

## Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

1:08 p.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Hierath]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we'll get started here. I'll call the meeting to order. I would like to receive approval of the agenda.

MR. BRASSARD: I so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.  
We have a copy of the January 11 minutes. Don.

DR. MASSEY: I move that they be adopted as printed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good. All those in favour? Carried.

Now I would like to welcome Don Salmon and Andy Wingate to our meeting. I'll turn it over to you, Don, at this time.

MR. SALMON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding of this meeting, in reviewing the transcript, was that there were particularly five matters or areas that the committee asked for clarification on. I've listed them in the letter, and attached to that letter that you'll have in the packet, I'm sure, are 11 pages of supporting information that will explain, at least hopefully, a little more clearly in answer to the questions that have been raised as I digested the transcript from the last meeting.

I have made a couple of comments about the manpower and salaries and wages and staff mix in the letter and also commented briefly on professional development and travel, which one of the members wanted addressed together. We've done that rather than show as the normal processes for her and for others' understanding.

The other three areas I haven't commented on in the letter because I believe the supporting information will help to explain.

If we were to go to the first page of the supporting information that's headed with salaries and wages changes, we've done a direct comparison of the base year of the 1992-93 actual with the 1994-95 estimate, and it's shown the 1993-94 forecast as a continuity factor for the committee to see where the changes are. At the bottom of that schedule are the positions in the office indicating the trend and the reductions that are taking place and an indication of the full-time equivalents based on percentages by some categories and also in a way which I believe will eliminate some of the more difficult understanding of a particular page that we had put in last time, where we only compared to two years and we needed a little bit more actual and a little bit more of a trend. The percentages are listed on the extreme right.

We felt that it would be of help if we described the staff mix a little, so we went back and took the actual chargeable audit hours that we have in the office for 1993. This is on the second page. We compared two different things: our agent-hours as they've done certain audits for us and the staff mix that they use, indicating the students and other staff versus the qualified, if you're looking at that, that the qualified staff would be 1 to about .82 of students and other supporting staff. The management to all auditor staff is 1 to 4.04. In our case we're a little higher. Our qualified people are 1 to 1.73 students, and the management is 1 to 5.51. The systems auditing, as we've explained before, is lower than that because we are of course in more of a specialty area and

you need to have the more qualified individuals involved with the systems work. We recognize, though, that as we have and as the firms are moving towards much more risk-based auditing and looking at the kind of staff that would provide the most efficient attest audits as possible, that the staff mix does tend to go down in relationship to support staff, students, and other, and the more qualified people are there because of the professional judgment that is necessary in completing the audits after the risk assessments are done.

So that's the first item that was raised in the transcript and described in the letter. I believe some of the individuals that actually raised the question aren't here today. At least what we say will go on record. If you have any questions on that particular area before we move on to professional development, we'd be happy to answer them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions?  
Don.

DR. MASSEY: Yes. The previous submission had a breakdown in terms of positions. Do you have that with you? In terms of office management committee, the directors, the managers: the breakdown that we were given.

MR. SALMON: The original submission that we'd given the committee still stands. All we did here in these two pages was present them in a more understandable way. We seem to have had some discussion on what was a manager versus what isn't a manager, and we were trying to get away from that because this is an audit office, and we're trying to get into where we are. So the breakdown is directors and above. If you go to the directors and above -- I don't know; it's probably on the second or third page of the first submission -- you can pick up the directors and the management committee at being about 30 or 32 for the 1993-94 estimate.

DR. MASSEY: You had 32 for '94-95.

MR. SALMON: Yes. If you look at the bottom . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: On this new one we have 23.

MR. WINGATE: Yes. The reason for that is that we have some of the management committee and some of the directors in the old support division.

MR. SALMON: We don't show here on this one the audit support part. You've got to recognize that there are some directors that are in audit support, so these are the actual audit division, as it says. Now, in the audit support division on page 1 that line has some directors in it, and it also has an Assistant Auditor General in there. We just didn't break it out because that was not the same question as was raised, and that was concerning the auditing.

DR. MASSEY: I find, though, that the new one gives us less information than the old one. One of the concerns that was raised was that the balance or the hit of the cuts seemed to be -- the office management, directors, and managers seemed to be escaping cuts, particularly when compared to student auditors and on down. That was a major concern; at least it was a major concern to me as I looked at it.

MR. SALMON: I think I can answer that by saying that we were comparing in the previous one -- and that's why in writing the

letter I made it very clear that the previous salaries and wages, because of the confusion, I was representing in a different way, going back to the base year of 1992-93. I believe it was a mistake last time in not showing the '92-93 base year in this particular one that we submitted last time. So if you are trying to compare, you're not going to find the comparability. I made it very clear in the letter that they aren't comparable if we go back to the base year because we weren't talking about the base year when we were here before. Rather than try to explain it all again the way it was, it's a lot easier to describe the mix. If you look at the mix in the audit division, you'll find that the managers and above have had a decrease of 13 percent since the base year, and the qualified, which are those individuals who move from student ranks to the qualification of CA or CMA or whatever -- the students and the qualified have had a reduction of 14 percent. So there's not a lot of difference if you go back to the base year.

DR. MASSEY: Does it mean that from 1993-94 to 1994-95 there will be 11.26 less student auditors? Is that information still accurate?

**1:18**

MR. SALMON: That's still accurate, but you have to remember that the reductions have taken place over a two-year period and we were trying to go back to the base year and then describe what the estimates were in '94-95. It comes out about the same. We have had reductions in the senior levels in the earlier years. The '92-93 year was where we took most of the hit in a management level, in the directors and above.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions?

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Chairman, just to echo what Don is saying, I guess our concern was more in terms of the mix. It's not maybe accurate for us to tell you how to run your business, because you know how to run your business better than I do, but the consistent theme that we get in terms of all departments and in talking to the people in our constituencies is that when we're looking at reductions, start at the top and peel away the administration or the management sector as much as possible. I think that's the direction that we're really coming from.

MR. SALMON: I understand that, and I also understand that you want to see that now, but I think we were looking at too narrow a thing last time to be able to see that. Now we've done that. The senior people are going down. They took a very, very large drop in 1992-93, and that's what this shows. There was a considerable drop in students in '93-94, and that's where we got that difference last time. So we're about even right now. I think we will still see some reduction in students in the normal course of getting this risk-based auditing in place. Also, as I've indicated in the letter and on page 7, I've said that

increases in efficiency will justify some downsizing at senior . . . levels in the next three years [in addition to what has been done in the last two]. We do not anticipate attrition occurring . . . To effect downsizing [in the next couple of years] it will likely be necessary to provide [some] severance . . . For these reasons we consider . . .

So I think the trend is there. I believe there will be some further downsizing. We have lost a number of directors, and we've been able to move several directors out. In fact, in this particular year, within the last month, another director has also been moved out of the office, and it was at our direction rather than his. So I think the trend is there. It's just that possibly again we may have confused the issue a little bit last time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don, do you have another question?

DR. MASSEY: I guess the confusion is the base line that we're to operate from. What is the understanding in terms of the cutting? I thought that it was following the 1993 election that the orders and the direction for reducing budgets went out and that one might assume the 1993-94 budgets were the ones that were to be the base that they were to operate from. Is that incorrect?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, it's incorrect.

DR. MASSEY: Okay; so it's 1992-1993.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right. The estimates.

Do you want to continue then, Don?

MR. SALMON: Okay; thank you.

In the professional development area the transcript indicated a request to show the fees and travel together. So on page 3 we have provided a breakdown of fees for professional development and for the meetings that are held and several conferences -- there are only three particularly -- and also related the travel that's associated with that.

I believe pages 4 and 5 have been directed to explaining the conferences and the reasons why we attend those and what the professional development is and what some of the meetings are that we also have attended. We have been very cautious and tried to minimize the numbers that attend some of these things, because you don't need to have an overpowering of a group, but we do have some correlation with other offices and with some professional organizations where we required one, two, and sometimes three, depending on whether we're making a presentation at the conference or whatever.

This, I believe, is basically what was asked for in the transcript. If there are any questions, we're happy to answer.

MR. BRASSARD: I apologize that I wasn't here at the last meeting, Mr. Salmon. I presumed that the attendance at these meetings is commensurate with the responsibilities that you have.

MR. SALMON: Yes. All of them are. We wouldn't spend the money unless we felt that it was needed and worth while with respect to the office. Many of the meetings are attended by senior people. I think one question was: it looks like none of the students are getting benefits from this. This really isn't what this professional area is. It's the qualified people, in some cases for professional development. Of course, for meetings with other legislative auditors you're not going to send students. You're really going to make sure that you've got the right people in attendance. That's the basis of the explanations on the attached pages.

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions?

We'll go on to the next one, Don.

MR. SALMON: Yes. The next question, Mr. Chairman, was with respect to agents. Interestingly enough the question is always, "Why have agents in the large centres?" and so forth. Page 6 answers the question, "Why does the Auditor General use agents?" Primarily it is to handle the peak resource demand of the office, particularly with so many audits being at March 31. We've also been able to establish a reduced travel budget and less

staff by having agents doing some of our out-of-town work where the agents are particularly located. We're using agents in Peace River, and we're using agents in the southern Alberta centres doing some of our work. Yet it is essential to have agents within the large cities as well, based on the number of staff that we have maintained over the years. As our staff has been adjusted down for various efficiencies that have occurred, at the same time we've looked at that in relationship to the amount of work we can have the agents do as well as to provide for that important peak resource demand that's so essential at March 31. So it also answered the questions: what are the benefits of using agents, and why do agent fees vary?

Naturally as an auditor we could give you the technical terms, but we've tried to write it in such a way that you can recognize the difference possibly between, say, two universities. Particularly we've demonstrated it here: that could be taken into account in the different sizes of irrigation districts in southern Alberta as well as in looking at colleges that we do across the province. Fees will vary because of the size and the risks that are there and other matters that arise in planning and developing the audit itself.

If there are some questions other than what we've said here, we'd be happy to answer them.

MR. FRIEDEL: My question would be relating to the number of agents that are used in Edmonton, considering that there are a large number of these institutions that are literally in your own backyard. One of the logics seems to be travel and such. I realize that you're talking about a lot of these jobs coming on maybe at a similar time, but since they are in Edmonton -- and I'm certain that in-house rates would be cheaper than contracted rates -- would it not be possible to arrange staffing in such a way that these could be handled and leave the contracting of agents to the more remote areas where you could eliminate to a certain extent the travel and the various expenses?

MR. SALMON: Well, are you raising the question about having staff at a peak period of time and then not having the staff otherwise? I mean, that's the question that arises. We've sort of maintained a complement that we could utilize in a balance in relationship to attest audits that have certain year-ends versus using that same staff in completing systems audits where we can make a contribution to improving the financial administration in the province by making recommendations for change. Now, what happened last year with the change to releasing the public accounts in September, it put some additional pressures on us to have the audits done, and yet we've managed it. This year we've got additional pressure because of the new deadline of the government, which again we're not arguing with and is a good thing from the point of view of having information available, that the consolidated financial statements of the province would be out by June. So if you take those kinds of crunches, the agents become even more valuable in being able to get the demand of that closeness to March.

1:28

Now, the other possibility in the future is that Treasury has even indicated that they would prefer to see the colleges all at the same year-end as well. Well, right now colleges are June, and that helps us to spread the year-end work a little bit. It would be a difficult time to be able to have the professional staff you need to do the year-ends yourself even in Edmonton or in Calgary. Yet at the same time we don't want to get too much staff that we then have to determine what to do with them. Maybe you don't need

all that staff in the other period of your life cycle, the year cycle. It has worked out well. I recognize that maybe our fees are a little bit higher, but also we have been very stringent in negotiating with them even a lower fee than what they would normally charge if they could charge whatever they chose to charge, whatever the private sector bears. They are actually underwriting a certain amount of the fee even though it isn't as low as ours in some cases.

MR. FRIEDEL: I guess the question, though, is: is it not going to be the same kind of a problem for the contracted company? A firm that has the manpower qualifications to audit such as the University of Alberta or AADC -- I've obviously picked up a couple of the large numbers here -- when that audit is done, they are going to have the same problem. They must somehow or other manage the fluctuation in their staff requirements to what would be off-season for these projects.

MR. SALMON: Oh, you mean themselves, in working for us?

MR. FRIEDEL: Yeah. Do not the fees that you pay, then, likely reflect the fact that you're paying a premium rate at a crunch season? Would that -- I want to say this properly -- reflect a proper saving, I guess, the most efficient use of the dollars? Your concerns about what you would do with those staff members away from peak season are going to be the same problem that the private contracted firm faces as well.

MR. SALMON: Andrew would like to make a comment.

Except our agenda is somewhat different than theirs. They aren't auditing all year-round. They do a lot of other things besides, where ours is based on an audit mandate of not only test audits but also systems audits, so we're auditing year-round. All of our staff's involved in auditing. They can sometimes have a way in which they can diversify into other things. Most of them, their auditing workloads would be much smaller than their full workloads are, so they can juggle some of the other things a little easier than we can.

Go ahead.

MR. WINGATE: You raise an interesting question. It's interesting in that our work fits particularly well with the private sector. They're busy immediately after Christmas and at other times in the year, but around March they're not particularly busy. So giving them work from our office which starts at the end of March and goes through to June and July . . .

MR. SALMON: They like it because of that.

MR. WINGATE: It's something that has appealed to them, and that gives us a leg up in negotiating a lower rate than perhaps we would otherwise be able to achieve. If we were asking them to provide services at a peak demand time for them, they'd say, "Well, yes, we can provide it, but you'll have to pay top dollar for it." But that's not the case when we're asking for those services in March.

Getting back to your base question, I think we follow a policy of staffing for a level where we can keep everyone productively employed year-round and that the peak demands should be satisfied by either contracting in staff or contracting with the private sector, because that seems to be the cheapest answer to the problem. Now, obviously you can constantly fine-tune the amount of work that you're putting out to agents or the amount of contract staff that you're hiring into the office to do the work, but

generally speaking, the objective has been to staff at a level where you can keep everyone productively employed for the whole year and then meet your peak demands by going to agents or contract staff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Roy, do you have a question?

MR. BRASSARD: Yes. Recognizing that the 26,700 hours is approximately -- what? -- 12 full-time equivalents and given the number of staff you have on hand -- I see you've reduced that by 22 and a half people approximately -- and recognizing the point you just raised that the private sector is more readily available at the time when you most need them, I'm surprised that you don't use contract staff more. Given the demands that are placed on this particular office and that it's really difficult to budget for, I would have thought that the greatest benefit you have is the ability to contract out some of the services that you require for audit purposes or whatever. I guess the question is: do you see the greater use in the future of agents' time or not? Do you see a trend where you're going to be able to take more advantage of the private sector and contract more services?

MR. SALMON: I don't think we're saying that we're really asking for more dollars. We're really trying to manage what we have and trying to utilize the dollars in the best way we can achieve it through the use of the agencies.

I thought maybe you might be thinking of contract. We tried to go to the contract base, where you just take an individual, bring an individual in, and push them back out, but they're hard to get ahold of. So it has been easier to use the agents, where they would come as a team and work for us and then produce the audit.

MR. BRASSARD: It was a poor choice of words.

MR. SALMON: Yeah. If we were going to expand the agency work, we would have to justify the extra cost. I think that's what was just mentioned before. So if we can keep reducing or keep it down and utilize a balance within the office as the office's staff goes down and as attest audits possibly go down to some extent, we would then use less agency dollars.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you done, Roy?

We have Frank and then Harry and then Gary again.

MR. BRUSEKER: On an annual average, on a year-to-year basis, does your workload remain: one year is sort of comparable to the next year, compared to the previous year, and so on? Like, over the whole year you audit basically the same number of institutions and boards and so on on an annual basis from one year to the next?

MR. SALMON: Well, it isn't always constant, because we inherit by legislation additional work, and we lose by privatization other work. It does change over the years. You might just take the current year. We've been doing the audit of the pension fund of the province. They've now established several boards, and all those boards will now require separate audits and possibly financial statements as well as those boards come into place. So there are changes that are occurring all the time, but basically the attest auditing, whichever we have, whether it's a variety of several audits, one way or the other they're basically the same. A systems auditing, of course, is on a selected basis as we determine issues to audit. We use the time available outside of the attest

time to do that work, and that can vary throughout the year depending on the availability of staff.

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess I want to follow up on Gary's question earlier on with respect to the audits that you hire agents for. How many audits does the office here in Edmonton do outside of Edmonton? Or is that mostly done by agents?

1:38

MR. SALMON: It's mostly done by agents. There are several colleges that we're still doing, that we don't have an agency for. We have a Calgary office, and they're able to do the other things that we don't have enough agencies to do in the Calgary area. Most of the colleges and most of the universities are out to agents. Also, irrigation districts are out except for very small ones, which aren't time consuming for staff and are also very difficult to put out to agents because it's not worth the additional cost sizewise.

MR. WINGATE: Where we have got a college that we're auditing, it's the result of not being able to get a middle agent.

MR. SALMON: We don't have an agent to do it that we would feel comfortable with locationwise and so forth.

MR. WINGATE: But getting back to your base question: not a great deal.

MR. SALMON: If we need to do, say, a college audit in Fairview, there's no reason to hire somebody in Edmonton to go up there and do that. We just try to put an efficient team together and get up there and get it done as quickly as we can. Where there are no firms in that particular location, then we can't really put it out. In Peace River we do the Northland School Division, and that's out. If you've seen that one, we're using an agency in Peace River.

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess I'm looking at the figure of 12,000 hours for audits located in Edmonton, and I recognize that would probably translate into five or six staff positions. I think the figure you mentioned before was that the agents do 15 percent of the audits at 20 percent of the cost or something along that line.

MR. SALMON: You've got to remember that that's an overall average, and you have to take all of them into account to get that kind of figure.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

MR. SALMON: The crunch is that the ones that are done in Edmonton at that particular time of year are an important part of getting the work done so that we can finalize for the year-end of the government. So they fall right into line in fitting into our year-ends and consolidations.

MR. BRUSEKER: Is there not some way of juggling the year-ends and trying to spread the workload over the year then, where you try to even out your load? As I hear you talking about it, it sounds like you've got tremendous peaks and valleys in your workload. Is there not some way of altering year-ends of different institutions?

MR. SALMON: Well, we do have. College year-ends are June, but there is some discussion of changing that.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, but now you're saying that all college year-ends are at June. Can we not change half of them to be in September?

MR. SALMON: Well, I can't change those. That would become a matter of government policy, whether they would want to suggest that.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, wouldn't that help make your office more efficient?

MR. SALMON: Well, if it's a case of us doing all of the audits, we could certainly figure out a way in which all the year-ends could be changed so we'd be busy doing attest audits all the time and never do any systems audits. We could certainly do that. But we do need additional time separate and apart from the attest audits in order to complete the mandate of doing some systems work where we can identify, control weaknesses, et cetera, to help improve the operations of the government. I mean, it isn't the case that the peaks and valleys are there; the peaks and valleys are important so we have the time to do the full mandate that we have.

MR. WINGATE: It has an initial appeal, moving the year-ends to various points throughout the year, but then you get hit with this consolidation problem, that everything is consolidated at March year-end. So then you'd have to go through a lot of extra work to move up the results to March anyway and look for any significant transactions since the year-end. It's just an apparent saving; I think that in fact it would probably result, if anything, in slightly more work.

MR. SALMON: If Treasury had their way on consolidations, they would actually prefer to have all of the financial organizations come into the consolidated statements all at the same year-end. It's a lot simpler from the point of view of consolidation to have them all at the same year-end.

MR. WINGATE: There are things that we've done. I mean, we've introduced interim auditing far more than we used to have. Most of the auditing work was conducted at the year-end, close to the year-end. Now we've introduced a much higher incidence of interim audit work. You know, halfway through the year we go in and audit the first half of the year, so there's less work to do at the final. That's smoothed the load as well.

MR. SALMON: This does shift the timing that we do the systems work; doesn't it, Andrew?

MR. WINGATE: Right.

MR. SALMON: Attests have statutory year-end limitations and have to be done by certain deadlines, and the rest of the time we can arrange and plan the other kind of auditing that we do throughout the year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Harry.

MR. SOHAL: The main part of my question has been answered. Regarding agents, here it shows that you spent more than 12,000 hours to do audits in Edmonton and more than 4,000 hours in Calgary. Why is there that big a difference?

MR. SALMON: There's more work in Edmonton than there is in Calgary because the primary load of audit work is within the city of Edmonton itself. The number of audits we have is much, much higher in Edmonton than it is in Calgary. It's the location.

MR. SOHAL: All government departments are here.

MR. SALMON: And agencies, hospitals. We have them in Calgary, but there are a lot more in Edmonton in that regard as well.

MR. FRIEDEL: I don't want to overly belabour the point, but the comparable cost in Edmonton -- and let's use just Edmonton for the sake of the point I'm making. Do you have sort of the equivalent cost per hour of what a contract senior auditor or manager would cost your department versus the same calibre of person on a contract basis?

MR. SALMON: Like, from a firm?

MR. FRIEDEL: Yeah.

MR. SALMON: Yes, we know the breakdown.

MR. FRIEDEL: How do they compare? Is there a percentage rate or a dollar rate that the contract service would be higher than the in-house work? Do you have a rough idea?

MR. SALMON: Yeah, go ahead and comment.

MR. WINGATE: I just want to make sure I've got the question right. You're comparing the cost of a grade of staff used by an agent with that same grade of staff used in our office.

MR. FRIEDEL: What it would actually cost your office to contract, say, an individual senior auditor or manager.

MR. SALMON: From a firm.

MR. FRIEDEL: From an outside firm.

MR. WINGATE: And compare that cost with our own cost.

MR. FRIEDEL: Compare that cost to doing it in-house. Is there a percentage difference? I mean, I realize it's going to cost somewhat more, but do you have an idea of what that percentage might be or the dollar rate?

MR. WINGATE: Yes, there is a difference. The agents are more expensive. The difference isn't constant. At the student level the difference is small; at the senior level the difference is a great deal because our senior people cost very much less than a partner, say. It's graded from there down to student.

MR. SALMON: They're about even at the student level.

MR. FRIEDEL: That's why I suggested using a senior auditor or the manager level.

MR. SALMON: We have done some of that over the years, and it's still higher than what we would pay. We've also found it's more difficult to manage. One year we decided that we would attempt to hire two managers from two different firms. We gave them a particular audit to do, and we gave them our staff. It was

a little bit difficult to supervise it because they were coming in without the background of the way the office operated. There was a learning curve there. We found that it was a lot more work, and it cost us almost as much as we can do on an average audit where we can get an average worked out with the team from the firm. If we can negotiate that lower rate as low as possible, we're just as well off. We could get a better job, in that light, because they were using their own staff instead of our own. So we didn't continue that too long, because again you're getting personalities and maybe those two particular ones weren't the best. It didn't work out as smoothly as we would have liked. We can control the agencies by teams a lot easier and get a more efficient job even though it does cost us a little bit more.

MR. FRIEDEL: But as a result of using it by teams, you don't then have a breakdown of what the comparable cost would be.

MR. SALMON: Yeah, they have to give us a full breakdown of each level person. Yeah, we know. Before they even start, we have a contract and we have a scope developed as to the levels of staff and the hourly charges that they're going to give it to us for. We negotiate that before we'll let them go to work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's the end of my questions list. Do you want to move on to number 4, severance pay?

MR. SALMON: Okay. This again was one of the questions that was raised and briefly discussed while we were there. It was raised at the end to bring back for today. I again believe that the explanation here is an indication of what has occurred from 1990 to 1994, with the changes in staff and what we've incurred in relationship to severance pay and also the early voluntary options program payments. The reason for including the money within supply and services rather than manpower is explained in the last paragraph on page 7, where I believe it was in about 1992-93 that we had the early voluntary option -- that was also the year of NovAtel -- and we had a transfer. We came to the committee and asked for a transfer because we didn't have enough money in supply and services. You can't make early voluntary option payments out of manpower. It has to be out of the other category. So it has been a normal practice to budget there. We haven't gone beyond '94-95 because of the explanation that I put into the second to last paragraph on page 7.

**1:48**

Further, I do believe and I have indicated in the letter that I really feel that the '94-95 budget that we have is a reasonable one that we can legitimately function with to perform the role that we have. I believe it gets a little gray as we move on. I think that if there were going to be any reductions possibly in senior management or in the director levels or whatever, the new Auditor General needs to have that opportunity to look at these people and decide how he would like to organize. We didn't extend the dollars, expecting, possibly not knowing again what the government load will be in relationship to our work in another year. He would be able to return in a year from now to this committee and be a lot more sure of what the budget will be for '95-96, recognizing that there are some factors that are out there with respect to change within government that can not only decrease our load but also can increase it. With that increase and decrease it's very hard to predict at this stage exactly where we're going to be in a year or two from now. So that was the basis of that. If you have any questions, I'd be happy to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I've got three here: Gary Friedel, Gary Dickson, and Don Massey.

MR. FRIEDEL: My question, I realize, may be a little overly general. You say that 15 people have left in the last four years. The amount involved seems to be kind of high. I know that you're budgeting for probably some downsizing, so that's outside of my question. The number of people that would be leaving because they don't work out strikes me as being maybe a little on the high side. Do you not have a probationary period or some other kind of a mechanism that would not cost to get rid of people that aren't producing or don't work within the system, rather than hiring them on and finding out that it's an expensive procedure to do?

MR. SALMON: Well, I accept the question. I believe the simple way to answer it possibly would be to recognize that there is a probationary period of about a year. If you get a staff member on and you don't want to make him a permanent employee, you can let him go, and he can just leave. That does occur and has occurred in the past. But you have to also just think about it in relationship to sometimes they become longtime employees in positions where there has been enough change within the office and where they are not working out, and they may have a number of years behind them. The only way you can do that is with this method.

MR. FRIEDEL: Can you give me an example of a change in the office that would make the person undesirable or not working out?

MR. SALMON: Well, sometimes individuals are unable to keep up with changing times as you make adjustments to the way you do audits, as you move on to risk-based auditing, which is much different from transaction testing, that has been around for a long time, unable to adjust to doing systems audits, where you can develop issues and work towards change. They've maybe made a contribution in some other areas and were doing well, but they aren't able to fit in and work and make a contribution to the team. The teams are measuring very much their efficiency, and it just starts to show. As this shows and you recognize they've got 10 or 15 years behind them, there's no alternative other than to move them. Otherwise, you're just going to carry on with a lot less productivity. You'd just rather take the hit now than go on. I think that too many times in government those decisions haven't been made. We've tried to make those decisions. Even though it looks like dollars are being spent unwisely, in the long haul I think we save a lot of dollars.

MR. FRIEDEL: Well, has the bulk of these, then, people been on staff for quite some time or relatively early in their career?

MR. SALMON: We had two in '93-94 that had been on for -- oh, I think one was about 10 years, and one was about 12 or 13 years. One was nonmanagement staff, and one was at the director level.

The large amount there is that early voluntary thing that took place before, where you sort of had the directive that came. You really had to let them go if they fit a certain category and if you were willing to let the positions go as well. We felt that there were some senior people that could go, and because of their years there were some fairly hefty payments. That's why that \$254,000 looks a little high for six people.

MR. DICKSON: I appreciated the explanation that we got in the package here, but I'm one of the people that had some difficulty with this last time around. Just a couple of thoughts.

Firstly, it seems to me that in tough times it puts a premium on personnel management. That's as big a challenge as any other part of managing a business or a department when dollars are scarce. It seems to me that when you get into wrongful dismissal situations -- correct me if I'm wrong -- you're not paying solicitor/client costs because you have a Department of Justice counsel, who represents . . .

MR. SALMON: Who advises.

MR. DICKSON: Well, in effect, if it's litigated, you don't typically retain outside counsel. The Department of Justice would have a civil lawyer do it. So your exposure there, just on a dollars and cents basis -- you're not paying legal fees. Your exposure, then, is the amount of the judgment, and taxed party and party costs would be awarded against you by the court if you're unsuccessful.

MR. SALMON: If you fired somebody and didn't pay them off.

MR. DICKSON: It's an observation that when you've got a payroll of \$6.1 million, any manager may like to have a fund available for this kind of thing, but it seems to me that we changed the focus. The focus ought to be on good personnel management, on performance evaluations, on trying within your organization to find job descriptions to suit the talents of the people you've got if somebody isn't able to keep up. I guess my comment is that I can understand it would be nice to have in the budget, but it seems to me it's one of those things that I have a tough time seeing as a necessary or as an essential.

MR. SALMON: I would agree with you. We certainly try to do all of those things with respect to appraisals and so forth, adjusting them to wherever they can go. The difficulty, of course, is that when you've tried all those things and you've done all the appraisals and you still come up with the answer that they're not making a contribution, there isn't really an awful lot you can do. So you go through the steps. The general counsel, then, in the province has been that you don't just dismiss, that you actually do settle and have them sign. It's all quiet and done, and they're gone. It's all done on the basis of what they were going to get if they took you to court and spent all those costs and all the rest of it. The process is pretty well standard in that sense. We may never spend a hundred thousand. It may never be spent. It's a case of whether or not it be there in case it's needed.

In this case, as I'm estimating the potential of a new man and considering that he's going to reorganize and maybe want to move some or downsize in the senior levels -- I don't know; I mean, I'm not going to predict what his answer is. This hundred thousand is not geared at any individual, so I'm not going to give him answers to that. That's already taken care of. We've handled those things, what we've shown you here in the 15 people that have left. At the same time, I guess you could take it either way. If you're going to dismiss somebody at the end of the year, you don't have any money in the manpower. If you dismiss them at the beginning of the year, you may have money from what was budgeted for that particular salary and would be able to handle it.

MR. WINGATE: I've just got a very simple observation. If through efficiency you spot that you can reduce at a senior level and you determine that you're going to reduce at the senior level,

what exactly do you do when the individual concerned doesn't want to leave? Now, the whole idea of dealing with the problem is that you offer them a severance package. Otherwise, you're not going to get rid of those people. I mean, if you're downsizing, which is what we're talking about in the future, and we're downsizing as a result of increased efficiency, if you get a situation at the senior level where you can do without that service because you have achieved increased efficiency, when you approach that person and they don't want to retire or leave, what exactly can you do about it except offer severance pay?

1:58

MR. DICKSON: What you can do . . . Oh, go ahead. Finish off.

MR. WINGATE: The other thing to do is to say: right; we'll only do it at the beginning of the year, and we'll do a transfer sideways and put it into severance pay, and that will cover the whole thing.

MR. SALMON: Supply and services.

MR. WINGATE: Yes, you could do it that way, but it seems more logical if you fully anticipate paying severance pay to budget it.

MR. DICKSON: I guess what I'm suggesting is what I've seen large corporations doing now. In many respects they're becoming more aggressive in terms of the way they approach severance pay. For example, there's no obligation to do lump sum payments. You're perfectly within your rights as an employer to say: "Sorry; things aren't working. We don't have just cause to terminate you. This is an employer's decision. We're going to give you a notice period. You're gone at the end of whatever the original notice period, and your lawyer can advise you what that is." In the meantime they can be doing something else, and you pay that over a period of time and set the lump sum.

MR. SALMON: Yeah, that's happened.

MR. DICKSON: I guess all I'm suggesting is that what you're talking about is the way large companies, I know, used to deal with this. It was just easier to cut a . . .

MR. WINGATE: It's the way the government is currently dealing with it.

MR. SALMON: It's no different from what they're doing now.

MR. WINGATE: There are two programs currently offered by the government under these circumstances. One is that you can get up to 43 weeks; the other is that you get a period of notice during which you have preferential hiring rights in the rest of government, and then you can hunt further, followed by a further 180 days preferential hiring rights. So there are two schemes at the moment which I think characterize what we've been debating. You were debating one side, and I was debating the other. Yes, you can do it that way.

MR. SALMON: I think if the government chose to do this other thing, that could be done as well. I think they've been doing it in a clean swipe -- you know, done -- rather than . . . I had a brother-in-law who got a year-and-a-half's pay from Xerox and got it by month. He was free to look for a job and write résumés and do all the other things.

MR. BRASSARD: It doesn't work.

MR. SALMON: No, it's tough.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don Massey, you have a question?

DR. MASSEY: Is there no redundancy clause in the contracts so that if the job changes or disappears people can be let go?

MR. SALMON: Well, not everybody is under contract.

DR. MASSEY: What kind of agreement would the auditors have received?

MR. SALMON: They're all permanent employees of the government in that sense. They have nobody under contract at the present time.

DR. MASSEY: And there are no redundancy provisions?

MR. SALMON: No.

DR. MASSEY: It seems to me that's the easiest way.

MR. SALMON: Yeah. Well, that might be another future way of doing it. Absolutely.

DR. MASSEY: Far cheaper than budgeting.

MR. SALMON: Our students have contracts. If they fail to meet their training requirements, we can cancel their contracts. But once they move into the realm of qualified and so forth after a period of time, if we want to recommend them for permanent status, they become employees of the government through that sense that we follow the same processes as the government.

MR. DICKSON: Help me with this. I understood that the programs referred to a moment ago, the retirement package -- I thought the term was up on that. I didn't realize that was still an ongoing program, that you as an office would have to, you know, fulfill your obligations if somebody wanted to exercise that.

MR. SALMON: The voluntary program is over as of March '94 -- the voluntary one. If you want to reduce a position and don't want to let this person go, you can . . . But the first one is not up, it's continuing, you know, where you can settle by going and checking with a justice as to how much you need to pay this person based on the status you're in and so forth. That's an ongoing.

MR. DICKSON: What's the statutory authority for that formula you're talking about for the ongoing program? Is that in the public service administration Act? Where does that come from?

MR. WINGATE: Yes. Actually, it was last talked about in a Transition 2 paper. What's changed is that the program under voluntary separation, as Don said, expires this March, but it's being picked up by a separation payment program in those instances where it's not voluntary.

MR. SALMON: The separation program in the government used to be about six months' pay. If you're going through the other route, it's now the same as this voluntary payment is up to: 43 based on the number of years of service. I think that might be just a matter of time.

MR. WINGATE: For instance, with the layoffs at social services, the severance payments . . .

MR. SALMON: If you had years enough you could still get 43 months.

MR. WINGATE: . . . would be under this program that we've just been talking about.

MR. SALMON: Yeah, not the voluntary one, because this is where you'll get some cuts. But it's up to that 43 as well.

MR. DICKSON: So the cabinet fixes the program, and there's no additional money made available to departments or legislative offices. If you wish to deal with it, you are just bound by the rules and anybody who chooses to exercise that option.

MR. SALMON: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We'll move along here. We've got one more point of clarification on computer services.

MR. SALMON: Yes, this is on pages 8, 9, 10, and 11. I think we got a little long-winded on this one, but we felt maybe it was important to give a full explanation of the program we're proposing, commencing in the current year with a small amount. We would actually hire out the programming of our software. We even tried to explain in simple terms, as best we could, the specific programs we're talking about and what we propose would be the estimated cost. Now, all these things are subject to everything happening according to the time element ahead of us, and we've sort of projected what we would hope to achieve in the next three years. That meant, of course, that when senior programmers within the office that we had on staff and that assisted us for a number of years had left, we chose not to hire but to proceed on this basis rather than to actually hire in-house.

Rather than me running through it individually, if you have any particular questions on any of them, our main explanation of why it is is on page 8: "Why is the Office proposing to spend \$550,000 on contract programming over four years?" That first paragraph pretty well spells out what it is, and the last statement on that page talks about some of the things we expect to achieve in the way of reductions in our three-year plan.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Are there any questions of Don on this one? Gary Dickson.

MR. DICKSON: I think I'm the one that raised this last time around, and once again I appreciate the explanation and the detail you've put out. There's not too much material here from my perspective.

You know, when you talked about what your process is and the sequencing of decisions you go through, if you had to rank these things from your first choice to fourth or last choice . . . In terms of the systems, this presumably is everything on your shopping list that you feel you'd like to have to make your office as effective as possible.

MR. SALMON: Yes, but these are not new things.

MR. DICKSON: Right.

MR. SALMON: The Probe is old, and we need to redo it to design it for a microcomputer. AMS is presently utilized in the



office, and this is an enhancement to that program. Apex was purchased from a national firm to assist in our risk-based auditing, and we've got the source code, which is unusual -- the only reason we got that source code is because we're government rather than in competition, because another firm couldn't buy it -- in order that we can adapt it to our type of auditing. There was a need to make some of those changes, so that's what the other one is. The RMS is to do with record management, which is something we haven't really started yet.

MR. WINGATE: I think you are building up to asking a question about priorities.

MR. DICKSON: Precisely. I mean, I understand you'd like to have all of these things, but I assume Probe is the most important.

MR. SALMON: Probe is essential.

MR. DICKSON: That's the key?

MR. SALMON: Absolutely.

MR. WINGATE: If I could characterize it this way, Probe is really the engine of our office. Probe is important because we find things with it; we find things that should be corrected. The other systems, AMS, Apex, and RMS, are methods by which we can reduce our operating costs within the office -- right? -- but they don't by themselves find things. So there's no question that Probe is the most important. I gave you a few examples of things we've found, but there are many examples, and in some cases they're in the millions of dollars where we've found situations which have been corrected. So it has the capacity to save the province a great deal of money.

**2:08**

MR. DICKSON: But I understand the savings are past '97, aren't they? I mean, as I look at your projections and so on, you talk about being able to save repair costs and maintenance costs and that sort of thing. It looks to me like that's the end of the installation, and there's a three-year period to install all these software programs.

MR. WINGATE: Okay. Now, I was in the process of saying that Probe saves money because it saves the province money. The replacement for Probe isn't going to save our office a great deal of money. I mean, yes, we've got the \$50,000 a year in maintenance costs, but that's fairly marginal. But during the life of Probe, it's almost bound to find many millions of dollars where the province can save money. Now, that's quite different from the savings that can be achieved with AMS, Apex, and RMS. There we're talking about reducing our operating costs. That's why we're saying that in achieving the reductions in budgets that we're looking at, we need those systems.

MR. DICKSON: The reason maybe I misunderstood was that when I looked at the top of page 10, the first reason you cite for redevelopment of Probe is an annual saving of \$50,000 in maintenance costs.

MR. SALMON: That's because we're doing away with a minicomputer. We're moving on to a micro.

MR. WINGATE: Quite a logical thing to say. But existing Probe is finding stuff; new Probe will find stuff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions? Okay. Are there any other questions in general terms of Don and Andrew? On the bigger question? If not, thank you for coming, Don and Andrew.

MR. SALMON: Thank you very much. I appreciate being here today.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks for the material.

MR. WINGATE: I hope we answered your questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you want to take a quick break before we come back, feel free. Coffee or restroom, whatever.

[The committee adjourned from 2:11 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We're going to call the meeting to order, please. I would like someone to make a motion in regards to the Auditor General's budget.

MR. BRASSARD: I would so move, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, Roy.

Is there any discussion? Roy is making a motion that we accept the Auditor General's proposed budget estimates for '94-95. Is there any discussion on that?

Gary?

MR. DICKSON: I appreciate the work the people in the Auditor General's office went to to give us the additional information. I still have a problem with the severance pay. I know it's a \$100,000 item, but it seems to me it suggests an attitude that they're not cutting all the costs, that everything other than nonnecessary costs -- and I've heard the explanation. I'm still not persuaded that that hundred thousand dollars is necessary.

I think any manager of a large organization would enjoy the luxury of having an account like that on the side to be able to use. I think sometimes we say to managers and personnel people: "It's up to you; if you can't sort out personnel problems, it's coming out of your personnel budget generally. We're not going to afford you a separate insurance fund over here on the side to protect against bad management." I think what it does is create a bit of a precedent because it allows people who don't do the job at the front end in terms of screening employees, monitoring, and assessing employee performance to some extent to bail out at the back end.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, I'm sensitive to the comments. I think it's good management philosophy. It's a responsible budget. When you know that you're going to downsize the department by 20 some odd people, it's logical to put aside enough money to accomplish that. I recognize that in some cases notice in lieu of severance has been applied, but my experience has been that that really doesn't work very well. You end up with a disgruntled employee on your hands for the next X number of months that really is not working with you but quite often is working against you. Particularly in the extremely sensitive position of Auditor General, I would think that when you downsize the department, you would want to shed the employee. The best way to do that is to offer them a severance package. If you intend to do that, then the most responsible way to handle it is to build it into the budget. So I have no difficulty with that item being in there at all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don.

DR. MASSEY: Well, I'm still convinced that the top administration is escaping the cuts, and recasting and collapsing categories only goes to try to hide what's actually happening. So I'm still unhappy about that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion on Roy's motion?

MRS. FRITZ: On whose? I'm sorry. I thought there was an amendment on the floor. Did you make an amendment, Gary?

MR. DICKSON: No. I guess I'm attempting to determine whether there is any support for my concerns.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any further discussion?

MRS. FRITZ: Well, I'd like to make an amendment then. It's not related to the previous discussion, but I'd like to amend the professional development and related travel. It's not a significant amendment. It's simply a change to amend it by \$10,000. That's on page 3. The reason I do that -- you know, I appreciate seeing that it was more consolidated as it came before us today, and I was able to see where the moneys were being placed. Given the economic times, I know we've had other departments that have cut back their attendance at conferences, and I think this department could do the same. That would leave enough moneys in the budget, I believe, to allow for program development and courses and also conferences continuing to be attended. So my amendment is

to decrease this area of the budget by \$10,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To decrease the professional development and related travel by \$10,000?

MRS. FRITZ: Professional development, meetings with other legislative auditors, and professional conferences.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any discussion on that amendment? If not, I'll call for the question. All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? Carried.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, committee.

I have one further amendment, Mr. Chairman, if it's still on discussion on the motion.

MR. BRASSARD: Are you amending the amendment now?

MRS. FRITZ: No. That's been voted on. This is on your main motion.

I'd also like to amend the computer services contract programming. We're being asked for over half a million dollars in this budget for computer services. I think through questions that were asked it was clear that the Probe system, \$270,000, is important. In fact, they've put here, "Probe is our most important system." I would like to see that supported, but the other areas I would not. I'm not certain how you'd like to see that amendment placed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So your amendment, then, would state that the budget exclude everything other than the funding for Probe.

MRS. FRITZ: Uh huh.

MR. BRASSARD: My interpretation of the Probe program is that it's a key and vital part of the system. As identified on page 9, "Probe is our most important system." Working with computers,

we all know that you must upgrade them on a regular basis just to stay level.

MRS. FRITZ: That's the one I'd like to see stay. I'd like to see the Probe program, the \$270,000 identified by the Auditor General, as the program that is funded.

MR. BRASSARD: To the exclusion of the audit management system and the Apex and the RMS, records management.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next I have Harry. Harry had a question, then Vic, then Gary Dickson, then Gary Friedel.

Did you have a question, Harry?

MR. SOHAL: Yeah. My question is that the Auditor General was here. We could have discussed all these things which Yvonne is now proposing to eliminate. We can't simply say once they're gone, "Eliminate all these." We should have a discussion with those people on why we want to discriminate, what the importance of all these programs is.

MRS. FRITZ: I heard him say that, and I wasn't convinced they were important. The one I was convinced of was Probe. He said that clearly Probe . . . He was asked: how would you prioritize these? He's been asking for these changes for several years, and the system that was the most important, in my understanding, was Probe. I was convinced by the data that was put forward as to what Probe has actually been involved with. That's here on page 9. I wasn't convinced the others before us are important at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Vic, and then Gary Dickson.

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Chairman, my comments, I guess, are similar to Harry's. I think that in the motion we've already passed, the last motion and this one, we're tinkering with the budget. Our direction is to make sure that the Auditor General comes in with the requested reductions. He's got a budget to manage, and there's going to be some fluctuation in the numbers as he sees fit. I would expect that that would happen. For us to sit and tinker with his numbers as presented -- we've had the opportunity to quiz him. We've had the opportunity to tell him what our thoughts were on it. I think now for us to get into the nitty-gritty of telling him what numbers he can have on what lines is not our mandate.

2:25

MRS. FRITZ: Well, I guess I need clarification. Are we here to rubber-stamp the budget after a bit of dialogue? Is that our role? Like, I might be misunderstanding.

MR. BRASSARD: Pardon me. Mr. Chairman, I take exception to that. We've had two days with this gentlemen to challenge his budget. I don't feel we're rubber-stamping anything. If we wanted to challenge these, in fairness to the Auditor General, as Harry pointed out, we should have done so in his presence so he could justify them or remove them. I think at this point we have approved his budget. Now we're going back and . . .

MRS. FRITZ: I guess I just need clarification then. I didn't know that we had approved the budget.

MR. BRASSARD: No, we haven't in this instance, but we've had every opportunity to challenge it.

MRS. FRITZ: My understanding of the last meeting that we were at was that the computer services area was questioned in detail. This information was brought back to us. There were other questions asked of the Auditor General. My understanding is that our involvement now is to discuss that and to discuss the budget as it's presented here and as to whether or not we would see any changes. If that's incorrect, then I would like to have that clarified. By rubber-stamping what I mean simply is we put forward a motion, and we approve the motion. If we're to do that, then we shouldn't be having this further discussion.

MR. DICKSON: I understand the reason for this amendment. I had in particular been concerned with this computer area. I'd asked some questions. I've received a response. We have the representation from the Auditor General that the reason the other computer systems are being supported is because it's going to save us money, it's going to save taxpayers' money, and it's going to allow the Auditor General to do the same or more with fewer taxpayers' dollars. I'm impressed by that, and I don't want to discourage that sort of initiative on the part of the Auditor General.

In fact I think, Yvonne, I'm going to have to vote against your amendment not because I'm interested in rubber-stamping anything but because the Auditor General has come out as the person who's researched these things and said that these things are going to save his office money, and he's accountable for those goals and those objectives. Next year and the year after and four years from now those things are going to be measured against the standard that he's trying to achieve. So I'm going to vote against your amendment not because I want to rubber-stamp anything but because I think he's come forward with an explanation and a positive reason why this warrants worth.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Gary Friedel, then Frank.

MR. FRIEDEL: Okay. I mentioned at the last meeting and I still kind of feel that in spite of this budget having attained sort of the basic reduction requirements that were set out by the Treasury Board, this is still a relatively generous budget. There seems to be things in here that are more of a want list than a need list. Nevertheless, I don't think on the basis of one or two hours of discussion that we could really take the arbitrary step of saying a particular item is or is not needed, that we could just delete and say that that is a priority when we don't have the necessary insight. I have no problems with the intent of what you're saying, Yvonne, but if we're going to do something like that, perhaps we should serve notice that maybe next year additional reductions would be required, but let it be done from within the system where the priorities could be established. Then our objective would be to make the budget a little leaner, if that's what we want. I don't think we're really qualified, and even if we were in this short time, that we could make the objective decision that this would ask us to do.

MRS. FRITZ: I can see what you're saying is relative in that you would reduce the global budget rather than make changes for areas such as this one, which I could agree with, but I would say that if it is generous now, then we should be making those changes this year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah. I guess basically I'm agreeing with the previous two, the Gary/Gary show. You know, carpenters work

faster with power tools. The power tools of an Auditor General are computers, and to take away his power tools -- he says the APEX system "will reduce the cost of audits." With respect to the Records Management System he says, "Benefits . . . are achieved through reductions in the time necessary to produce, document, and review audit evidence." Those sound like pretty powerful reasons for us to support the Auditor General's request for those systems, so I'm going to be voting in favour that he retain those moneys.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Should we have a vote on Yvonne's amendment?

MRS. FRITZ: Just to close, then, on the amendment. It's not that I disagree with the discussion that's before us, Mr. Chairman, but from what I saw presented in the last two meetings and what I read here, I think the important area of computer services is Probe and that a half a million dollars to expand computer services any further than that is excessive.

I also agree with what was put forward: that perhaps in the future what our committee should be doing, then, is thinking as budgets are being presented of simply a global reduction if we feel the budget is excessive, rather than looking at specific areas.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Diane, would you like to read back Yvonne's amendment, please?

MRS. SHUMYLA: Okay. Amended by Mrs. Fritz:  
we'd like to see the Probe system, at \$270,000, being funded but exclusion of other computer systems.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of that amendment? Opposed? Defeated.

Now we'll vote on Roy's motion, which is accepting Don Salmon's budgetary proposals as amended. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

We are going to one way or another be out of here by 3:30. We have a select committee meeting at 3:30. I will proceed here with some haste, but if I'm moving too fast, let me know.

The next item is Voluntary Salary Decreases for the Officers of the Legislative Assembly. I met this morning with the four officers. The discussion that went on with the officers -- Diane, did you pass out a copy of that? Would you do that?

MRS. SHUMYLA: I'll do that right now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The discussion that went on with the officers in January was that we would like to have the officers have a further voluntary decrease in their salaries on January 1 in conjunction with our government's policy of 5 percent rollbacks. We were asking the officers for a 3 percent rollback. They had taken a 2 percent rollback last spring, and we were asking them for a voluntary further 3 percent rollback effective January 1. From my meeting with these four gentlemen this morning, as you can see from the letter, they are willing to volunteer a 3 percent reduction effective April 1 rather than January 1. So I'll open up any discussion you wish to have in this regard. I have Harry's hand up so far and Frank's.

MR. SOHAL: Just for clarification. Why did they take a 2 percent rollback last spring?

2:35

MR. CHAIRMAN: Their salaries are hooked to deputy ministers. Officers' salaries run in conjunction with the deputy ministers' salaries. The deputy ministers took 2 percent last spring, and they took 3 percent effective January 1, so that's why we are asking the officers to take a voluntary rollback of 3 percent: because the deputies did.

So I had Harry. Who else? Frank next, and then Yvonne, and then Vic.

MR. BRUSEKER: So this will just bring them, then, to a total 5 percent reduction.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. BRUSEKER: I suppose it's just a minor detail. When you calculate the 5 percent, is it going to be calculated in one shot or in a 2 percent and then a 3 percent bite, or do you know?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the 2 percent bite happened in the spring.

MR. BRUSEKER: A year ago.

MR. CHAIRMAN: March, I think.

MR. BRUSEKER: So it's 3 percent more off of what they're currently making.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah. Thank you.

MRS. FRITZ: Is this because their contract is April 1?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that why they're saying that they'll do it on April 1?

MRS. FRITZ: Because it fell in line with their contract?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There were quite a few reasons that they wanted to do it April 1. One is that it appears that their staff are going to take a 5 percent rollback effective April 1. Of course, the other reason that they gave me was that the deputy ministers were given a 5 percent increase in June of 1991. They were coming on line for a 5 percent increase following the deputy ministers, then a freeze came on in 1991, and they didn't get 5 percent. So they didn't follow the deputies in that regard. Now we're asking them to take a 5 percent hit. The deputies had already had a 5 percent increase, and they never got that increase. So there's that foggy area of some of the past history that I wasn't around for but apparently is verifiable that that did in fact happen. So that was the other reason they were giving me the pitch this morning on why they would be willing to accept a voluntary rollback effective April 1.

So now I have Vic on the list and then Gary Dickson.

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to move that we accept their voluntary 3 percent reduction but to be effective January 1, '94, to make it consistent with the deputy ministers.

As the leaders of this province and in the positions that they have, I think it would be quite appropriate for them to show the way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I'll finish with my speaking order here. Gary Dickson, do you want to speak on the motion?

MR. DICKSON: I'm going to be speaking against the motion. Given the sort of vulnerability that these legislative officers have, I appreciate their agreement to the 3 percent reduction in salary. It seems appropriate that it should be at the beginning of the government's fiscal year.

I just want to ask one question, Mr. Chairman. Sometimes these kinds of things go on and there are understandings by certain people that if they accept a salary rollback, somehow there'll be some compensatory adjustment in their budgets somewhere down the road. Have there been any representations made to any of the four legislative officers, some sort of consideration down the road for the 3 percent reduction?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you talking about, like, days off without pay?

MR. DICKSON: No. I just want to know for next year whether we or you on behalf of the committee or someone on behalf of the government has held out that if there were a 3 percent reduction in their salaries at this time, there'd be an increase next year or some other adjustment down the road. I just want to be clear on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the government is trying to roll back all the people that derive their wages from government by 5 percent. It's just that way.

MR. DICKSON: So there'd be no inducement or incentive or some type of commitment to any of our legislative officers that there'd be some other compensation if they accepted the 3 percent reduction?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not that I know of.

MR. DICKSON: Okay. Thank you.

MR. FRIEDEL: I find myself agreeing all too often with Gary Dickson lately, and I think that's a very dangerous precedent. I think these people are on contract rather than a salary . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, not all of them. Two of them are and two of them aren't.

MR. FRIEDEL: Okay. That's what I meant. Some of them are. The fact that they have chosen to take a contract cut, I'm rather inclined not to look a gift horse in the mouth and say that it was negotiated by yourself. I'm not sure that us sitting here arbitrarily saying, "Well, let's hit them for another three months" is really going to solve very much by way of finances. It probably would seem a little antagonistic. So I think I would be opposed to the January 1 date.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yvonne.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the previous speaker. If negotiations have already occurred -- and I appreciate that it would take place April 1. Also I think it is showing leadership if it takes place at the same time as the staff are being asked to take that reduction as well, which you indicated was April 1. I think it's more evenhanded to allow it to occur as it's outlined here to us in this letter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But I need to point out that this wasn't anything negotiated.

MRS. FRITZ: Oh, it wasn't? Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. In January I asked them if they would take a voluntary 3 percent rollback effective January 1. So there wasn't any negotiating here. These four gentlemen got together and decided that, yes, in fact they will take a 3 percent rollback, but they're saying: no, not on January 1. They're saying: we will take a rollback on April 1.

MRS. FRITZ: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you had negotiated that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, there was no negotiating. I didn't want to speak on behalf of this committee at all. This committee will decide by discussion in public what we want to do. No, there wasn't any negotiating going on. What happened was that when the government arbitrarily decided to roll back the deputy ministers -- the wages of these gentlemen are tied to the deputy ministers, so the word came from Treasury that since the deputy ministers were rolled back by 3 percent, I was to ask the officers for a voluntary rollback of 3 percent, quotation mark, voluntary. Roy.

MR. BRASSARD: Our fiscal year begins April 1. It has been the basis for almost all of our budget discussion, and I would speak against making an exception in this case.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion? Do you want to close the debate, Victor, or do you feel it slipping?

Okay. Then I'll call the question. All those in favour of Victor's motion? Opposed? Defeated.

MR. BRASSARD: Call for the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We voted on it.

MR. BRASSARD: You don't have a motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was the motion.

MR. BRASSARD: Okay. We need a motion, then, to accept.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would assume that by defeating Vic's motion that it is accepted, but if you want to make a motion accepting the officers' . . .

MR. BRASSARD: I move:  
voluntary wage rollback effective April 1.

**2:45**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any discussion? If not, all those in favour? Just hold it. Gary Dickson.

MR. DICKSON: I wonder if the text of the motion reflects that in fact we appreciate the leadership shown by these four officers.

MR. BRASSARD: Certainly. In the spirit of co-operation I'd be happy to add that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion on Roy's motion? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda is the Office of the Ethics Commissioner, Supplementary Budget Information. Which tab is that on Diane?

MRS. SHUMYLA: Six.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Six. Don Massey, do you have a question?

DR. MASSEY: Do you want -- what? -- a motion that it be received as information? Or how do you want to dispose of it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Quickly, I hope.

DR. MASSEY: That's what I was trying to do.

MR. DICKSON: I was going to move that we approve the revised budget submitted by the Ethics Commissioner with his letter of January 25, 1994.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any discussion? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Now, item 7 is the Expiry of Term of the Chief Electoral Officer. I will just give you a little bit of a background of what has happened up to this point. I've had a couple conversations with the Chief Electoral Officer. His term expires a year after the election, which will be June 16, 1994. My first conversation with Pat Ledgerwood was that he was hoping that maybe he would be able to work for a few months to finish up some loose ends that wouldn't be finished by the middle of June. He was thinking he would have maybe a temporary appointment for six months. He's in the process of changing office buildings, and there were a couple of other things that he wanted to tie up, finish up loose ends. So I investigated and Diane investigated the possibilities of doing that, and when we went to Parliamentary Counsel Frank Work, he made a judgment that under the Act it was not possible to do a six-month extension.

At this point, in a conversation that I had this morning with Mr. Ledgerwood, what he would like to do, then, is -- his approach would be that he would like to have his name put in for reappointment, and what he would do then is finish up and resign early. Now, from the standpoint of Mr. Work again -- well, that would be up to him whether he resigned early or not. That would be his option. The appointment would be the set term again under the legislation. So I'm bringing that up for this committee to just have a discussion today, if we wish, or just for your information, whatever you wish.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, I don't think an extension is appropriate. Mr. Ledgerwood has had lots of time. We've dealt with that. I would be opposed to entering into such an arrangement, because I think the Chief Electoral Officer has his work cut out for him preparing for the next election. I think he needs all the time that he has at his disposal. To leave it up to the discretion of a reappointed Chief Electoral Officer, in this case without a fixed time attached to that, such as a one-year maximum, would be wrong, and I'm not prepared to give a contract for one year. So I would be opposed to that. I think we go ahead and find a replacement and let him get on with the job.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion?

DR. MASSEY: Just a question. Was his proposal that he would go through the interview process?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's up to us. His term is up on June 16. That's up to this committee, whether we go through the process of a search committee, and he knows that. I mean, he's aware that, you know, the term is open. Whether this committee decides to reappoint him without going to the public in looking for a new Chief Electoral Officer is up to this committee. I'm a rookie at this, but I think that's what . . . So we will decide, I think, this committee, what we want to do. If there's a motion that needs to come through, that's fine.

Gary Dickson.

MR. DICKSON: I wonder if the motion isn't premature, Mr. Chairman. I guess I start from the basis that Mr. Ledgerwood probably has more experience and insight into the electoral process than most of the people in the country. There are very few people, I think, that have had his experience with all of the changes and the boundary realignment in Alberta. He's got a wealth of experience, and I want to make sure that Albertans get as much benefit from that as we can.

My suggestion would be that if he's interested in looking at some other options, he meet with the committee and we discuss it, because there may be a number of ways of coming at it, not just the two alternatives that have been mentioned. I'd frankly appreciate the opportunity to meet with Mr. Ledgerwood to get some better sense of what yet has to be done, of what sort of timing is involved to finish off. I understand Mr. Brassard's perspective, but again I think that if you've got somebody with such a wealth of knowledge and background information, if it meant a few additional months, that may be the most cost-effective way of being able to get the additional assistance and whatever work is being done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. What we'll do, if that's all right with the committee -- we certainly have a little bit of time here. I realize that we are going to go into session. This committee can meet when we're in session. Fine. I mean, there's no problem doing that. Historically we don't, but I know we can. We will not let time fly by us. I think that probably you're right, Gary, that we meet with the Chief Electoral Officer and have a discussion with him in this regard. If that's fine with the committee, that's what we'll look forward to doing.

Okay. Item 8 here. Diane is requesting we go in camera.

[The committee met in camera from 2:53 p.m. to 2:58 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next item is Conference Attendance. Maybe I will turn that over to Diane. There are a couple of conferences coming up that she might want to explain to the members. I guess that's tab 9.

MRS. SHUMYLA: Number 9. Just to note, the committee may be interested to know that our budget was approved at Members' Services Committee last week, and there were no changes made to our standing committee budget. Included in our budget are two conferences. One is in Charlottetown, July 10 to 12. The national Ombudsmen conference is, I would expect, probably November. I haven't received a date yet. The full details of whether all that conference is approved by that area, I haven't received that yet either. Typically in the past what I understand is that for people going to conferences, we had usually used seat sales. As Charlottetown is July, which seems like a long ways away, if the committee doesn't meet for a while, we may want to think as to which committee member may attend. This is in conjunction with the Auditor General's office. There'll probably be people from the

Public Accounts Committee, and the new Auditor General may be there.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Chairman, all of us, I think, looking around the table, except for Don Massey are outside Edmonton, and we're all accumulating these big fat amounts of bonus points when we fly. Is this not the sort of thing . . .

MR. DOERKSEN: We are?

MR. DICKSON: Sorry; except for those of us who responsibly motor in from Red Deer.

Is this not what you use the bonus points for, this sort of thing? I mean, isn't that the pattern? Certainly all the Calgary members who use the airbus frequently build up these tens of thousands of bonus points. Isn't this the sort of thing we use them for?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You and Roy are the only guys who have been here before. I don't know.

MR. DICKSON: Frank actually is the veteran.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Frank was here too.

MR. BRUSEKER: Roy's the veteran. It was '86.

Yes, I've been here a lot.

MR. BRASSARD: Traditionally they have used them for that, that I know of.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Diane, do you want to answer that?

MRS. SHUMYLA: This is something I would check into, but my understanding was that we weren't allowed to use bonus points traveling on government of Alberta business. That was my understanding when I had traveled, and it was brought up before with the old Legislative Offices Committee.

MR. BRASSARD: I think the exception would be where it's appropriate to have a spouse accompany you. You could use them to bring your spouse with you, but I don't think that's ever been used either.

MR. DICKSON: Can somebody tell me why? I mean, why wouldn't we use it for legislative travel? I mean, I thought that was the whole point of it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's certainly worth checking out, Gary. I think it's a very good point, and I think it's worth checking out, so we'll certainly check it out.

Roy?

MR. BRASSARD: Also, I'd like to know the significance of the conference, number one. Secondly, how many other people are going? I don't think we need a convention down there. So if we've already got the Auditor going and someone from Public Accounts, I don't think we need someone from this committee to duplicate those efforts. I would just like to know a little bit more about these two and whether or not we have someone attending the Ombudsmen's conference. I think that was the one that was open, is my understanding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, one of the reasons from my perspective here is that if you've got staff going to these things -- elected

people are running staff people. Personally, as chairman of this group, I would like to learn a little more about what some of the people we're supposed to be supervising do. I would. I don't know when and where, but if you're going to be the boss over someone, you'd bloody well better know what you're the boss over. I don't know whether these conventions -- I've never been to one -- are any good or not. When I look back in the past, if they weren't any good, these guys were wasting their money. If they were good, then we better take part in them.

MR. BRASSARD: If we go back in our minutes, I think I've already recommended that the chairman attend the second one, the Ombudsmen conference. But the public accounts conference, I think we will have the chairman from the Public Accounts there.

MR. DICKSON: I think that if we're going to seriously discuss whether we're sending somebody, we need some more information on what's going on and who is attending. We're going to be in the House for probably three months here in another week or so. My suggestion: we defer this to another meeting when there's some reasonable backup information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good. We'll check on the travel points and discuss your point, Roy, and Gary's.  
Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just a question. Looking back in 1993, I notice that there were two conferences, one on government ethics laws and the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation conference, that were not approved by Members' Services. Was that just for that year or in perpetuity, or do you know?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Diane knows.

MRS. SHUMYLA: What happened is those two conferences were taken out at the Members' Services Committee meeting for Legislative Offices and not put back in. One reason that the COGEL conference was taken out was because that particular year it was in the United States and I think the committees were being discouraged to travel outside of Canada.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. So we'll check into that, and if anyone is interested in attending either one of these conferences, talk to me and we will bring it back at the next meeting and discuss it further.

MR. BRASSARD: If the secretary will go back to the minutes, I do believe I had recommended that you attend one of those conferences as chairman of this committee. I thought we had agreed to that.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, and I thought we had agreed that Mr. Sohal was going to go to the Ombudsmen conference. Then he couldn't make it, and we were in session, and things kind of fell apart.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Our Whip wouldn't let anybody from this committee go on our side, and you guys weren't interested, so Diane went.

MR. DICKSON: I didn't understand we'd ever addressed 1994 conferences, Roy.

MR. BRASSARD: No, you're right. It was '93. Sorry about that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We'll bring it up at the next meeting for sure.

What else did we have on the agenda? Oh, a complainant protection thing. What tab is that on, 10?

MR. BRASSARD: I would move that we accept that for information, or is there an action?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, Gary.

MR. DICKSON: I'm delighted to see it on the agenda, Mr. Chairman, and I thank you for the attachment. I'd like to see us go further. This is one of these things that's been kicking around, the recommendation from Harley Johnson, for I don't know how many years, at least two, maybe longer. I'd like to see us take some action. My thought would be that rather than simply accepting it for information, I'd like to see us recommend specific action; in other words, make a recommendation to the Executive Council that the Ombudsman Act be amended to in fact incorporate the kind of complainant protection that's sought by our Ombudsman. I'm happy to speak to it.

MR. BRASSARD: Can I just ask you a question then? Do you limit that vulnerable person's protection legislation to his office? Is that what you're suggesting in this instance, because you want to expand his role to include this protection for people coming to him specifically? It was my understanding that you would far sooner see an Act in place that would cover all the circumstances.

MR. DICKSON: Quite. But I'm saying that in the meantime this committee -- I mean, I think other members look to our committee to have a better understanding of what the Ombudsman is doing and some of the problems. There may well be private members' Bills introduced, but my hope would be that as a committee attempting to support our legislative officers when they've got a problem they've run into and they think they need some legislative change, the whole committee could champion that issue on behalf of the legislative officer, that we'd have whatever influence would follow from a recommendation of the committee, if that were to be the case.

3:08

Mr. Chairman, I think there's actually a lot that could be said about complainant protection, and I'm happy to get into it. I don't know whether there's sufficient time, though, for members to thoughtfully review this and then make a considered decision today. I wonder if we set a meeting in the early part of session -- we specifically asked people to come prepared to speak to this. I'll do a motion in advance that I'll circulate to all committee members to focus discussion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Any comments on what Gary is proposing here? Vic and then Harry.

MR. DOERKSEN: Well, I certainly agree that I'm not prepared to discuss it at length and have not given it enough detailed thought. But I'd like to throw a question back to you, because you seem to know a lot about this. It talks here on page 7 of "all provincial human rights legislation and the federal human rights legislation have a complainant protection clause [already]." Are we reinventing something here?

MR. DICKSON: No. Complainant protection in the IRPA or its provincial counterparts only means that if you make a complaint under that Act, you can't be penalized. There can't be some kind of job action or disciplinary action taken against you.

What the Ombudsman is talking about is on a broader scale. If you have employees who see a serious government wrongdoing or breaches, illegal behaviour or whatever, they would be able to come to the Ombudsman and raise those things without losing their job. That's what we're talking about here. So it wouldn't be just the Ombudsman Act and Ombudsman investigations; it would be somewhat broader. I mean, that would be a decision for us to make, Victor. You might decide it would only relate to complaints to the Ombudsman, say it relates to any one of the government departments or just certain ones.

MR. DOERKSEN: All right.

MR. SOHAL: Philosophically I agree that there should be some kind of complainant protection, but the larger question is how we do it. I mean, how are we going to protect the inmate who is repeatedly raped if he reports to his superiors? How do we protect these kinds of things?

MR. DICKSON: I'll just take a stab at that. In a number of U.S. jurisdictions, actually most of them, in Ontario, and then in two other Canadian provinces they have legislation and there's a process. One of the ones that would work in Alberta is to say that if you're a civil servant and there's a problem, you'd be able to raise it with the Ombudsman and have the comfort of knowing that you could not get tossed out on your ear or whatever the next day.

MR. BRASSARD: You'd be able to raise it with immunity.

MR. DICKSON: Exactly. Actually, it's in the statute. There are lots of examples. I could find some examples from other jurisdictions, and I'm happy to put that in the package that I'd circulate before another meeting, Harry.

MR. SOHAL: I don't want to take much time . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, go ahead.

MR. SOHAL: The thing is, then, that anonymous people could complain about certain people because they know they will never find out who the complainer was. Complaints could be made without any basis.

MR. DICKSON: But what happens? Two points to that. The first one is that the Ombudsman already gets complaints that he investigates and throws out as being mischievous or for some other reason. They aren't bona fide complaints. The other thing that the Ombudsman stresses in here is that these aren't faceless, nameless complaints. This would be where somebody identifies themselves and says, "I'm Joe Btfsplk in this department, and here's a problem going on that you should be aware of." So it's not faceless people. I mean, there wouldn't be any anonymity; these people would be known to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman would then make a decision. If it's a frivolous complaint, he has the power now to not pursue it any further. He would make that decision, and I'm prepared to trust the judgment of the Ombudsman.

MR. BRASSARD: This would enable him to monitor further retaliation for someone who did lodge a complaint.

MR. DICKSON: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yvonne, you had a question?

MRS. FRITZ: Well, it was just to say along the lines of what Harry had said. Right now an example would be the bylaw officers, at least in the city of Calgary. If you have a complaint to a bylaw officer, the person that's been complained about has no right to know who complained. It creates a lot of problems, so I would hope you'd bring back both pros and cons. Harry's correct. You're saying that an anonymous complaint would not be investigated. I don't know if that's true or untrue until you bring it back. Even if somebody does complain and complains continually, the bylaw officer investigates each time. It can even be about the same person, and they investigate each time. But the complainant is never made known, and it can create a lot of difficulties.

MR. DICKSON: That's a fair comment, except you could look at page 6 of the submission, the middle paragraph. Harley actually makes a clear distinction between whistle-blower legislation, which is where you have anonymous complainants, and complainant protection, where you know it's Joe Btfsplk who is making the complaint.

MRS. FRITZ: But, Gary, I'm talking about a complaint that's not anonymous. That's why I'm talking about municipal, because it's mentioned here. I could phone the bylaw officer, and I've had that experience where people do that. They phone the bylaw officer. The bylaw officer must respond, because you never know when it's actual. They are to respond each time. What happens is that people then become harassed. They become harassed not by the complainant in a personal way; they become harassed by the bylaw officer. That's why I'm asking that you bring back both, because I think Harry has said something quite valid.

MR. DICKSON: Certainly we can address that, but I just say again that the Ombudsman is the person that makes that call. Now we're talking about somebody whose whole job is about discretion and sound judgment and that sort of thing. That's, I think, absolutely the best way of screening out those kinds of complaints and that sort of thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. If you want to do some of that background stuff for us, Gary, we'll put it in our folders for the next meeting.

MR. BRASSARD: I move we table this item then.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Go ahead. You wanted to comment.

MR. DICKSON: Just one thing, Mr. Chairman. I happily see the thing tabled, but I'm hopeful there's a general agreement that this will be high enough on the agenda next time that we'll be able to address it, finish it, and dispose of it. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

We had a motion to table it, yes. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Other Business and next meeting date.



MR. BRASSARD: At the discretion of the chair, recognizing that we would like to meet -- unless we can come up with a date.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would be fine with me. We have a couple of things here that we would need to have a meeting fairly soon. Your idea of early in the session with the Chief Electoral Officer and what we just talked about now with complainant protection, I think that we should do it at least within a month.

MR. BRASSARD: Yes. I think that if Gary could come forward to you, let you know when he's about ready, then you could call the chair.

MR. DICKSON: You'll have this thing in four or five days, so I like the idea of within a month.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With a month; okay. You can count on that being done. Okay?

Then I would entertain a motion to adjourn. Don Massey. All those in favour? Carried.

[The committee adjourned at 3:17 p.m.]

