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we discuss that at our next regular meeting?

MR. FOX: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The practice we followed this year was that there was a request from the Chief Electoral Officer for an opportunity to explain to the committee why he felt a transfer was required. We then contacted the other two offices to see if there were any requests for a meeting to be held now, which is close to year-end. Personally, I feel more comfortable if it's a committee decision. That was the intent of the motions we agreed to. I think with some good planning by the various offices, as long as we're prepared to meet with them late in the fiscal year, the system should work. But let's allow that matter to be discussed at a regular meeting.

MR. FOX: Sure. We usually have enough agenda items that a meeting is warranted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And I'm assuming that the committee is comfortable with our practice of last year that unless there is some emergent need, we will not be calling meetings while the House is sitting. So our next regular meeting would occur sometime after the House has risen.

Is there any other business to be raised today? Are you ready for a motion to adjourn?

MR. NELSON: I'll move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by Stan. All in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The committee adjourned at 11:59 a.m.]