

[Chairman: Mr. Hierath]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think maybe we'll call the meeting to order. I would like to firstly introduce our guests this morning: Brian Fjeldheim, the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, and Bill Sage. Welcome, gentlemen.

Our agenda is printed on the cover. The first order of business is Approval of Agenda. If I could have approval of that, Roy.

MR. BRASSARD: I so move.

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

The minutes of our previous meeting are under 3(a) of your booklet.

DR. MASSEY: I move they be adopted as printed, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Don Massey. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

The fourth item on our agenda has to do with our guests this morning: the approved budget estimates of the Chief Electoral Officer. I think maybe we'll start with that agenda item. Perhaps I will first make a few statements regarding the budget estimates. We were asked by Treasury and our Deficit Elimination Act to do 20 percent cutbacks in spending for our government in all departments. When we first started this process, it seemed there was a kind of forgotten group, and that was the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices. We were told in early December that we were kind of forgotten, and we had to rush around quickly and make some cuts in our officers' budgets. Consequently, we really didn't examine the '95-96, '96-97 budget estimates all that thoroughly, and we had a motion to accept the cuts in the legislative officers' budgets for 1994-95.

I need to have a motion today, if committee members find it acceptable, to rescind a motion we made at the last meeting so we can allow the legislative officers to change their budget estimates for 1994-95. We are planning on passing legislation for a freedom of information officer to be included in the Standing Committee for Legislative Offices. We have roughed in a cost of \$200,000, not knowing what the legislation is. Since we do not allow special warrants in spending anymore, we need to have these things in our budget. So what I would like to do is have a motion from the committee, if possible, to rescind the motion made on accepting the 1994-95 budget estimates.

MR. BRASSARD: I so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Roy.

Is there any discussion on that motion? Gary.

MR. DICKSON: I'm just trying to get my head around this. The \$200,000 that's being recaptured from the electoral office is going to be dedicated to this new office that's going to be set up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. DICKSON: Is there a reason why it's the Chief Electoral Officer that's taking the hit as opposed to one of the other offices?

MR. CHAIRMAN: When we get into this a little further, Gary, our PC caucus is going to try to revisit the Chief Electoral Officer's Act in this session. When we were in budget deliberations there were

some things, if you will recall, that we were wondering about. The committee was wondering about the necessity, for instance, of having an enumeration after the second year after an election that costs \$4.4 million to do. The discussion around cabinet and caucus has been that maybe we should relook at the Chief Electoral Officer's Act because of fiscal restraints and debate the issue of whether we need to have that enumeration. So that kind of initiated this thing. When I was meeting with Mr. Ledgerwood on the phone a few times in the last while – and I must state here today that he would have liked to have been here. I had the meeting scheduled for Monday. He would have been here yesterday, but he's on holidays right now and couldn't change his plans that much. That's kind of the whole background to this, Gary.

MR. DICKSON: Okay. I understand the thing being driven by the government caucus. I guess just in terms of process, from my perspective – and I may be putting it too simply – what you're telling us is that the government caucus has made a determination that there are going to be some changes in the electoral legislation. The Chief Electoral Officer was invited to redo the budget, and it's presented to us. It wasn't a question that we had the discussion in terms of whether this is the appropriate place to try and carve out \$200,000. It seems to me that really what we're doing now is being put in the position of virtually rubber-stamping a decision that's already been made without the prospect of discussion. I'm not telling you that this isn't the place to take \$200,000. I don't know, but I would have thought that if we had to capture money for a freedom of information commissioner, we would have looked at all the different legislative offices this committee supervises to see whether there are other places it could be taken from, whether it would be in conjunction with other departments. I find that what's presented, Mr. Chairman, appears to be a done deal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: My discussions on an informal basis with Mr. Ledgerwood – he had put in his budget for 1994-95 \$200,000 for two by-elections. I think that's right. He came to the conclusion – and I wish he were here so he could verify that – that he didn't need the \$200,000 that he had in his budget for by-elections. It was strictly a voluntary thing from the standpoint of Mr. Ledgerwood, Gary. Certainly from my perspective it isn't a done deal. I'm bringing this forward to the committee because, again, I was stating that we do have a tendency to have the cart in front of the horse in some cases in that fiscal restraints are kind of driving the agenda. I am not going to apologize for that, but that certainly is the case in some situations here.

Any further discussion on Roy's motion?

Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry I was a little late.

On the point of the \$200,000 for by-elections, in the event there is a by-election, how would the Chief Electoral Officer cover that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe I'll ask Brian to debate that. Give the committee your impressions of what I said maybe in conjunction with Mr. Ledgerwood, who isn't able to be here.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Okay; thank you very much. I have an overview here regarding the \$200,000, but that's already pretty well been discussed. Those funds were earmarked for by-elections, as you mentioned, Mr. Hierath, especially enumerations, as well as for the purchase of election and enumeration supplies for restocking purposes. With the funds we have left after the \$200,000 reduction, we still feel we can conduct a by-election and a special enumeration if required. However, if there is more than one by-election, we

would perhaps need additional funding. What we're doing is reducing the amount of purchases we would make for supplies and restocking. It also depends on the size of the electoral division where the by-election is held.

**9:14**

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have Yvonne, and then Victor. Go ahead, Yvonne.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question has to do with the base funding. If this \$200,000 is out of your base, then next year do you require that \$200,000 back into your base, because you may have the potential – or the year after rather? How many years is this for?

MR. FJELDHEIM: Did everyone get the package, Diane, that was sent over? Okay. If you'd like to take a quick look at the package, you can see that in our revised '94-95 budget, there was \$100,000 taken out of the election element and \$100,000 taken out of the enumeration element. Roughly speaking, conducting a special enumeration and conducting an election cost about the same. The administration element, as you can see, was not touched.

MRS. FRITZ: So you can work with this base budget from now on.

MR. FJELDHEIM: That is correct, yes. The administration part.

MRS. FRITZ: I guess my question is: why did you overbudget \$200,000 in this area?

MR. FJELDHEIM: Well, when the budget was put together, we followed the guidelines, the 10 percent reductions. In terms of overbudgeting, I wouldn't say it was overbudgeting. We had enough for three by-elections and to restock supplies. That was based on the 10 percent reduction. Now, of course, it could be debated: are three by-elections likely? In the 1992 calendar year there were three by-elections.

MRS. FRITZ: This money for three by-elections is over how long a time frame?

MR. FJELDHEIM: One fiscal year.

MRS. FRITZ: Then the next fiscal year you won't have the \$200,000 in your base budget.

MR. FJELDHEIM: In the next one.

MRS. FRITZ: So you will have. Where will the \$200,000 come from, then, for the next time? If we take it out of this base budget now and allocate it, where will it be for the next year, for '95-96?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, right at the present time there is 4 and a half million dollars in the budget for 1995-96 for enumeration.

MRS. FRITZ: No, no. I mean freedom of information, for the officer there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see what you mean.

MRS. FRITZ: If we take \$200,000 from this budget and cover it to 1996, we still then no longer have it for . . . Can somebody help me out?

MR. BRASSARD: I don't know what you're getting at.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Yvonne, the truth of the matter is that . . .

MR. BRASSARD: This is only one year's budget we're talking about.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right. The truth of the matter is that we approved a one-year . . . We only approved 1994-95. This committee only approved 1994-95 for our officers' budgets.

MR. BRASSARD: We will sit down and do the same thing for next year.

MRS. FRITZ: But the \$200,000 will be in place the next year and the next year and the next year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We really don't know what the cost of running a freedom of information office will be. We were allocating money before we pass that legislation, and this is why I was talking about the cart before the horse to some extent. Since special warrants are not being done by this government, we have to have dollars sitting for something that may happen in the future.

MRS. FRITZ: I see. So this isn't just one-time funding. This is going to stay out and over. Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Victor, did you have a question?

MR. DOERKSEN: Yeah, Mr. Chairman. I think it would help the office of the Chief Electoral Officer in their budget if they knew which Liberals are going to be resigning or appointed in the next year, so we would know how many by-elections there are going to be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's too early in the morning, Victor.

MR. DOERKSEN: I know. I'm so sorry. I'll go back to sleep.

MR. BRUSEKER: It was a poor attempt. That's why we just ignored him. It is so unlike him.

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

MR. FRIEDEL: That's a motion just to rescind the previous budget?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. To rescind the previous motion. That then allows this committee to reopen the budget meeting. That's what it's doing.

MR. FRIEDEL: So this is just rescinding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Rescinding the previous motion accepting the budget for 1994-95. Roy is moving that we rescind that motion so we can then rediscuss the 1994-95 budget.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, just a further question on that. I understand the purpose is to find \$200,000 to fund the freedom of information office. Is it the intention that whenever this freedom of information office is created it be tied in some way to the chief electoral office, or is it going to be separate? It's just that the funding is going to be coming from . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. It's just that everybody is assuming it will

be under this committee's jurisdiction, Frank.  
Gary.

MR. DICKSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, that suggests, then, that if it's going to cost us \$400,000, not \$200,000, by the time we get this office set up and working, we will keep on revisiting budgets of the other four legislative offices to find an extra \$200,000. Is it the intention that we have an envelope of money to spend on the existing legislative offices and the envelope isn't going to get any bigger and when we have an extra legislative office all the costs are going to have to come out of this envelope? Is that the intention?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That certainly appears to be the intention for 1994-95, and I wouldn't go any further. Members' Services and some of the other committees, Assembly offices, will have some bearing on what that envelope is. I'm not sure of that, Gary. I don't know how to answer that, but certainly 1994-95 – you're correct. You're correct that we're scrambling to find a couple of hundred thousand dollars so we can pass legislation and get someone started in being a freedom of information commissioner.

Go ahead, Gary.

MR. DICKSON: I've got two problems coming out of that, Mr. Chairman. The first one is: do we have a budget? I mean, where does the \$200,000 come from? Right now it looks like it's being drawn from the air. If there's some kind of budget in terms of how many people this is going to cover, what start-up costs, I think we should have a look at that budget.

I guess the second thing is that I find it frustrating that when the Chief Electoral Officer was here we asked him specifically about by-elections. We talked about it for a number of minutes because it was a large amount of money. We challenged – as I recall, gently – the Chief Electoral Officer in terms of the number of by-elections that were anticipated. Now, it seems to me just a bit odd that in a scant couple of months we're back and the Chief Electoral Officer is now able to say: well, when we needed the \$200,000 before it in fact reflected our experience with by-elections in Alberta, and now, all of a sudden, because we've got this other demand over here, there's a \$200,000 surplus. I just have a real problem with that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Gary, this committee sets the budget for the Chief Electoral Officer. The Chief Electoral Officer doesn't set the budget for this committee.

I had, I think, Gary and then Roy. Gary for now.

MR. FRIEDEL: I wasn't part of any discussion you had with either the Chief Electoral Officer or any of the other officers. I gather from some of the comments, the discussion you and I had, that the \$200,000 is somewhat arbitrary in that there has to be something in the budget, but being that this is going to be the year that presumably, depending on the passage of legislation, a freedom of information commissioner is appointed, it will likely be on into the year and there will be just a basic start-up budget, not anywhere near what that office likely will require once it gets fully into operation. And it's possible this might not be the only place money is being extracted for that. This is the only one we're involved with.

9:24

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right. Well, actually the budget for the potential freedom of information officer was something we did pull out of the air, Gary. We looked at the budget of the Ethics Commissioner, which is \$177,000. And how is this committee supposed to have any idea what the freedom of information officer is going to cost when

we don't even know what the Act is going to be? So certainly I'd be more than willing to admit that we have to start someplace. The \$200,000 is pulled out of the air; there's no doubt. I mean, my proposal to this committee or trying to get something started for the freedom of information officer is quite intangible at this point; there's no doubt.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Chairman, I think we can only expect or anticipate by-elections. I think it's a best guess as to what we're going to require in the future. It's basically a contingency fund, as I understand it. I think that in the budget considerations of the day contingency funds come under extreme fire, and this is no exception. What we're being asked to look at here is a reduction in a contingency fund and perhaps putting that money aside for the creation of a freedom of information office if it should be required. Right now we're discussing the reduction in a contingency fund, and I've had those kinds of discussions with almost every department I've sat with in their budget considerations. So I don't think this is unusual. I recognize we have no control over by-elections; if there were 10 in the future, we would have to find the money for them. But I think it's reasonable to assume we have to back off on any areas of flexibility we have at our disposal, and this is one of them. That's what I'm basing my motion on in rescinding the earlier motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I would like to try to stick to Roy's motion rather than debating the bigger picture. If we can end up voting on this motion and passing it or not, then we can get on to the debate of budgets.

I would like to now call the question, if it's acceptable to this committee. All those in favour of Roy's motion? Opposed? Carried.

Okay. I guess we can now go on discussing what we really have been discussing, and that is the Chief Electoral Officer's budget for 1994-95 with \$200,000 removed from it.

Brian, if you want to make any further comments before we have any further discussion, feel free.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Thank you. The only thing I would refer to is the handout under the election element. First of all, page B, if anyone has any questions in that regard. Once again, it's \$100,000 out of this control group.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we're going from \$255,000 to \$155,000 on that page B; right?

MR. FJELDHEIM: Correct.

Page C is the enumeration element.  
I'm sorry?

MR. BRASSARD: Just before we leave that, if this basically reflects the reduction of one of three by-elections, I would have expected to see more of a 30 percent factor as opposed to, say, some of the figures. For instance, advertising is cut in half.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Yeah. The advertising is regarding polling place locations and so on. In attempting to put the budget together and, once again, looking at where the by-election may take place, we felt that to be somewhat prudent maybe we would just cut that in half and take more from another area.

MR. BRASSARD: The same applies to freight and postage. The same almost right down. Consistently, it's a 50 percent application. I would think that if you were going to reduce one by-election out of

three, we would have seen a one-third application.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Yeah. If you'll notice under . . .

MR. BRASSARD: I think it's going to be more.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Sorry.

MR. BRASSARD: It's okay.

MR. FJELDHEIM: If you'll notice under contract services, that isn't cut in half. We left more money in there for resupply and so on.

MR. BRASSARD: Okay.

MR. FJELDHEIM: No. I'm sorry. It would not be strictly a two-thirds reduction in all areas.

MR. BRASSARD: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: A couple of questions. This budget now – we're looking at the revised estimates. Reducing \$200,000 would still allow you to cover two by-elections. Is that correct?

MR. FJELDHEIM: Well, right now we're saying it would allow us to cover one by-election and do some restocking. But once again, as I mentioned earlier, it depends on the location. For example, to conduct the October 26, '92, Three Hills by-election cost \$73,925, and the Calgary-Buffalo by-election was \$103,029. You can see there's a bit of variance there depending on the location where the by-election was held.

MR. BRUSEKER: Are you worth that much more, Dickson?

MR. DICKSON: Of course, of course.

MR. BRUSEKER: How many by-elections have we had in Alberta? Have you ever done a total count and worked out a sort of average? If we're trying to come up with a budget, I recognize Roy makes a good point. If there are no by-elections, we don't need any money; if there are 10 by-elections, we've got to find the money for 10.

MR. DICKSON: There were four since 1989.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah. I'm just wondering, because I see Brian has it right back to 1905.

MR. FJELDHEIM: I don't have it added though.

MR. BRUSEKER: You don't have it added; okay. I was just wondering if there is an average, recognizing it will fluctuate to a certain extent.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Well, as I mentioned, there were three in the calendar year of '92, and that's a lot. That's unusual. There generally aren't that many. In fact, I think in *Hansard* you mentioned last time 1.2 or something like that. I can't remember the exact figures.

MR. BRUSEKER: Weren't there five by-elections in the last . . .

MR. SOHAL: But '92 was an unusual year, because we had a

general election in '89 and '92 was three years after the general election. Immediately after the general election we don't have that many by-elections.

MR. BRUSEKER: You did in '89. In '89 we had a by-election right away in Stettler, and then we had a by-election for Edmonton-Strathcona. Then we had three – Roy, isn't that correct? Weren't there five by-elections in the 22nd Legislature?

MR. BRASSARD: Yeah, I think you're right. I think we had four or five. We had Stettler.

AN HON. MEMBER: We had two deaths and two resignations.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Okay; I think I've got them here. We had Three Hills, October 26, '92; then Calgary-Buffalo, July 21, '92; and Little Bow, March 5, '92. Edmonton-Strathcona was December 17, '90, and Stettler was May 9, '89.

MR. BRUSEKER: So we had five.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Yeah. Once again, as it was mentioned earlier, it is obviously very difficult. We don't know how many there may be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm not experienced in this committee by any stretch of the imagination, but there is a point that if the electoral office runs out of money, the Assembly will allocate money for them to do their job. That would be exceptional circumstances, but I think the Assembly as a whole has the power to do those things.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, wouldn't that even be driven in part by the Constitution, that says we must have elections every five years at least and there must be by-elections? Isn't that in part driven by that?

**9:34**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure.

MR. BRUSEKER: So I guess, Brian, in coming back to what you're saying, if this prepares you for one on average, that's probably a reasonable guess, and if something changes, you're going to have to come back to this committee PDQ if there is a second or a third by-election.

MR. FJELDHEIM: That would be correct, yes.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

MR. SOHAL: The by-election has to be within six months after the person had resigned or the seat is vacant?

MR. FJELDHEIM: That is correct. Six months in one and then 180 days – yes, six months.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. If we have a comfort level on that, I'm going to throw another wrench into this whole debate a little bit here. I would like to initiate a discussion on the '95-96 budget of the Chief Electoral Officer. I alluded to this in some of my comments earlier. When we were meeting with Mr. Ledgerwood in December, there was a lively discussion about the need for enumeration the second year after an election and enumeration costs of \$4.4 million. This committee, in my judgment, was certainly wondering why we needed to do that: incur a cost of \$4.4 million, whatever it was, for

enumeration the second year after an election and every year after that, in my understanding, until an election is called. Anyway, the idea of that in a discussion amongst some of my colleagues was, well, if that's a waste of \$4 million . . . In general terms, this committee was kind of asking Mr. Ledgerwood – and Mr. Ledgerwood was following the Election Act – why don't we think about revisiting the Act and saving the taxpayers of this province \$4 million? I would like to initiate a discussion in this regard and see where it goes.

First I have Gary Freidel, and then Gary Dickson.

MR. FRIEDEL: Well, I raised that point during the budget, if you recall: why was it necessary to have an enumeration at that cost midterm between elections? The answer was that it was preparatory in the event that there was an election in less than four years. Now, that's great for strategies and whatever happens, but I'm not so sure it's great for restraint and budget measures and such. I felt that way then, and I certainly feel that way now. I would be very supportive of working toward legislation that would not mandate an enumeration midterm, with a guaranteed two years after an election.

MR. DICKSON: I think Gary Friedel makes an excellent point, and I'd add an additional reason. That is that instead of just looking at the frequency of enumerations provincially, it might be worth while to create a small subcommittee to look at dealing with enumerations municipally and federally. It's certainly technically possible now to look at a single enumeration. Not only could you reduce the frequency of them; you could look at some means of being able to eliminate the fact we have three different enumerations going on now in this country. It occurs to me that one way to get this moving would be to maybe create a small group of, say, three from this committee to do some investigation and maybe give us a report back.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I want to ask Brian to make a comment, and then Roy.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Thank you. That's actually being looked at now. Mr. Ledgerwood was in Ottawa last week with representatives from all jurisdictions across Canada looking at coming up with a list of electors that could be used. Once again, people can be enumerated three times in one year, and with that duplication obviously there are funds expended. So that is being looked at, a common list, and once we get more information, we'll certainly be passing that along. That's something that is being looked at now federally and provincially.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, actually I was going to make the same point that Gary did. I think that between the last enumeration and the one that was done this time – the Electoral Boundary Commission was looking at an increase of 156,000 people, was it? Frank, you were on that committee. There was an increase in population in Alberta of 156,000 people.

MR. BRUSEKER: About that.

MR. BRASSARD: So that did drive an enumeration. I wonder if that couldn't be the criterion in the future, something co-ordinated with a population increase or decrease, so that if there hasn't been a major shift or increase in population, perhaps it wouldn't be required. I think Gary makes a good point. If we had a small committee to come up with a recommendation in that regard – it is driven more by population fluctuation than just some time frame – that would make it more practical. So I support what Gary was

saying.

MR. BRUSEKER: Brian, aren't there jurisdictions that don't do enumerations at all?

MR. FJELDHEIM: British Columbia does an enumeration, I believe, once every four years. I could be corrected on this, but they have a list of electors where people register, so when people move, they're expected to register, and they have revising agents throughout the province of British Columbia. Once again, it falls in line that people are expected to in effect look after themselves in getting on the list of electors.

MR. BRUSEKER: Do you have any idea what it would cost to run such a system?

MR. FJELDHEIM: No, I don't.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I just want to throw something else out to this committee on why I was wanting to discuss this 1995-96 budget estimate along with the '94-95 that we just kind of finished going over. I don't know; maybe I should attempt to get a motion of acceptance for the 1994-95 budget estimates first, and then we'll move into '95-96. Would that be acceptable, that someone approve the 1994-95 budget estimates and then we'll move on to '95-96? Okay. If that's okay with the committee then, I think your motion would state, Gary, that \$782,291 be the figure.

MR. FRIEDEL: As revised and presented, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. All those in favour of that motion? Opposed? Carried.

Then further on to the '95-96 thing. If our government is looking at revisiting the Act and revising the Act and debating the Act to save \$4.4 million, almost 4 and a half million dollars, in enumeration costs for 1994, is it possible that this committee would approve a reduction in 1994-95? I know this is again putting the cart before the horse. The reason driving this is that we are looking for 20 percent cutbacks in government spending over four years, and we haven't been able to achieve that in the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices because we weren't able and didn't have time over the short time frame in December to debate and consider the Auditor General's – well, the Auditor General did some of it. The Chief Electoral Officer wasn't able to do any decreasing in his long-term budgeting because the Act dictated that he would in fact do this enumeration. We are being driven by the fiscal realities of this government, so I just throw that out to committee members.

First I have Gary, and then Frank.

MR. DICKSON: I'm happy, Mr. Chairman, to look at ways we can deliver service at lower cost to the taxpayer. I mean, we've had a series of suggestions that relate to trying to cut the enumeration cost. But I'd sooner see us focus on the actual savings first, and rather than setting a wholly arbitrary number, a target, I'd sooner see us start looking aggressively at the kinds of costs this committee is responsible for and looking at alternate strategies and alternate ways of achieving the goals. I'd sooner see it driven by analysis by function, not simply by arbitrary numbers and percentages.

9:44

MR. BRUSEKER: A good lead-in, Gary. I couldn't have said it better myself.

Along that same line, the government has moved now to create agents for registries. The majority of people in the province of Alberta have driver licences and/or are registered owners of vehicles, so many adults are going to have their name on file somewhere within the bowels of a computer mainframe somehow. Now, I think as politicians come election time we all want to have a list of our electors in the constituency, but along the line of what Gary is saying, instead of just cutting a figure and saying "Let's see what we can do with it," how about if we ask the Chief Electoral Officer's office to look at something along the line of what is done in B.C. and if we can't somehow tie it to other lists we already have; i.e., driver licences? I know that's going to miss some, but if we asked people to go to their local registries office – and, yes, there are many more now than there used to be – perhaps we can tie into something that has already been created and, rather than having to have a \$4 million enumeration every year or every other year, instead of just saying we're going to chop \$4 million once, we may be able to chop \$4 million in perpetuity and save more than just \$4 million.

So I'd like to look at, as Gary suggested, a procedure, and I'm throwing out this one as a suggestion. Perhaps driver licences and registry offices somehow can be used. Registry certainly rings a bell with registering to vote, and it seems to me we could utilize those things better than we have in the past in where we're going. At any rate, I'd like to throw that out as a possible suggestion that we should consider. I support the idea of saving the \$4.4 million, but let's see if we can't find a better way of doing what we have been doing in the past.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yvonne, and then – Brian, did you want to make a comment? No.

Yvonne.

MRS. FRITZ: Would you please clarify for me, Mr. Chairman, what the reductions of each budget were when you said we haven't reach our 20 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't have the exact percentage cuts. The Auditor General office went from \$11.6 million to \$9.3 million from the 1992 actual to the 1996 estimate. The Chief Electoral Officer is all over the map because of the Act driving what he has to do with enumerations, so he didn't reduce his budget at all. The Ombudsman went from \$1.2 million in 1992-93 to \$984,000. You can see that the Auditor General and the Chief Electoral Officer are the two big spenders in the group we're supervising. The Ethics Commissioner, with \$170,000 per year: we left him pretty well at that level.

So really when we come down to trying to cut 20 percent of costs from the committees we supervise, after I had time to do some digesting of some of the numbers after our quick whirlwind budget cuts that I subjected this committee to – and I apologize again for that – the only place I could see we could do 20 percent was to revisit the Chief Electoral Officer's Act, the Election Act. You know, that's all I'm proposing to this committee, that the Act be debated and changed. Again, I apologize that we may be putting the cart before the horse, but there is probably one thing that would happen for sure if we downsize the '95-96 budget by \$4.4 million. That certainly would drive us to do something with the Act. I'm not sure that's the right way it should be done.

MR. FRIEDEL: Are you suggesting, then, that this committee could recommend to the Legislature that we review the necessity of having an enumeration on alternate years, that we look at the necessity of having that legislation?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that would be for the Act. What we're talking about now specifically is reducing the Chief Electoral Officer's budget in '95-96 by somewhere around \$4 million, and we will leave the debate of the Act or how we formulate the Act or whatever for another day.

MR. FRIEDEL: But we could make that as a recommendation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure.

DR. MASSEY: What is the timing on this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time frame for what I'm suggesting?

DR. MASSEY: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Budget day.

DR. MASSEY: You must have the \$4 million before budget day?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's driving the machine somewhat, but that's one thing that should be considered by this committee. You know, we're trying to lay out three-year plans for different departments on where their spendings are going to be, Don, so that's kind of what's driving the financial thing right now.

DR. MASSEY: I most certainly agree that some flexibility is needed. I think it's a problem that can't be looked at in just half an hour and then a decision made, because the growth in electors is one problem but the movement of electors is another. I think it's a problem that deserves some serious attention and consideration, and I'd be loath to make decision this morning on something as important as that.

MR. BRASSARD: I have a question first of all. Do I understand that there's \$4.4 million in the '95-96 budget for . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. BRASSARD: And given that the current legislation says we must have enumeration after every second election . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The second year after an election we have to have enumeration. That's what the Election Act says. Right?

MR. FJELDHEIM: That's correct.

MR. BRASSARD: After every election.

MR. BRUSEKER: After every general election. Right.

MR. FJELDHEIM: The second year following a general election.

MR. BRASSARD: Okay.

MR. BRUSEKER: That would be next September. We would be not even 18 months past the general election. Isn't that correct?

MR. FJELDHEIM: September '95.

MR. BRASSARD: September '95. So in essence we could postpone the pain if we just extended that period for a couple of months. But I think the decision we have to reach around here is whether or not we can seek an alternative way of dealing with this enumeration

problem before we can make this decision. I guess the question I would like answered first of all is: can we put an enumeration aside? If we all agree around this table that yes, based on experience in B.C. and so on and so forth we can, then I have a greater comfort level in saying yes, let's reduce the 4 and half million dollars. But without answering the question of whether or not we need this enumeration, I have trouble explaining what we are going to do with this money.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, legally we can cut it out.

MR. BRASSARD: So we have that flexibility.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have that flexibility, yes.

MR. BRASSARD: Then I would move that we put aside the normal enumeration for the '95-96 fiscal year and strike a subcommittee of this committee to come up with other ways of dealing with an enumeration requirement.

9:54

MR. CHAIRMAN: So Roy's motion is that we remove \$4,415,995, which is enumeration costs for 1995-96. Is that correct, Roy?

MR. BRASSARD: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any discussion on that motion?  
Brian.

MR. FJELDHEIM: I don't know if I'm out of order or not with a comment at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure.

MR. FJELDHEIM: I would ask that some consideration be extended to leaving some funds in that element for the same reasons as discussed earlier for '94-95.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Once again, for special enumerations for by-elections. Once again, we don't restock all our supplies the first year; we spread that out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. BRUSEKER: Can you suggest a figure then?

MR. BRASSARD: Would that not be a separate motion, Mr. Chairman?

MR. FJELDHEIM: Well, if we wanted to follow the plan, then we'd . . . Now, of course, it's more than 10 percent the first year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: My calculations were that \$1.177 million be cut out instead of \$1.4 million. That was how I scratched it out, that some money be left in for by-elections. Instead of the total \$4.4 million that we would leave . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Five percent missing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Exactly.

MR. BRASSARD: With all due respect, I think you're combining

two issues. In one you're dealing with a by-election, and in one you are talking about enumeration. I think it requires two motions to remove the enumeration factor and then build the contingency fund back in to handle the by-election.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; that's fair.

Any further? First Vic, and then Gary Dickson.

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Chairman, I'm having trouble grappling with what's going on here, because over the course of an election period, from one election to the other, there's a dollar figure that has to be expended when you're adding each year together. Okay? If you take 20 percent off that – that total combined – that's one issue. The way we're going now is we're trying to get 20 percent off a base, or that seems to be what's happening, the base being '92-93. Now, coming to '96-97 and down the road, are we then going to have a sudden ballooning again? I mean, obviously we have to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure. And then under Mr. Ledgerwood's projections there was \$9.3 million in the budget for '96-97, which was an enumeration and an election. We're only talking about 1995-96 here. Since his budgeting is so erratic because of the nature of elections, that's why we're just focusing on one year, trying to cut down if there's perceived waste here. That we would not have to have this enumeration if we revisit the Act and debate the Act and change the Act is really what the discussion is about with Roy's motion, I think.

I think I had Gary Dickson, then Frank.

MR. DICKSON: One part of Roy's motion I like very much, and that's the idea of having a small committee to look at saving costs. But I have a problem. As I understand the motion, it's to take this amount out of the 1995-1996 budget. I mean, that's the first part of the motion. Correct? Going back to something Don Massey's said before, I would sooner see the cut driven by some good policy reasons. I'm as keen as anybody around the table to be able to eliminate enumeration. I'd like to see us go with a permanent voters list, and that's what I'd like to see us achieve. It seems to me that's the way to come at it. So I would sooner simply leave the 1995-1996 estimate as it is and, instead, put the squeeze on the small committee to work hard and come up with some specific recommendations under a fairly tight time line. Then we have that sort of thing driving this whole process.

You know, there's a reason why these things are done frequently. In some parts of the province, some constituencies, there's an incredibly high turnover. In my constituency, six months after the last enumeration it's out of date because there's so much turnover. There's a reason why we have enumerations frequently. So that's why I'm afraid I support one part of the motion but I have to vote against it. I can't support the reduction before we've done our homework and decided how we can do it better. I'm going to encourage people to consider opposing the motion but certainly supporting that part of Roy's motion that talks about coming up with some ways of substantially reducing our enumeration costs.

MR. BRUSEKER: A question for Brian. Under the legislation right now, you would normally conduct an enumeration in September of 1995 and then each year thereafter until another general election.

MR. FJELDHEIM: That's correct. Yes.

MR. BRUSEKER: So if we adopted Roy's motion, I guess the intent would be that we would just eliminate that one and then things would continue as normal. We would save it for one year. Unless

we have a subcommittee that finds an alternate proposal, as we talked about, it would save the \$4.4 million at least for one year.

MR. BRASSARD: I just feel there are alternatives to the way we're doing things, and I believe the system we're using is one of the more expensive systems. A permanent voters list is an excellent way; the utilization of drivers' licences. I think there are ways of doing things other than what we're doing now. These are already in place in other provinces. I just believe that given the sense of urgency of the day, there are other ways. I personally would rather see four and a half million dollars go into our health system or our social services programs or whatever than into an enumeration. I think a subcommittee can find an alternative to the way we're doing things. I agree it would be nice in a perfect world to do these things in a different order, but I don't think we have that luxury.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yvonne.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you. Just back to the question of the base again that I asked earlier, if this is off as one-time funding, what happens to the next year?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What we're trying to do is cut the spending and then change the Act so that the following year under the normal plan there would be budget dollars, which is \$9.3 million that year, for the enumeration and an election.

MRS. FRITZ: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. FRIEDEL: Just speaking to what Gary Dickson said, I feel strongly enough that the biannual, or whatever you want to call it, enumeration is such a waste of time that it should just be dropped even without an alternative. The second part of your motion, Roy, is looking at alternatives. Am I correct in assuming that this is to look at ways of dealing with it in the future and also dealing with the enumerations that would come up for regular elections? They would look at all facets.

MR. BRASSARD: That we just look at a different way of enumerating. We may never return to the original model. I think there have been some excellent points made here that we can access different methods. I think we need to take more personal responsibility for the voting list, and we'd do that with a permanent list, I gather, Gary. I just think there are alternatives, yes.

MR. DOERKSEN: A question for Brian. If there is a by-election that takes place, let's say, in the year we're talking about, '95-96, would there be an enumeration done just for that particular constituency?

MR. FJELDHEIM: Yes. There is some judgment involved. For example, if there was a by-election within a year of the general election, I think we would certainly take a look at what type of constituency the by-election was being held in – in our estimation, was there a lot of movement and so on? – and decide perhaps not to have an enumeration because the list would be good enough and perhaps during the revision period that could be picked up.

But after a year generally it's certainly been most prudent to conduct an enumeration.

10:04

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

I'll get Harry and then maybe call for a vote on this motion.

MR. SOHAL: Just two points. How much time does it take to enumerate the whole province?

MR. FJELDHEIM: The way the legislation reads now, it's September 15 to September 30. So it's a two-week period where there's actual door knocking. As far as contacting the constituency associations, that's done in June. Enumerators are supplied to the returning officers in August, and of course the mapping is done some months before that. So physical door knocking is two weeks, and there's a revision period two weeks after that. I guess, ballpark figuring from very start to very finish, we're looking at about six months.

MR. SOHAL: A minimum of six months?

MR. FJELDHEIM: By the time process starts.

MR. SOHAL: Second, if an eligible voter is not on the voters list but lives in the riding, can a person simply walk in the polling station, prove that he lives in the riding, and be allowed to vote?

MR. FJELDHEIM: Yes.

MR. SOHAL: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; I think we'll try to have a vote on this motion. Moved by Mr. Brassard

that we put aside the normal enumeration for the 1995-96 fiscal year and strike a subcommittee of this committee to evaluate alternative ways of supplying the voters lists.

All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Thank you, gentlemen. I think we're done. I'm just asking the gentlemen if they want to carry on with their normal business for the day and we'll go on to other business. Thank you, Brian and Bill.

MR. FJELDHEIM: I just have one question, sir, regarding the striking of the enumeration for '95-96. As I mentioned earlier, we would still require some funds in that element.

MRS. FRITZ: I'll move, Mr. Chairman, that those funds be added.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How much?

MRS. FRITZ: You had it figured out there.

MR. FJELDHEIM: If I may, Mr. Chairman, what we previously had was \$271,993. If we've reduced that by 5 percent, we end up with about \$257,000. I should mention that we would certainly also be getting close this year to an enumeration with returning officers and would require training, a great deal of map work, and so on. Without going into a great deal of detail . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was about what my calculations were too. So if it's okay with you, Yvonne, let's put in \$257,000 for 1995-96 enumeration costs.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Yes.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's the motion.

MR. BRUSEKER: This would be for training of enumerators and materials?

AN HON. MEMBER: And by-elections.



MR. FJELDHEIM: I just have one more question. Is this the approval of our '95-96 budget as well? Have we in effect approved two budgets today?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have approved '94-95 in a motion. We have done that, and now we're focusing on 1995-96.

MR. FJELDHEIM: I'm also then wondering if the other numbers will stay the same – the \$235,301 in the election element for '95-96.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's just the enumeration that we were trying to get out.

All those in favour of Yvonne's motion? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

MR. FJELDHEIM: Thank you.

DR. MASSEY: Mr. Chairman, what happens now in terms of the enumeration? Does the legislation have to be changed?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What happens now is that I'm telling this committee that we will come up with trying to change the Election Act. That's what I'm saying to this committee, to accommodate the motion we have passed.

DR. MASSEY: Before budget day?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before the end of this session.

MR. BRUSEKER: Although technically if the Legislature does not approve that, what we've just done is for naught anyway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, that's right, Frank.

MR. BRASSARD: It is in the Act that you must have an enumeration done in the second year following an election?

MR. FJELDHEIM: Yes, that is correct.

MR. BRASSARD: So we need to change the Act . . .

MR. FJELDHEIM: Yes, that is correct.

MR. BRASSARD: . . . before we strike a committee?

MR. FJELDHEIM: Yes, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, gentlemen.

MR. BRUSEKER: Roy, on that point, it wouldn't have to necessarily be before we strike a committee. What the committee says might determine what changes go into changing the Act. I think what you and I are envisioning a little bit is a change that would require a change in the legislation anyway.

MR. BRASSARD: That committee could drive that legislation in theory.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yes, or recommendation for legislation.

MR. BRASSARD: So the committee should be struck to come up with a system that would then be incorporated into the legislation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; can we get our act together? As you are all aware, I think, Mr. Ledgerwood has written a letter stating that he will not seek reappointment for a fourth term as Chief Electoral Officer and will retire as of June 16, 1994. I guess at our meeting now we would probably need to have a motion of acceptance of his letter stating that he is not going to seek reappointment. So if we could have a motion.

Gary.

MR. DICKSON: I'll move that  
we accept the letter of resignation and extend our appreciation for the excellent work he's done for the people of Alberta.

MR. BRUSEKER: I would agree with that. I had the opportunity to work with this gentleman on the boundaries committee, version one, in 1989. I think his commitment has been exemplary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion? Opposed? Carried.

In item 6 on your . . .

MR. DICKSON: I thought, Mr. Chairman, we were going to strike this subcommittee. Is there some reason we're not dealing with that right now? It was the second part of Roy's motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; let's do that.

MR. DICKSON: Maybe fix some times for them to report and so on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The wish of Roy was a three-member committee. Was that the general discussion, three members? Would that seem reasonable?

MR. BRASSARD: I think sometimes the smaller the better. It gets more work done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If that seems reasonable, is it the wish of this committee to ask for three volunteers, or is it the wish of the committee for me to ask three people to sit on the committee? What would be the wish?

MR. BRASSARD: I think it's appropriate that the chairman appoint some rather than just volunteers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I wonder if Gary Dickson would like to sit on this committee.

MR. DICKSON: I would be happy to, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How about Roy? Roy, would you be interesting in sitting on that committee?

MR. BRASSARD: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yvonne, would you?

MRS. FRITZ: No, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How about Don Massey? Would you be interested in sitting on that committee?

DR. MASSEY: I prefer not to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Frank, would you?

MR. BRUSEKER: I'm intrigued by it, yes. I'd be interested in working that way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Would you like to, Harry?

MR. SOHAL: Three members. Okay; fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's make it four then.

MR. BRASSARD: Who have we got then?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't want to exclude anyone, so sure.

MR. SOHAL: No, three's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, if you want to sit on there that's . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: We would just be making a recommendation back to this committee.

**10:14**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Would you like me to set a date for you? I think the three of you could better do that after the meeting. Is that okay? All right. Good.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just so we're clear then, we would do some investigations. We would report back to this committee. Then, I guess, if there's concurrence, that ultimately would lead to some kind of amendment proposed to the legislation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure. Great.

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to belabour the point. Do we have the mandate, then, to bring forth legislative change from this committee?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, you're as new at this as I am.

MR. DOERKSEN: Or should this recommendation in terms of striking a committee to look at legislation not go back to the House? I don't know. I'm looking at the way this is supposed to flow. We're taking some liberties here, sir, that I'm not convinced we should be taking.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On what? On the committees? On this subcommittee?

MR. DOERKSEN: On proposing legislation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You know about as much of where government Bills come from as I do. I mean, what we're trying to do is with this committee – and I guess I need to maybe appoint Roy as chairman of the subcommittee – is preliminary stages of putting things into an Act to change an Act.

MR. DOERKSEN: I've no problem with research being done by the committee and coming up with some good ideas for presentation. I'm quite happy with that, but it's voluntary for these guys.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. First at it, Frank and then Roy.

MR. BRUSEKER: Victor, in an attempt to answer some of your discomfort, I don't think there's anything at all wrong with a few of

us going off and doing some research. I don't envision any great journeys being undertaken. I think we all perceive that there is a problem the way it is right now. Let's see if we can come up with a solution. I think the three of us then would make a recommendation to this committee, and all we as a committee can do is recommend changes to the Legislature.

I'm thinking back to the proposals we had with respect to our boundaries again. You know, that's probably where my greatest experience was. We put forward a report that said here's what we think should be in the legislation. Legislation was then subsequently created. So we would not come forward saying we propose to amend clause so and so by doing this and this. I think we would put forward a report, probably signed by the chairman of the committee, saying that here is something we have investigated and discovered and here's a report that will make a recommendation to the Legislature. The Legislature presumably would then adopt or not adopt that report and legislation. If it was agreed upon as being correct, we would then proceed from there. I think, Roy, that would probably be the procedure. So you're right. We can't propose legislation from this committee, but we can say, "Gee, here's an idea we've come up with; what do you think about it?"

MR. DOERKSEN: All right.

MR. BRASSARD: If indeed this subcommittee was going to answer to a higher authority, then you're right: we should get that higher authority's approval before we're struck. But the recommendation's going to come back to this committee, and the committee is the one that's going to go forward with it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are we all comfortable with that?

HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then we will carry on to item 6.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Chairman, did you want me to chair this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, would you please?

I have a letter from the Auditor General. They don't have a copy of this letter, do they?

MRS. SHUMYLA: Under tab 6.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, under tab 6. The senior assistant Auditor General is requesting that we approve a payment of \$2,000 for a retirement party for the Auditor General. I am not exactly sure why this request has come to this committee, because it's \$2,000 that is coming out of their budget. So I'm just going to open this up to whatever comments committee members wish to make.

Vic first.

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to go on record as opposing this. I think that if they've got \$2,000 to spend, then they should have cut it out of their budget elsewhere. If they wish to host . . . I have nothing against the Auditor General. He's done a good job; I respect what he's done. But I think any going-away party they have for him, they can fund out of their own pockets. I'm not in favour of this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further comments? Gary Friedel.

MR. FRIEDEL: I'll just go on record as echoing what Victor said.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there someone that would . . . I mean, I'm not sure how to deal with this.

Roy.

MR. BRASSARD: I would like to be sensitive to what is being said here and not have this come out as some kind of reluctance to show our gratitude. You know, this man has served the government and all of Alberta very well, to be quite honest, for quite some time. I honestly don't think \$2,000 is a significant amount for the kind of effort this man has put into his performance in the past – what is it? – eight years he's been around.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, he's been with the department since 1950 and something.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Chairman, in the whole scheme of things, I would like to put it this way: that \$2,000 be made available if required, but every effort should be made for the evening to stand on its own feet. I think you can put on a very credible going-away party that is self-sufficient, that shouldn't require the \$2,000, but if the \$2,000 was required for start-up funds or whatever – you know, I just think it's a very small amount.

MR. CHAIRMAN: First Gary Friedel, then Don Massey.

MR. FRIEDEL: Maybe I should elaborate a little bit. I didn't mean any disrespect for the Auditor General. Victor's remarks said that, and that's why I echo him. But I think in this time of restraint, if we're going to start to look at whether it's \$2,000 or \$200 coming out of government money for a social event for a retiring government employee, then why aren't we doing it for everybody? Since we're not doing it for everybody, we should have the practice of doing it for nobody. If they want to have a retirement social, whoever is invited, it's not unusual to pay a small fee toward the cost and toward a gift or whatever. I think that would cover it quite adequately. The size of the social could be judged according to the amount of money they can raise rather than what should come out of government coffers.

DR. MASSEY: What has the past practice been?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have no idea.

DR. MASSEY: I, too, think it should be self-supporting. I think the practice in most government departments, government agencies is that these functions are self-supporting. You don't draw on the public purse.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I really wonder why the request for approval of this committee when it's not money we, this committee, are spending. It just makes me wonder a little. I guess from one respect they could put the retirement party on at, you know, the Coast Terrace Inn, and \$2,000 could be spent out of the Auditor General's budget; we would never know it. So why are they asking this committee to approve it?

MR. BRASSARD: Well, in all fairness, they are spending money that is not designated in their budget, and they could be subject to reprimand if they spent it on something as frivolous as a party when it's really earmarked for something else. I guess that's the long and short of it. So they're asking for your approval.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, in a \$10 million budget there's a couple of thousand dollars under miscellaneous, Roy.

Go ahead, Diane.

MRS. SHUMYLA: I'm not sure if the Auditor General's office falls under this, but from my being in various government departments before I came to the Legislative Assembly, I think somewhere in the area of \$300 to \$500 could be allowed for a retirement function for a senior official.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So does the committee just want . . . Gary.

MR. FRIEDEL: I would make a motion that we reply to this letter respectfully declining to endorse this expenditure.

DR. MASSEY: Can we make that positive, urging them to make it a self-funding function?

10:24

MR. BRUSEKER: Why don't we send a letter suggesting that with the additional \$2,000 they've suddenly discovered, they apply it to their computer budget to purchase a personal computer?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good suggestion, Frank, but we have a motion on the floor. I'll call the question. All those in favour of Gary Friedel's motion? Opposed? Carried.

The next item of business is a conference, tab 7, the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees conference in Prince Edward Island on July 10 to 12. I think that's one of two conferences this committee has budgeted for sending one person to. Is that right, Diane?

Gary.

MR. FRIEDEL: I'm looking at the time, and I do have a commitment. So if I could make this quick, might I make a motion that the chairman be authorized to attend within the confines of the budget, and if he cannot attend, that he would appoint an alternate.

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

Other Business. Date of Next Meeting. I guess what we'll do is: when the session is over, we will meet again.

Thank you, gentlemen.

If I could have a motion to adjourn.

MR. BRUSEKER: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Frank. All in favour? Carried.

[The committee adjourned at 10:26 a.m.]

