

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

9:04 a.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Hierath]

THE CHAIRMAN: I'll call the meeting to order. The agenda is before you. Members of the committee, I would ask for approval of the agenda, please.

MR. SEVERTSON: I'll so move.

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

Also, the committee meeting minutes of April 26 are under tab 3. I hope you've all read them over. Is there any discussion? If not, would someone move the approval of the minutes of April 26? Ken. All in favour? Carried.

I would now like to welcome Peter Valentine, Auditor General, and Andrew Wingate and Don Neufeld from the Auditor General's office. I think that if you'll turn to tab 4, committee members, you'll see that the Auditor had written to me back at the end of April. We wanted you to come in today, Peter, just to welcome you to your new position, and this letter was an excuse to invite you just so the committee members would have a feeling of who their new Auditor General was. If there's anything else in this short time frame that you would like to bring up after we deal with this letter, feel free.

MR. VALENTINE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. You'll have to just let me catch up to the letter here. Oh, yeah, fees for the audit. Okay. Let me deal with that then.

Firstly, I should say just by way of introduction that I'm particularly pleased to be here this morning, and I look forward to a number of productive visits with you. I've had a busy three months. The government year-end is March, so when I arrived in the office, everybody was going full out, but I can tell you that I am now quite comfortable with my role, with the mandate, and with the authority of the office. I have made a point of working closely with every one of my senior people, and I am very pleased to tell you that I found a very high degree of professionalism in the office. I'm also on a program of trying to meet all of my clients and getting to know them. That, too, comes at the same time as the busy season rolls along, so I'm attending entry meetings and exit meetings and audit meetings and otherwise trying to meet everybody as soon as I can. Lastly, I should tell you that I've had wonderful support moving into the office, and that's a credit to both Andrew and the other assistant auditor generals, of which Don is one.

Dealing with the letter that I wrote to the chair on April 25, I would like to turn that matter over to Andrew, and we'll talk about the fee. We'll come back then and have Don talk about the financial statements which are concluded now. We're sort of, I might say, first off the mark with delivering a set of financial statements that have performance measurements in them that are full-cost financial statements. I think that's been a worthwhile exercise. Then I'll tell you some of my impressions in the first three months in office. We're going to conclude by talking a little bit about the irrigation district situation as it is at the moment. Then I'd be happy to answer any questions that the committee might have.

So, Andrew, perhaps you would proceed with the fee issue.

MR. WINGATE: Sure. Our auditors provided us with an estimate of \$11,550. That was for their '94-95 audit. Now, that was a 5 percent reduction over the fee for the preceding year, which in turn was a 5 percent reduction from the fee the year before. The estimate that they provided us with was based on the presumption that the nature of the audit wouldn't alter at all, but in point of fact, because of our requirement to produce improved financial statements, which Don will tell you about in a second, there were quite a number of issues which the auditors needed to deal with.

They had to look closely at some new accounting policies that we'd developed, which we think are appropriate, but obviously as auditors they had to examine the accounting policies and satisfy themselves that they were appropriate.

We also included pension and vacation pay liabilities for the first time, so they had to audit that area.

We've introduced the concept of work in progress as far as our audits are concerned, and because this was the first time introduction of work in progress, they had to audit no less than three year-ends because we did it retroactively.

They also had to audit costs paid by others because we decided that in order to reflect the full cost of operations of our office, we'd incorporate the costs that were in fact paid by other departments. As a result of that, they had to audit this cost.

All of that involved a significant increase, and what they'd like to do is bill us for an additional \$3,600 this year only. Next year they're proposing to revert to the original fee of some \$11,550. That's their estimate for next year. We've considered the increased charge, and frankly we think it's reasonable. So we would encourage your approval of the increase in the fee.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Perhaps we should deal with that one first. Are there any questions of Andrew or any of the group over the increase of \$3,600? Actually what we need at the end is a motion of some sort to deal with this issue.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the Auditor General has a budget of X amount of dollars. I can't recall it right now. What is the total?

THE CHAIRMAN: Ten million.

MR. KOWALSKI: Ten million, and this committee has to deal with a request for \$3,600?

MR. VALENTINE: No, you don't. I think it's really a matter of courtesy that we bring the issue to you.

MR. KOWALSKI: Oh, okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: But it's paid for out of Leg. Offices because the Legislative Offices holds the Auditors office accountable.

MR. WINGATE: The committee in the past has taken an active interest in the audit fee and has asked for tenders and that sort of thing. So it was a question of keeping everyone informed as to what was transpiring.

MR. VALENTINE: I might just observe, Mr. Chairman, that for those audits that we have agents appointed for -- and they work at our direction -- most of them are already full accrual, full costing, financial statements. Some wouldn't have all of the fixed assets or capital assets recorded yet, but they would have dealt with things like accrual for revenue and expenses and all of that.

I wouldn't think that this kind of a blip would occur across the board, but certainly it will occur in some of the engagements that we are involved with agents on. They are not as far along in the area of performance measurements as the office of the Auditor General is, and that is a significant difference between the private sector and our office. So I can see that we'll be discussing fees with our agents over the course of the next few months.

MR. BRASSARD: So I assume this is simply related to a change in procedures, a deviation of process, and once they get the process back on line, then they'll be able to return to their original \$11,500.

MR. VALENTINE: That's a good way to put it, yeah. There's a learning step here. As you move -- and it's the government's desire to move to full accrual, full consolidation type financial statements. You're very familiar with that, I'm sure.

MR. BRASSARD: I believe that when we ask for a change in routine that has a cost associated with it, we should be prepared to accept the financial liability of requesting such a change. I would move that we accept this recommendation.

9:14

THE CHAIRMAN: So would you like your motion to read that we approve the \$3,600 additional cost for audit?

MR. BRASSARD: Yes. On a onetime basis, and then we can return to the base fee the following year.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any discussion on Roy's motion? Seeing none, all those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

MR. NEUFELD: Okay. Well, if I could just take a minute to tell you about the changes that occurred in our statements. I've left Diane with four sets of information, that she'll pass out to the committee later. One of them is the 1995 audited financial statements, which we received from the auditors on Monday of this week. I've also made a copy of last year's statements that you can look at for comparative purposes, and you'll notice quite a difference.

The other two documents relate to accountability. We had prepared a document last fall -- and I'll mention that a little bit later -- that you may find of interest. Some of you have seen it before, a few members of the Public Accounts Committee.

The financial statements that we are presenting you with today are different in two major respects. For the first time ever they include all of the operating costs of the offices, which Andrew mentioned, but they also include much more performance information than we've ever included before. We believe that these changes will provide better accountability to this committee as well as to the Legislative Assembly as the statements will be published in the public accounts.

Some very brief highlights. Previous statements only included a statement of revenue and expenditure and some brief notes. We now present a complete set of financial statements with a balance sheet, a statement of operations, a statement of changes in financial position, expanded notes, and three schedules containing performance information. The balance sheet discloses our capital assets at amortized cost, our share of the unfunded pension liability, our receivables, et cetera.

The statement of operations includes all costs, including those paid by others. The major item there is leased accommodation. It reports for the first time amortization of capital assets instead of expenditure on capital assets. You'll notice that the statement

reports a decrease in our net cost of operations over last year of about 1 and a half million dollars, which represents a 15 percent decrease in one year. We feel that's a significant accomplishment.

The statements include accountability information in the form of budget to actual comparisons and salary disclosure. The three new schedules that we've attached include output costs by ministry, our recommendation work, which is associated with the production of our annual report, and the status of those recommendations. It discloses our average hourly costs compared to those that we pay to agents when they do audits on our behalf. They also show our public reporting dates, which were significantly earlier this year, both for the consolidated financial statements and our annual report.

We believe that these statements set a standard for others to follow and that they demonstrate our commitment to accountability. We intend to add more performance information in the future.

I know that you will need some time to examine these statements, and if you have questions that arise from them, we'd be very happy to respond to them either in a meeting or over the phone or in writing, whichever method you prefer. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. WINGATE: Mr. Chairman, just to echo some of Don's comments. This question of the performance information, which we've provided in the schedules -- as Don said, we will be expanding on this, but it would be very nice to hear the committee's reaction to this additional information. We believe this is the future of reporting in the public sector. So we'd be very interested in the committee's reaction to the information.

MR. BRASSARD: I don't have that information in front of me, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: No. It's going to be passed out. It's the bottom material, Diane.

MR. NEUFELD: We just received it from the auditors Monday evening late.

MR. BRASSARD: Oh, I see. Okay.

MR. WINGATE: So when the committee's had a chance to study the financial statements, as Don said, we'd be very pleased to answer any queries you might have but also specific reactions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I guess, then, from that standpoint it would be something that we might have on the agenda for another meeting -- is that what you're saying? -- after we have a chance to digest it.

MR. VALENTINE: At your pleasure.

THE CHAIRMAN: So if it's the committee's wish, we'll carry on. You had another item, Peter, that you wanted to bring up?

MR. VALENTINE: Well, I thought you might like to know the impressions of a new boy on the block, I guess would be a good way to put it. The first thing I might say with respect to these financial statements: while you probably will not have seen the financial statements of a major accounting firm before -- because those happen to be partnerships, and they don't let that information out very often -- these statements are not unlike financial state-

ments that you would expect to see if you were looking at the statements of Ernst & Young or Coopers or KPMG. They're very similar in construction. I just thought I might talk about some of the things that I found in -- I refer to it as the "practice." We are a practising office of independent accounting, so there are a few thoughts I'd like to leave with you.

Firstly, as coming from the private sector and 37 years in it, I'm very impressed with the calibre and the experience of the professional staff. We have a number of situations where we don't have a full portfolio of clients in the same industry, and where that exists and we want to make sure that we're focusing on the right things and focusing to an appropriate extent, I have asked members of the profession to come in and look over our shoulder, if you like, and tell us whether or not our audit process is appropriate in those areas where either I feel there's a high risk of audit failure or where our experience is limited. I intend to continue to use such consulting advice to the office in order to ensure that the very highest standard of audit service is available from our office to our clients.

I'm in the position now for three months. There are two things that I have not spent any particular time with: one is the overall organization of the office; the other is the structure of the audit philosophy, which is the basis of our work. What we have organized is some strategic planning activity, and in the course of that strategic planning activity, which we'll carry on during the middle of the summer and perhaps a little bit into the fall, we will look at those two things. We may have some more things to tell you about that as the fall comes around.

The office does operate very much like a private-sector firm. It has the usual budgets and control of time spent in engagements. I did not find any surprises when I started to be there full-time. I do have a concern about the extent to which we're using technology. I think in order to be efficient and to be competitive and to increase our productivity in the long term, we're going to have to deal with the issue of coming up to date with technology. Our E-mail capability is not great. We are involving ourselves with Internet, but there's some further updating that we need to do in that area. We have an outdated telephone system, which does not allow our staff who are out in all those client offices all the time to adequately communicate with our office here in Edmonton or, for that matter, the office in Calgary. We are definitely going to have to deal with that. We have asked Public Works, Supply and Services to get involved with us on that score. In today's modern audit world there's a strong need for the field staff to be able to communicate electronically with the office and to pass documents and files back and forth electronically, and we are in need of upgrading our remote communication capabilities. Our laptop computer equipment is very old.

9:24

MR. NEUFELD: Very old.

MR. VALENTINE: Very old. In fact, I can tell you that my predecessor firm threw out the same kind of equipment four years ago. So we need to deal with that.

In the fullness of time I see that audit files will be mostly electronic. We will move away from thick paper files. There will be little or no need to keep masses of paper. So as we move to that electronic file, we need to properly equip the field staff with the necessary hardware.

You will be aware that we are reducing our office space by 25 percent on June 30, and the tenders are going to go out momentarily. So we are recognizing the fact that we've had a downsizing in our staff, and we need to use our existing space more efficiently.

There may be some need to update our furniture at the staff levels for workstations and the like. Most of the chairs and most of the existing workstation dividers are well worn out. We need to carefully look at this, come back to you and tell you what some of our problems are, and have you understand where we think we should be going. So we will return with specific proposals on replacement furniture and with a specific proposal on the telephone system.

The last few thoughts are that you'll be aware of some communication that has occurred in connection with the records management system and the proposal for inclusion in the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act at the end of the session which has just risen. We continue to have concern over our records management. We have to comply with the Institute of Chartered Accountants' code of ethics on client files and who accesses them. We have an involvement by the archivist because they are files with respect to provincial government matters, and we need to deal with our space and our storage bill in an appropriate manner. So what I would intend to do, until such time as the matter of the appropriate amendment is dealt with, is institute a formal records management policy in the office, and we will follow along on that until we can see what happens with the proposed amendment.

The profession is changing in its composition. It used to be very much a pyramid-structured organization where a large number of students came in at the bottom, grew up through practising offices, and if they weren't candidates for partnership, they left the firm. The profession very much was an up or out employer. The profession was also a large educator, the cost of which was borne by fees charged to clients. That is changing quite dramatically, and the pyramid has disappeared. It looks something like a whisky keg now, with a smaller base, a little fatter in the middle, and not so pointed at the top. There are fewer students available to pursue either a CMA or a CGA or a CA. The competition for them is more intense. Interestingly enough, the salary levels are not going up that much at that entry level, but good students are becoming harder to find. I have a concern for the future over the lack of availability of good personnel. One of the things we'll do in our strategic planning is look at what the office should look like in five years' time, and we will come back and tell you what we think our human resource issues are.

Lastly, we're on target for the release of the combined financial statements of the public accounts in June. So far as I am aware, we have at this point no material outstanding issues with the statement preparers.

Mr. Chairman, with that, I might just ask Andrew to briefly talk about the irrigation districts and then open it for questions.

MR. WINGATE: Sure. As you're aware, there was a change in the Irrigation Act. Previously we were automatically appointed auditors of all irrigation districts, although they're not part of the government reporting entity, and that seemed illogical to us. If you'll remember, we discussed it with this committee. As a result of that discussion, it was concluded that a change in the legislation was appropriate. That change has now been put through.

Some districts have expressed an interest in our continuing to be involved. What Peter's going to do is send them a letter saying that if they are keen to appoint us, then they'll have to pay our full normal audit costs, whereas previously they weren't paying our full audit costs, and that it would have to receive the agreement of this committee because it would be a 12(b) audit. The reason for that is that they're not part of public accounts, so they're outside our strict mandate. So what would happen is that if Peter agreed with being appointed, he would bring it to this committee and seek your

approval to the appointment. So you might get a few of those in the next few months.

So that's what happening on the irrigation districts.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. We've got time for a few quick questions before the Chief Electoral Officer comes in.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Valentine, in your letter that you sent on April 25, in the third paragraph it reads, "Major accounting policy changes have been made to capitalize and amortize capital [costs]." Are you talking about internal capital costs within the office of the Auditor General or the overall policy to try and evaluate the capital side of government?

MR. VALENTINE: The latter.

MR. KOWALSKI: The latter?

MR. VALENTINE: Sorry. Maybe I don't understand the question.

MR. NEUFELD: This is the matter of the increased fee; right?

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes, this is correct. Your letter of April 25.

MR. VALENTINE: Our own capital costs in our own office, yes, which is part of the whole drive to capitalize.

MR. KOWALSKI: I'd like to ask the question about how you evaluate the capital side of government, the assets of government. In the recent Provincial Treasurer's report they've designated and basically said that the province of Alberta has capital assets of X billions of dollars, yet two-thirds of the landmass of Alberta is nondeeded land. I want to figure out how you guys come to a conclusion on what the value of that is, on that two-thirds of Alberta which is nondeeded land, all the petroleum reserves owned by the Crown in right of the people of Alberta, and our trillions and trillions of trees, which all have a value. It includes all the other, the bridges and the roads and everything else. It seems to me the figure that you fellows came up with was something like \$8 billion, if I recall. I may be out a bit. It seems to me that that figure should have a lot more zeros behind it than that.

So this is a question of policy, and I'm not sure, Mr. Chairman, when we ask this policy question of the Auditor General other than here today. In terms of how, if you don't have all the answers this morning, perhaps at a future time you can come back with the criteria that you use to determine what the value of government is. Governments only deal with deficits, it seems. They never deal with assets. It's that philosophic question I'd like an answer for.

MR. VALENTINE: Well, two things. One, by way of introduction it has occurred to me that one of the things that we might do as an office is do a show-and-tell on where the accounting world is going in connection with public-sector accounting. We're only sort of halfway down the trail at this point, and there are a whole lot of chapters to be written yet.

Andrew is a member of a task force at the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants which is dealing with the difficult questions that arise in accounting for not-for-profits, and governments are in the not-for-profit category. At the moment -- and I'll get Andrew to supplement my answer -- the birthright assets, if you want to call the forest, the land, the trees, the water, and the sky birthright assets, are not recorded at anything other than their original cost, which is nothing, the dollar sort of thing. The assets we put in place -- the bridges, roads, buildings, cars,

trucks, desks, buildings like this one -- are being recorded at their historical cost and depreciated at historical cost. Perhaps you'd like to expand on that, Andrew, but the model is that those assets that we've constructed and are consumable will enter into the determination of the cost.

9:34

Now, one further point I'd like to make is that it's the responsibility of the government, notably the Treasury Department, to prepare and co-ordinate the preparation of financial statements and our responsibility to audit those financial statements, but we are advocates of good accounting principles and good accounting disclosure.

Andrew, would you add to that?

MR. WINGATE: Yeah. Peter's given a very comprehensive answer. The objective I think predominantly is to reflect the government's true cost of service delivery. To the extent that in delivering a service you're consuming the capital asset base, consuming an infrastructure, then you should be aware of the rate at which you're consuming that infrastructure. Now, this is all on a historical cost basis, but it's useful information because infrastructure doesn't last indefinitely. To heighten people's awareness of the fact that it's being consumed and the extent to which it's being consumed is useful, and our view is that to reflect that cost in program cost is also useful.

Your question about minerals under the ground, Crown lands, trees, forests, because money wasn't spent on that -- it was, as Peter said, our inheritance -- that's not factored in this at all. It's where the government spends money on an asset that's going to last a number of years, and what we're doing is reflecting the consumption of that asset in the period over which it's consumed. That's the objective. So to say that we're recording all capital assets of the province is not so at all. All we're doing is recording how we're consuming the money that we've spent. I think that's probably a fairer definition of it. As I said originally, it gets back to this cost of program delivery. That's the objective.

MR. BRUSEKER: Looking at your financial statement here, on schedule 1 you refer to funds expended on opinion projects versus recommendation projects. I wonder if you can tell me the difference between those.

MR. VALENTINE: The opinion project is the Auditor's report on the financial statement: we have examined and in our opinion presents fairly. Recommendation work is that part of our mandate which falls under section 19 of the Auditor General Act wherein we are interested in the efficiency and the economy of government's method of conducting its business. So we are significantly interested in: is there a system in place to run this business, and if there is a system, is it working?

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess a question then comes out of that. As I look at the list, of course Treasury is the highest because it's going to be the most involved in financial issues, but some of the recommendation project costs are quite significant and in some places exceed the cost of the opinion project costs. A couple that jump off the page are Executive Council, Justice, and then down at the bottom Legislative Assembly, where it's almost 8 to 1. I'm wondering why that would be.

MR. VALENTINE: Firstly, Frank, you can't relate one column to the other because in the recommendation work we are taking specific areas and looking at them. For example, I happen to know

that in Justice we looked at the fine collection business, and there's a substantial piece of the Auditor General's report which relates to that. The recommendation project column really is the Auditor General's report. It may deal with things that are encompassed in the financial statements, and it may deal with entirely different things in the same department.

Would you expand on that, Andrew?

MR. WINGATE: Surely. Just picking up the Executive Council, Executive Council is obviously not a large department, but what's in there are all the recommendations which apply to the government as a whole. In other words, they're not focused on an individual entity; they're focused on the government as a whole. So all our recommendations concerning accountability and performance measurement and those sorts of things are clustered under Executive Council because the recommendation went to Executive Council. That's why those costs appear so high.

Our recommendation work is launched where we think we can make recommendations for improvement. Sometimes you can improve a small operation significantly, and sometimes it's a large operation. So recommendation work doesn't have a strict relationship, as Peter was saying, to the size of the organization. It's the potential for improvement that's the important point.

MR. VALENTINE: The other significant thing is that this won't be the same year to year because our emphasis will be in other areas. So I can't tell you, for example, that the relationship of recommendation work in agriculture, which is one-tenth of the audit fee, would be that relationship next year. It could be two times the audit fee depending upon what we decide is the project we should go looking at.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. I understand what you're saying then. I should be looking at the recommendation projects dollars column and perhaps comparing it instead to the annual report total number of recommendations column.

MR. NEUFELD: Exactly.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, then, I guess the question that has to be asked is: how come you spent 25 grand and came up with no recommendations for the Legislative Assembly?

MR. WINGATE: That's not good. That's not good. This is accountability information, so it's good and sometimes it's not good. If we spent a bunch of money and didn't produce a recommendation, that's not good news. I mean, that's not what we're about. But underneath that there might well have been some useful recommendations to management which never made it to the Auditor General's report from a standpoint of significance, and that does happen. So we go in and we think we've got an issue, and having audited it, we realize that we might have a small issue but it's not a big issue, and we're not going to take up the time of the Legislative Assembly with a small issue. So what we do is we cut our losses, send in a management letter with the recommendations which we think are useful, and back out. Basically it's not good to spend a bunch of money and come up with no recommendations. That's our philosophy.

MR. VALENTINE: On the other hand, it's nice to know that the systems that are in place are there and working. You could end up going in and looking at a particular area and coming away from it saying: "Well, they're doing a good job here, and those systems that they have are the right ones. They're managing their business

with a system, and the systems are working." So that audit process in and of itself is of value to the Legislature.

MR. BRUSEKER: So there's really no way of quantifying what it costs to come up with recommendations. You look until you figure you've done the job, and then you look at the recommendations that come out of that investigation you've done. Is that sort of a summary?

MR. VALENTINE: That's right. I suppose in the fullness of time what should happen to the office of the Auditor General is that we should have a peer review. We would have some chartered accountants come and examine how we do things. To some extent I'm having that done, as I spoke about earlier, in the areas where I think there's risk to audit failure. I'm having another professional come and look at what we do, challenge what we do, and make recommendations for improving what we do. We're having that done internally. I come from a very litigious business environment, and I tend to think of audits as a measurement of risk of failure, and if you get the right measurement of the risk of failure and then do the right audit work, you can be assured that the opinion is properly placed on the financial statements. I think I've expressed that to some of you before. It's the way I believe the practice should be run, and it's the way we're moving. The whole profession's moving that way.

9:44

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. I'm going to take one more quick question, because we've got to roll along with the next group.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, maybe I should leave it; it's philosophical. My understanding of your response to Ken was that we don't factor in the assets of the province until they're capitalized on, that we don't count the value of property or natural resources or trees or whatever until somehow they're brought into play. Based on the fact that the province's future is dependent on those very assets, how do we go about monitoring the viability of the province without monitoring the rate of consumption of those assets? It would seem to me illogical not to have some kind of a list out there with a value established so that we know if at the rate of consumption we're going to be bankrupt in 20 years, if you follow me. But that's philosophical.

The main question that I wanted to know was: will you be bringing back a list on a priority basis of the equipment and procedures that you'd like to put in your office that are going to have cost implications?

MR. VALENTINE: Yeah, we will. One of the mandates that I have imposed upon myself is to look at where the profession will be five years from now -- six years from now will be the end of my term -- and say: what kind of an audit office will we have? The first thing one has to do on that is say: "Well, what kind of a government are we going to have? What business will you be in? How will it conduct its business? How will we audit that business?" So it's my desire to get some strategic planning done so that we look at our human resources, our use of technology, the nature of the work we're going to do, come up with a focus on that, and come back to you and say, "Okay, this is what we think is the picture as it's going to unfold in the fullness of time, and here's, we think, the resources we are going to need to accomplish that."

I'm actually very excited about it. I can tell you that in KPMG we reduced service staff per hundred members of the firm by a factor of one-half, or 100 percent, whichever way you want to do your math. We reduced them to half of what they were just

through technology. We don't have people answering other people's telephones anymore. We don't have people typing original handwork anymore, because most people have access to a laptop. The material is typed from a template in the field. It comes in, it eventually gets a look by a professional person to make sure it meets firm standards, and it moves on. Those kinds of things are rolling along very quickly, and it will change the structure of our office. So that's exciting, a good challenge.

MR. BRASSARD: That could be expensive.

MR. VALENTINE: Well, I don't know. If you achieve your economies and efficiencies in the right way and then reinvest in your people and in technology, then I hope you'll be able to look at those kinds of cost reductions. There was \$1.4 million off the bottom of the operating line in the office over a year period. Further achievements of good performance of the office will come through productivity. I'm absolutely certain that's where it'll come. So we must determine how we're going to achieve those further productivity gains.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, what are we going to do with this report? Is this coming back?

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, yes. That's why we weren't going to hand it out, because it takes some time to digest, and if you're at . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, may I ask one question, then, of the Auditor General when he does come back?

THE CHAIRMAN: Sure.

MR. KOWALSKI: It has to do with note 9 on page 7 of the report. It has to do with something that I'll ask the Auditor General to do a review of. It has to do with payouts for vacation leave. We're talking about senior managers in the public service. There's no prescribed union card that they have to sign in. There's no card that they have to put in a clock at the beginning of the day that says they only work seven or eight hours a day. Since this government has moved in the direction it has in terms of downsizing, restricting salaries, caps, and the like, there is a thought among some departments in this government that, in essence, the way you reward or get around that is by giving to your senior managers this, quote, payout vacation entitlement. There are some ministers who refuse to sign this. It would be interesting to know what the philosophy of the new Auditor General is with respect to his own staff in the future, whether or not he will sign, approve these things. It would also be of interest to see what is happening in other departments of the government. Are all senior managers now finding that they're doing all this extra overtime and putting in a claim annually for a vacation entitlement of \$5,000 to \$10,000 and getting it, or is this just in a few departments of government? I'll just leave that as a part; I'll raise it the next time you come back.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's conclude on that. It should be an interesting discussion when we come back at our next meeting, Peter. I thank you and Don and Andrew for coming.

MR. VALENTINE: Well, let me just close on this one point. I retired from a firm. When you retire as a partner, there's nobody to pay your leftover holidays. I left 31 days on the table. But that's 37 years of accumulation, too. I don't intend to leave any days on the table in 2001. I'll take my holidays.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, and we will meet again.

[The committee adjourned from 9:51 a.m. to 9:53 a.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. We will reconvene, and I'd like to welcome Derm Whelan, the Chief Electoral Officer, and assistant Brian Fjeldheim. The first agenda item is number 5, committee members, in your booklet, and the second page there is a letter that Derm sent to me in April, and I think you maybe have all read it. I will ask Derm to give a little overview of the contents of that letter. Derm, if you want to. Welcome.

MR. WHELAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Simply put, Canada is very interested in having their provinces participate in overseas missions as necessary, and that includes an electoral component. So what they have devised at this peacekeeping school is a scholarship that would involve electoral personnel from across Canada and preparations primarily for that. There's no doubt about the fact that this is tailored to encourage and support people from electoral offices in Canada who might or might not be permitted or asked to go on missions, asked by the federal jurisdiction usually and permitted by the provincial. So it's been a common thing in Canada for the last decade, and it in itself is a great opportunity to make a contribution at an international level to the emerging democracies, usually, and to the electoral process.

In terms of the funding, Elections Canada will pay either jointly with the department of defence or solely. I'm not quite sure of that, but at least they'll pay for the \$2,000 course, which provides accommodation, training, and also meals, in Nova Scotia, in Greenwood at the Lester Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. Now, the only kicker is that we would have to cover the transport for any person going there, and my view of that is that it's not unusual for a scholarship not to include transportation. We may, if the committee agreed, very likely not send more than one person in any given year. We might for the purpose use air points that have been accumulated. So that's the financial aspect briefly stated.

The Emergency Measures Organization, which I've been involved in in other jurisdictions, used to take people from every government department for special training in either identification, emergency feeding, emergency measures, whatever would be, to address contingencies or emergencies that arose in the various provinces. Here in Alberta I think this is going to go to the private sector very shortly, but of course there's still a need to have an emergency response group available provincially for floods, disasters, whatever. So there is that locally, and I think that people who have had the benefit of the courses at this peacekeeping school might be useful in the emergency measures responses.

During elections, unless there's something quite serious, as there was in Saskatchewan with the flooding during the last election -- and they had contingency plans to defer the election in a number of districts. Unless there's something like that -- it's probably most unusual, though, to even suggest that. An emergency type of response or some training at that school might be helpful during elections. Nevertheless, it is a staff development opportunity, and it proposes a course on crisis resolution. I've seen many people working with returning officers and candidates who feel aggrieved, not able to resolve problems that should be resolved. I would think in a practical sense that could be very useful training for my deputy or somebody else in my office, perhaps myself. I've been exposed to some of it already. You see the 12 things that they have on their curriculum, and the one that would attract me most would be the conflict resolution techniques that they discuss.

So I guess I'm just simply asking if we can do this and hopefully be able to avoid travel costs by using air points.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Derm.

Do any of the committee members have any questions on this topic to either Derm or Brian?

MR. DICKSON: Well, I've got one. What other sorts of opportunities would there be for people working for Alberta elections to experience difficult situations and that sort of thing? What other opportunities are there independent of this particular situation here?

MR. WHELAN: Well, the one that arises most frequently is with the First Nations people. Sometimes they get in a position where they don't want enumerations on their designated lands, and sometimes, depending on whatever the mood is at the moment of a particular community, they don't even want polling stations there. So there's a situation where there could be a practical application of good negotiating and conflict resolution skills. That's a more practical one than the one I've given recently, but I didn't want to refer specifically to First Nations peoples.

There are other instances that come to mind. Sometimes groups of people take the point of view that they want to boycott an election, and it may be necessary to talk to them and at least attempt to prevent any outright interference or harassment of people campaigning. But these instances don't occur frequently. The more frequent one -- and we've had long sessions on dealing with First Nations at a national level -- is probably the only time, and it may never happen in this province. I don't know. But it certainly has happened in many other provinces. That may be the best application, Gary, that I could suggest to you.

MR. DICKSON: I was a bit foggy maybe in the question. What I was meaning was not so much other applications but in terms of -- if we agreed that this was a useful kind of experience for people in the Alberta elections organization to have, what other opportunities are there for them to take this kind of training to prepare them to deal with those kinds of emergency situations and so on independent of this?

MR. WHELAN: Nothing. This is it apart from what the United Nations or the association of British Commonwealth states might give you in terms of a one- or two-day briefing on the site after you arrive when you may have decided that you're sorry you ever came. It really was badly needed. That's why this school was struck.

I don't know how much time I have to discuss this, but you know people are talking about Bosnia and withdrawing Canadian troops today. Canadian troops in Bosnia are not involved in peacekeeping. They're peacekeepers caught in the middle of a war trying to provide humanitarian aid, which they can't do. Since 1991 ten have been killed and 50 have been wounded. Let's say that there was going to be an election there. Well, the electoral part of the component that went to assist with that -- it would stand to reason they would have some preparation. So this was the philosophy out of which the school came and hence the invitation to the people that were involved in democratic development.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Whelan, you have a budget overall for your little organization of -- what? -- \$4 million or something.

10:03

MR. WHELAN: Oh, I think it's more than that.

MR. KOWALSKI: More than that?

MR. WHELAN: Oh, yes.

MR. KOWALSKI: So we've got a request here on a piece of paper to send somebody on some little educational process. As far as I'm concerned, you're supposed to be the chief administrator in that office; you make that decision. I don't want to waste my time discussing it in here.

Then we're a long way from Bosnia. I've been through five elections in the province of Alberta, and quite frankly the kinds of difficulties you're going to experience in the province of Alberta are very, very few, I would think. If you want to deal with the native people in the province of Alberta, have a polling station on the reserve, hire Indian people from the reserve to be the enumerators, and have all of the officials be native people from the reserve. It's amazing how it works all of a sudden. It works very, very well. But if we go with the white guy coming on the reserve to do the enumeration, the polling station on the reserve and everything done by white people, then it's not going to work in the province of Alberta. So you make the decision if you want to send somebody to a course, but I don't think we have to tell you to do a course in Bosnia or anything else. Let's focus on Alberta and keeping Alberta alive.

MR. WHELAN: I don't have anything further.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, my comment was along the same line. I thought this could be handled under the normal staff developmental budgetary process more so than anything. I would think that if the Chief Electoral Officer feels it's worth while to attend one of these courses, then I think he should make that decision and have someone attend and take advantage of the federal participation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Is that the general feeling of the committee?

MR. DICKSON: Do you need a motion, Mr. Chairman, to leave this matter to the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer?

THE CHAIRMAN: I don't think so.

MR. DICKSON: Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. WHELAN: Mr. Chairman, having reached a consensus on those points, may I take it that, generally, affairs of this nature I may not bring before the committee?

MR. KOWALSKI: Yeah. We have the opportunity to evaluate you on an annual basis. So if I change my view and say that you've misbehaved, I'll get you when you come back for the annual assessment. So you do it at risk.

MR. WHELAN: Yes, I know. That has happened to many people.

THE CHAIRMAN: Good. Okay. We will go on to item 6 perhaps. I'm not exactly sure what you want to say on this point, Derm, except maybe the committee would like to meet with the two gentlemen listed there on item 6.

MR. WHELAN: Well, I guess that's the main point. Roy has met the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada in the context of the subcommittee's work with respect to enumerations. At that time

he offered to come, and the Chief Electoral Officer of Quebec -- and they are implementing a permanent list -- has also offered to appear before the committee. So I just wanted to put this on the agenda to ask, first, if you would like this to occur and, second, to get some idea of the time frame, or time line. Nothing more than that. If you want to defer it and talk about it privately, go ahead.

THE CHAIRMAN: You know, that item should maybe have been after we discussed the voter registration and some of the other things that we want to change or that the committee was recommending.

If Roy wants to say a few words, then we'll just move on to item 7, and at some future date . . .

MR. BRASSARD: I was just going to simply suggest that we go to item 7 and come back, and if we've agreed on the voter registration methodology change, then we should talk to the Chief Electoral Officer.

MR. DICKSON: Well, perhaps we could bring it back after we deal with 7 and 8. Those are the other two substantive matters.

THE CHAIRMAN: Sure. Good. Will do.

Okay. Go ahead, then, on the benefit-cost analysis of voter registration, Derm or Brian, whichever one of you gentlemen is going to handle that one. That's under tab 7, gentlemen.

MR. WHELAN: I've provided a very brief executive summary of this paper. Those who have been involved with the committee will know that there are reams of documents and all kinds of literature on this particular topic, which we've tried to keep to a limit, but there's still been a great volume of paper.

The focus of the study was to analyze approximately 23 different types of processes used for either the registration of electors or the census type, or enumeration type, of registration that occurs in a number of jurisdictions around the world. With the exception of the United States and a couple of particular states we looked at, we tried to keep it within the realm of the British parliamentary process, or system.

So we looked at Canada, Australia, and South Africa in particular, but we focused on five groups. We looked at those that use the census type of enumeration, like Alberta does and like Canada federally does and like most provinces do, with the exception of British Columbia. We looked at the Alberta practice, at least at the municipal level, of having elections without any list of electors whatsoever. Then we looked at jurisdictions that either had permanent lists or computer-managed databases. There was really only one complete one, and that was the British Columbia model. One partially complete was Elections Canada computer-assisted enumeration. We looked then to the private-sector and public-sector possibilities.

Now, there are two charts. I only sent up one, though. There's a typo on that page. It should just say one chart. But I sent a marginal analysis with it, a table, which I'll come back to in a moment.

We tried to identify the benefits of the five groups comprising a total of 23 methodologies. The first thing we looked at was: is there a way to do this that will enhance revenue or make possible the sharing of the costs with other jurisdictions, meaning either with the federal jurisdiction or with municipalities? In the back of our minds we were thinking even of the more recent creatures that are emerging, like hospital boards, and of course we always have the school boards, the possibility of referenda, plebiscites, et cetera. So we placed that first among the benefits to measure.

Secondly, administrative value: does it diminish or improve the efficiency or the quality of the work that's done at the administrative level? We looked at efficiencies of time. Integrity referred to the security of the vote, making sure that only one person voted once in the right place for the candidates that were running in that particular district. We looked at the political and the campaign value to all candidates and political parties of these different systems.

I think the core issues are the availability, the completeness, the currency, and the accuracy of the list. I think I would have to say that of all the lists I have seen in Canada, very few can meet the StatsCan standard, which has an error of 3 percent. In their door-to-door census their standard is: it's not finished until they have 97 percent of the population. I don't believe that any enumeration in Canada ever does that, but I think a permanent list might. So the currency, keeping it up to date, keeping it complete, and keeping it accurate and available and hopefully for multiple uses: these were the 10 points that were measured on the benefits matrix that we constructed. We did that fairly scientifically. It's a collection of election experts, you might say, using the best of their reasoning with respect to this particular subject and ranking it, but still, you know, when you rank benefits, there's always sort of a qualitative element in the judgment. So we tried to reduce it to yes and no questions, and there are in total 50 of them, 2 points each to make the matrix.

So now if you look to the table -- you may not have it in front of you, but I think you may in your books see the marginal analysis -- you'll see that the ranking goes from a joint venture with Canada on a permanent list basis to one that we did on our own here -- again, it's at 98 -- down to the North Dakota method, where people don't even register. They just come to the polls and they vote and they take an affirmation at the poll. But still it's very costly, and they're ranked at 23. So the benefit value of each has been ranked, and I think that probably there's no need to belabour the detail.

10:13

On the cost side we list two types of financial indicators. One is the cost per elector over a three-year cycle. We went over the history of enumerations in Alberta, and generally there have been three in a 10-year period. So we figure that, all right, we'll use the three-year cost-per-electors figure. If you look at the chart, again you'll see that the Alberta status quo model, which is about two-thirds of the way down, ranks at 48, and the cost now is \$2.33 per elector in this three-year cycle. Now, to convert that to the 10 years, of course, if it were annualized, I'd multiply it by 10 times the total number of voters in the province. That's the control factor in the analysis. Having done that, then it is necessary to compare the costs and the benefits. Now, this marginal analysis is the ratio between the benefit and the cost per elector, and then they're ranked in ascending numerical order to indicate which has scored highest in terms of its benefits and its costs. The lowest cost with the highest benefit I think almost always has the best ranking.

I have another set of tables. They are 10 tables with a complete statistical analysis. I don't really think it's necessary to burden you with that, but certainly I'd like to give Roy a copy and other members of the committee. I think Frank mentioned at our last meeting on enumerations that he'd like to see a weighted analysis, which we've done. We've made the costs also equal to a hundred and made the total score 200. So that kind of a table has been done too.

The marginal analysis certainly clearly indicates that in terms of quality and cost a permanent list of electors, especially if the cost is shared by Elections Canada, is probably the best way to go. Now, to make you current on that, this is just a little clip from the *Hill Times* in Ottawa. Mr. Kingsley, the Chief Electoral Officer of

Canada, is working almost weekly in meetings with Peter Milliken, the chair of the House of Commons House affairs committee, which is dealing with the implementation of the royal commission recommendations on elections in Canada. They're very quickly getting to the point where they're prepared to go with a permanent list of electors. In talking with him earlier this week, we have a firm letter of agreement, an agreement in principle that we'll work together towards that end if it is the will of the parliament here, this committee first, the caucuses, you know, the routine way things are done.

So I very quickly have come to a conclusion. The ranking and the charts are available to you if you want them for greater detail. Perhaps I might just ask Diane if she would -- later when the meeting is finished, the members might want to take them. Our recommendation is that Alberta adopt the laws, regulations, and procedures required for the development of a permanent list of electors in a joint venture with Canada. The list should be capable of multiple uses.

I'll tell you now that we haven't considered possible revenue in the use of this list in other electoral events. For example, if we had a list that could be used by Alberta in this coming municipal election that was available at reasonable cost, I would think they would share the production of the list by paying the going tariff for that list. However, now to implement this, I think it is fair that it needs input from the party caucuses and that there has to be legislation and an understanding that certainly the confidentiality of the list and the privacy of electors will be respected. This is not for wholesale publication. As a matter of fact, in the draft amendments that I've done, I've written the amendment so that the list will not change. All that will be available publicly is the family name, the initials, and the address, period. Privately you need all the other data to track individuals on computer files. It's not possible to do it with just an initial and a family name; you have to have more. However, that information is very private, quite confidential, and would not be released. The given names would have to be given to the federal jurisdiction for their purposes, because they require that for their elections. Other than that, it would not change. So we're trying to keep in focus the issues that arise from the freedom of information and privacy Act.

Anyway, we've come to the point where the most cost-effective and efficient method available today in Alberta for the generation of a permanent list would involve the use of current databases, such as motor vehicle lists and other lists. In Quebec they're using the health list, and they're doing it not by accessing the health list but just using it to confirm their data: just the name, address, postal code, the harmless generic information they can get out of any directory. As far as addresses are concerned, you can get it from most telephone books. They, of course, have freedom of information and privacy laws that are very stringent. The Chief Electoral Officer of Canada is working with the Privacy Commissioner for Canada to develop a method that will be acceptable to him and at the same time make possible a permanent list of electors.

So I wanted to stress that this focus on privacy and confidentiality is part and parcel of the recommendation.

I think at this part, Mr. Chairman, perhaps I'd just answer questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. I have two people on the list: Roy and Gary.

MR. BRASSARD: Basically, I think the subcommittee -- we weren't always able to get together at the same time, but as I mentioned at the last meeting when I presented the executive summary, we were satisfied that the matrix that was developed for

efficiency was sound. Then when it was applied against the cost analysis, that was sound as well. So when you marry up the most efficient with the most cost-effective, then it stands to reason that you would hopefully come out with a good priority scale, which was done.

It's hard to argue with the fact that we can come in with a permanent enumeration list at a tenth of the cost of what we're doing at present, and with today's utilization of technology I think we're going to end up there anyway. It's almost a given. We have this offer from Elections Canada to share equipment, expertise, and everything else to develop this, and I think the window of opportunity, if I could use a well-worn phrase, is there to capitalize on it. I think we should move ahead. I think it has a variety of applications. I think those applications need to be defined, however. Secondly, I think we have to be absolutely certain of the security of the list, that it will be used for what it is intended and not be accessed by *Maclean's* magazine or some other.

So I think that security is a concern, but other than that, I recommend that we proceed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. You probably don't need to comment on that.

I'll keep going with Gary Dickson and then Gary Severtson.

MR. DICKSON: I've got a couple of comments, Mr. Chairman, but first I was simply going to move

that this committee recommend to the Legislative Assembly that the Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta and his office participate with the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada in development of a permanent voters list and that this province adapt the relevant laws, regulations, and procedures to accomplish that end.

Now, moving on to the motion, just speaking to it, I've got two concerns. I mean, I've been interested for some time in the idea of a single, permanent voters list. I have two concerns that I'm going to want to see addressed before this thing achieves fruition.

The first one is a concern with accuracy of the list. There are concerns in terms of the databases that seem to be preferred in terms of Alberta health care. Often it's a number of months that somebody has to be resident in Alberta before they get a health card number and they're registered in the health care system: three months, I think, currently.

In terms of seniors, many seniors typically don't have drivers' licences. I think that you have, certainly in the cities, an itinerant population of people moving around who cannot have some of these regular kinds of ID. So I'm particularly interested in the strategy or the plan to deal with those seniors, new Albertans, and I guess I'll call them itinerant Albertans who move around a lot and don't have some of the conventional identification and maybe a fixed address. I'm interested in seeing that being addressed.

10:23

The second concern. I appreciate Roy's comments in terms of protection of privacy. I think it's just so attractive, once you have one of these lists, to start looking at other applications and other uses of it. I think that Roy's right: we have to build up a very elaborate system of safeguards to assure Albertans who provide personal information and personal data for purposes of a permanent voters list that that information can't be utilized for any other purpose. It seems to me that it's not enough simply to express a concern, but we'll have to see in the system a number of concrete safeguards to ensure that the integrity of the list will be preserved and maintained.

Otherwise, I think it's an excellent initiative, not only because it saves costs, but also it's the kind of efficiency that in 1995

people expect governments to be able to provide to take advantage of some of the technology we have now. Frankly, I'm excited at the prospect that this province can show some real leadership in this particular area.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you want to make a comment?

MR. WHELAN: Well, I really don't want to put this on the table for this meeting, but I've already taken the liberty of drafting a complete revision of part 1 of the Election Act, which deals with the permanent list of electors. In that Act I've made possible basically four scenarios. There isn't time, if we continue to do it the way we're doing it now, for the next election. Secondly, if we have to do an enumeration door to door again, we can assist it with computers. I already have it in the database; the enumerator just confirms at the door. He doesn't have to write it all down again. We don't have to re-enter it. That can be all preprepared. That second possibility is written into it. Thirdly, it's a permanent list. Fourthly, there's a provision that if that crashes, you can revert to what you had in the beginning, so it will never threaten an election when it's the will of the government to have one.

We've built in those safeguards, but in doing that, issues like itinerant electors or people who are -- the old Latin, Gary, was *vagus*; you know, where the word *vagrant* came from. So the definition of residency was *domicile*, *passe domicile peregrinatus*, a person who was always traveling, and a *vagus*, a person who had no home. We call them itinerant people. Well, in the draft part that I've written into the rules of residency, there is a rule, and I might just read it to you so you'll have an idea of how I think we may cope with this.

No person shall, for the purpose of this Act, [being the Election Act] be deemed to be ordinarily resident on any date in lodgings, or a hostel, refuge or similar institution conducted for charitable . . . purposes, unless that person has been

receiving food there on a regular basis over a number of days.

We've tried to catch the vagrant people in the population or itinerants who don't have any permanent fixed address by methodology like that, but I don't believe there is any foolproof way to capture that population entirely, mainly because they choose not to be registered, and of course that freedom has to be respected. I think briefly that probably has answered that question for you.

In this draft Bill, which again we'll probably be giving to the committee for study and hopefully place on the agenda, if you agree, for a future meeting, it very clearly says that the list of electors will be used only for the purpose intended or other use authorized by law.

MR. BRASSARD: Under strict penalty.

MR. WHELAN: Yes. For example, if we're going to elect another Senator, why would we go do another list of electors? If there's going to be a provincial referendum on whether Quebec should have a veto, which they're looking for now, well, you know, that might be authorized by law. So apart from these things, I think it will be possible to ensure the integrity of the list.

In terms of the electronics and the security, we'll make sure that hackers don't get into our databases, but even people in the field, security field experts, don't catch all the hackers. So there's always an element of risk, just as there is an element of risk now. If you have a candidate who is prepared to photocopy his list of electors and give it to every salesperson that wants it, they're very hard (a) to catch and (b) to stop. So I think there would be a higher degree of security with an electronic list.

Having said these two things, I'd like to say that the questions you've raised are probably answered in this draft part.

MR. DICKSON: I haven't reviewed that.

MR. WHELAN: No, I didn't expect that you would. You know, I'm just saying that when the opportunity comes, you may see the fuller answers to the questions that you had asked.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Gary Severtson, then Ken.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to ask about the \$1.5 million average. What is the start-up cost? I don't see anything in here to achieve this. There must be some start-up costs.

MR. WHELAN: Yes. We of course have a budget, and we've annualized it at a cost of \$1,501,400 over a period of 10 years, being half the cost shared with Canada. So the cost over 10 years, \$3,002,800. You don't have the benefit of that particular paper, but if I can find the particular page, I'll tell you.

MR. BRASSARD: They'd be shared costs.

MR. SEVERTSON: Yeah, shared. But are there some extra costs? Start-up costs are what I was wondering about, or is that just an average?

MR. WHELAN: Well, if you think it is useful, I can provide all of the committee members with a copy of the full report.

MR. SEVERTSON: I just wanted -- I thought maybe you knew what the start-up cost was.

MR. WHELAN: Well, yes, I have it here. I don't want to quote it blindly; I want to tell you. We think the global database initial input for quarterly updates from five sources that we've measured and the conversion of the data into the format we require will cost on average \$187,950 for the first three or four years. The computer hardware and software required, \$560,000. Data entry costs -- and it may not be this. We're toying with the idea of scanning, using optical scanners. The technology is so improved that you can almost take a handwritten page and just put it on a computer. That would mean that the initial data gathered is simply scanned in whenever it comes in by mail. Let's say we make sure that people can register by mail. If that handwritten form is scanned into the computer, it would avoid data entry costs. So that's an if, Gary. I'm not sure that that would be necessary, but we put in \$100,000 for that.

Now, there are things in here like map production and so on, but that's ongoing. We have to do these whether there are permanent lists or not. So when I put these things together very quickly, including some printing and advertising with respect to this, the start-up costs are probably in the order of \$2 million, and the maintenance costs are relatively low. That's where you're talking about the \$187,950 plus the data entry costs per annum. It's much less, so much less: 10 percent of what it's costing now.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, a fascinating discussion. We have a motion on the floor, so I'll speak to the motion at this point in time. I'm not prepared to support it. I think it's too premature on the basis that we just received this particular kind of information. There are a variety of questions, including the one that Mr. Severtson just raised about what the start-up costs are. I'd like to

see that broken down to see an actual budget of what this is all about.

More fundamentally, I want to know the answer to the fundamental question: what information is required to conduct an election in the province of Alberta? Other than the name of the person, the address of the person, what else is required?

10:33

MR. BRASSARD: The currency of that information.

MR. KOWALSKI: But we still are living in the Wild West. There are a lot of people who move. They come and they go. It seems to me that basically the security of protection of privacy is fundamental to all of this. You get a list for an election. We've gone to a single initial to protect the security of women from the stalker and the pervert in society. Yet we take those same lists and we post them publicly in various places throughout our communities. It's a public list. So this business about saying, "Well, we're not sure if *Maclean's* magazine can't get the list," is a red herring. *Maclean's* magazine can get the list, and anybody else can get the list. It's available at the chief electoral office, where everybody can get it.

But what is this other stuff that you're talking about, that on your files there's protected information that we have to make sure that nobody else can have access? All you need for an election is the name and the address. That's all you need. What other information are we talking about here? You said that we have to make sure that we build in intricate protection methods to make sure that people don't get hold of them. Mr. Dickson talked about that too. There's a bit of paranoia going on in Canada today. I mean, we've got some federal government wanting to do registration of firearms. Other people are concerned about mandatory HIV testing or blood testing for people they want a list for this and the security and a control factor. What do we need other than those two bits of information for an election?

MR. WHELAN: Certainly we need to know the citizenship. Only Canadian citizens can vote. We have to know that. People have to be 18 years of age. We need to know the age. So there are two other essential pieces of data that have to be gathered in order to generate the list that you say is needed for an election. I said a few moments ago -- and I will repeat it -- that the lists that will be given in this proposal are the same as the lists that people have now. It's just the initial, the name, and the address. You're right. If these people are Canadian citizens and 18, that's all you need.

What we're talking about is the way you get there to get that. Right now we're spending 3 and a half million dollars to \$4 million every three years at least in two jurisdictions, federally and provincially. That's \$8 million every three years. So we're not talking about the list as such. We're talking about how we get it, Ken. We're spending too much money. It's too inaccurate. It can't be done properly anymore. You can't get good enumerators. You get two people and they can't agree on when they're going to go out and work. They have different schedules and lifestyles.

When you have two people going door-to-door to do a census, there's a problem. Older people won't answer the door. All adults in the family are working. So the door-to-door coverage in a period of seven days is just not working. It's not producing a good list, and what it does produce is too expensive.

So to answer your question directly, that is all you need for an election with the two qualifiers that I mentioned: the age and the citizenship. We're talking about the process and a way to make it less costly and more efficient, more up to date, more current, more secure.

When you ask about the security of the system, I'm talking about outsiders being able to access a database in any office of the Alberta government or the government of Canada. I mean, there are people who can get on-line and try through telephone lines or other electronic means to access the data that you have on computers. So we would want to prevent that.

MR. KOWALSKI: Are we not going to have an enumeration anymore under this proposal?

MR. WHELAN: No. No. That's not what we're talking about.

THE CHAIRMAN: We're talking about a voters list, a permanent voters list.

MR. KOWALSKI: I understand that, but how are you going to get the fundamental information?

THE CHAIRMAN: Registration or an existing list.

MR. WHELAN: You see, we have 50 percent of the information now on the current list. You can expect that in the last two to three years about 50 percent of that will not change. So once that's entered and placed in a database, the only need with respect to other electors is to change anything that might have changed with respect to that: their address in particular, delete if they've left the province or died, and add new people, people coming of age. This can be done electronically very cheaply.

MR. BRASSARD: But what sources would you use to build the list? That's what Ken is asking.

MR. KOWALSKI: I'm looking at page 4 in here, where you've still got an enumerator going around. I mean, you're telling me that they're not going to go around?

MR. BRASSARD: No, they're not going to go around. That's the whole purpose.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, I'm sorry. I think this is premature until we have a chance to read this stuff. I don't understand what section 25(4) says.

MR. WHELAN: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. I think that for me to be answering questions I have to know that you're familiar with the material. Ken, if you're not, I'd be glad to spend an hour or two with you privately and brief you on it.

MR. KOWALSKI: I just got this.

MR. WHELAN: Yeah, I know.

I'd be glad to do that at any time at your convenience.

MR. KOWALSKI: No. We'll do it in the committee, on the basis of the committee. I don't want to do this private stuff that's behind the doors in government.

MR. WHELAN: Yeah, but I certainly think that it would not be useful to try and address questions that are not based upon the material that has been placed before the committee. I say that intending to make myself and my staff available to you to give you a full briefing, if you would like to have that.

MR. KOWALSKI: No, but we'll make decisions in the committee.

MR. WHELAN: I understand that, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ken, we've had a committee of three MLAs working with Derm on this, and there isn't a decision that needs to be made. This is coming forth for discussion purposes. If we want to enter into a joint venture with the federal government -- and that's in essence your motion, Gary -- then we can do that, but we're proceeding here on trying to, you know, develop a more cost-effective way and having permanent voters lists. However slowly or quickly that happens, the committee needs to make sure we do it in a proper way.

MR. WHELAN: Yeah, but to answer the rest of the question, motor vehicle registration with respect to drivers' licences and vehicles is now being used in the United States under what's called the National Voter Registration Act, which has been imposed by the federal jurisdiction on all the states. They just simply were told, "You find your own money, but you do this." Every challenge that has been mounted in the courts has failed. So it looks like it's a go, and most states are using it and embracing it without any resistance because it's terribly accurate. It gets about 80 to 85 percent of eligible voters.

So that would maybe be the primary one, but there would have to be others. People could register by mail by using the appropriate form. People could go to see the returning officer in the district, if there was one, and register and say: look; I've moved and I don't have a car. We could use the social agencies like health or schools, whatever. We haven't precisely identified all of that, but there would be a range. Certainly there would be StatsCan, Canada Post to verify postal codes, the motor vehicle people, perhaps medicare, and one other agency -- I'm not quite sure what it would be -- and maybe also a group where you'd want to say: "Well, look; we want to know if the people here in Alberta who are members or are involved with the Canadian Institute for the Blind would mind filling in registration forms? Would you circulate these? Would you do it voluntarily?" There are many ways to do this. There are so many that nobody can possibly think of them all and lay them on the table, but that's the method instead of going door-to-door. I don't know if that's the information that you wanted.

Now, Ken, with respect to the present list, you cannot come to my office and look at the list of electors. It's protected and private.

MR. KOWALSKI: I can after a certain period of time after the election.

MR. WHELAN: Only for 30 days after the election.

MR. KOWALSKI: That's right. That's exactly correct. I can go and spend all the time that I want in there for 30 days.

MR. WHELAN: On the other point about it being posted and therefore in the public domain, that's true, and we've eliminated that in the draft amendment. The old idea was that you posted this so that people would get an idea if they're on the list, if they objected to something on the list, or if they wanted it corrected. It comes from the 1800s, a feudal law in Great Britain, where this was the way things were ordinarily done. So it has continued.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have a question, Gary, and then we'll maybe wrap up on that motion.

MR. DICKSON: Just two quick comments following on the discussion. Firstly, the impetus for this, as I recall -- and I stand

to be corrected on this -- was over a year ago. We were looking at the budget for the chief electoral office. There was a lot of concern about the cost for enumeration. I don't remember the number we'd budgeted for, but I remember that at that point there was a concern in terms of this actually very large amount of money that was being budgeted for enumerations. It was at that point, I think, that I remember Roy Brassard and maybe others expressing an interest. There had to be a better way of doing it. So that's largely where the impetus came from.

10:43

The second thing, just going back to something Ken had raised as a concern, I think all of us have just seen the text of the proposed amendments. I mean, I just got to my office last night. The motion is simply a recommendation to the Legislative Assembly. The next step is to deal with the text of the amendments and the detail of the plan. At this point, as I understand it, we're simply dealing with whether we move forward in promoting to the Legislative Assembly the notion of a permanent voters list with the cost savings and the efficiencies attendant with it.

So I don't see it as being necessary now to resolve and agree on the detail of the proposed amendments. I think what we're really dealing with is a principle that in fact has been the subject not only of a great deal of discussion in the past in the committee, but then the subcommittee has done a whole lot of work in terms of coming at it from a more concrete perspective.

Those are the two observations I wanted to make, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just one other thing. I think the other thing, too, with respect to the issue of the permanent voters list is that the budget of the Chief Electoral Officer has been wildly variable based upon whether or not an election had to be conducted and whether or not an enumeration had to be conducted. It became very difficult for the purposes of budget time to decide what the budget of the Chief Electoral Officer should be.

I think Gary covered it essentially. Roy and I started having a conversation awhile ago, and Roy had gathered some information together. We sort of struck up a subcommittee, and this is how it began.

MR. BRASSARD: Appointed by the chair.

MR. BRUSEKER: I think we simply came to the conclusion that there had to be a better way, and I think it was Roy and I that kind of started it up. Gary Dickson started on that committee, and then we had to change Gary Dickson to Gary Friedel because of parliamentary tradition and so on. I think that's how it began. I think the concept of us trying to have a voters list that would be readily available on short notice at low cost was really the thrust of what began the whole discussion.

MR. BRASSARD: The subcommittee acted, in fairness, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of this committee. It was appointed by the committee, and that's the report you see in front of you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just a little further clarification. We may have been getting the horse a little in front of the cart on drafting Election Act amendments before we have a clear indication in our mind of what the mechanics of this whole thing, voter registration, are.

At the last meeting we did authorize the Chief Electoral Officer to bring forth interim amendments. I was just reading *Hansard* here at the table a few minutes ago. We're kind of paralleling this thing a little too fast in maybe the context of already drafting

amendments to the Election Act with regards to changing the enumeration or the voter registration, whatever. I mean, I know that there are some other things that Derm wants to put in a draft on changing some of the things in the Election Act, but let's just focus on this voter registration methodology that we're talking about now.

Maybe I should get Diane to read the motion that Gary made, and then we'll maybe close debate on that and vote on it.

MRS. SHUMYLA: Okay. I think I have most of it here. Moved by Gary Dickson

that the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices recommend that the Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta and his office proceed with the election office of Canada to proceed with the voters list and that the province of Alberta proceed to that end.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is that about what you said?

MR. DICKSON: Yeah. The wording is a little bit different, but that's the gist of it.

MR. BRASSARD: Speaking to the motion, I'm not prepared to move to the adoption of this at this point. I think it needs more discussion, but I would like to amend the motion to indicate that we move the issue forward.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah. You know, the thing is is that we've marched along here on this whole thing without a motion, and I'm not sure that anyone in this room wants to stop the exploring of voter registration and the co-ordination with the federal government. I don't think anyone wants to stop that. We just don't want to be tied in a motion form to forming a formal partnership with the federal government at this point, I think, if I'm reading the committee members properly. Does that reflect your feeling, Gary?

MR. DICKSON: Well, I guess the million dollar question is: how do we move the thing along without it being sort of stillborn or stuck at this stage, as a committee? The intention of the motion was to move the thing forward. Ultimately all it is is a recommendation to the Legislative Assembly. It's not going to be dealt with until the fall, when the Legislature resumes, and in the meantime, hopefully four months, this committee would have a chance to deal with the mechanics and nuts and bolts and draft regulations. I mean, that's what I had wanted to achieve. Now, I'm open to suggestions. If there's another way of keeping the thing going, I'm happy to look at that.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Chairman, I believe that the next item on our agenda will take a step forward. I think we need to talk to Elections Canada and see what they have in mind to formulate a list and the utilization of the list and what kind of controls and securities they're going to put on that list. This is a very significant issue that is going to touch on every electoral district in this province, so I would want to vet this through our various caucuses and come to some kind of consensus universally and come back to the discussion. So I'm not prepared to adopt or accept this procedure at this point. I certainly want more discussion, and I'd want more meaningful discussion headed towards a logical conclusion. So that's where I'm coming from.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, just a question. I have to apologize that I was not available to attend the last meeting of this

committee, but I see in the minutes that we did have the executive summary presented at that time. I know we received two additional documents that Mr. Kowalski referred to just today. I, too, have just received them today, so I haven't had an opportunity to review them. But I'm wondering with respect to other documentation if that small brief -- and I use that term very loosely, I might add -- that has been provided by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer has been provided to all members of the committee?

MR. WHELAN: Yes. Well, I had intended to ask the committee . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: I'm talking about the 2,000-page brief, the big binder.

MR. WHELAN: No.

MR. BRUSEKER: That was just to the subcommittee.

MR. WHELAN: And also to the chairman of the committee.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Well, from that standpoint I think I'm inclined to agree with Roy that it would be worth while chatting with the federal Chief Electoral Officer to see how we might even begin to do this or even whether some kind of a relationship is even feasible. I would like to suggest that, while I appreciate the intention of Mr. Dickson's motion, perhaps it might be worth while to table that motion until after we have the opportunity to meet with the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada. Now, that's not a motion, but I'm putting that forward perhaps as a suggestion. Sitting next to Mr. Dickson, maybe it's a bug I can plant in his ear that he might consider.

MR. DICKSON: Well, I just want to go back to something that you, Mr. Chairman, had started off by saying: we may have gotten ahead of ourselves. We've never as a committee resolved on the principle of a permanent voters list. We have jumped over that, and we are now sort of caught up in the detail of what that's going to look like and some of the minutia related to it. I have no problem with us deferring a vote on the motion on the table until the next meeting with a view that there be further input, consultation with respective caucuses, and so on. My concern is that since we now have a lot of the detail, at least in draft form, on the table, what we're going to end up arguing and wrestling over and dealing with is the detail and lose sight of the principle: whether in fact in Alberta we support a permanent voters list or we prefer the current sort of system.

If it were on the basis that we would defer to the next meeting a vote on the motion, that would be fine, but it would have to be understood that we're still dealing with the principle of whether we want a permanent voters list. I mean, that's the issue that has to be resolved. I don't know how much sense there is in the Chief Electoral Officer and others spending an awful lot of time going down this road in terms of working up amendments and alternate amendments when we haven't resolved the more fundamental question.

10:53

MR. BRUSEKER: That's a philosophy that would have to be resolved by the Assembly, not by this committee, I would think.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, if the principle is defined as to what it is you were debating, then it's much easier to resolve it that way than to have an open-ended thing. I'm not even sure what a

permanent list means. All I know is that if I hear the words "permanent" and "list" put together, the hair on the back of my head goes up, because there have been forms of government that have survived for years with permanent lists. Others have taken and rounded up people and had them gone. So I have this little feeling that I don't like the words "permanent list," because to me it's a reflection of what a controlled, totalitarian approach is. I may be wrong that that's what the definition for permanent list is under this context, but I haven't seen it. That's all I'm saying, that I'm not prepared to vote in support of this motion unless I get that. If Mr. Dickson would defer this and we had some opportunity to have further discussion, I would be much more comfortable. It may be a great idea in the end, if I know what the definition of permanent list is.

THE CHAIRMAN: I agree, Ken, that we're running along two parallel lines here with something that we don't understand. We understand voter registration on a conceptual basis in this committee, Ken. True?

MR. KOWALSKI: If it's the Alberta model of voter registration, if that's what it is, but there are other forms of voter registration too. So let's be careful of the definition. That's all I'm saying.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, and we haven't seen that yet either. The premature part of it is that people now are looking at draft amendments to the Election Act based on something we haven't seen. So we will back up a little bit and do that, because everyone wants to go ahead with exploring this avenue. But at the end of the meeting what does the Chief Electoral Officer do? Does he explore further with the federal government on sharing lists or not? That's the question.

MR. DICKSON: Well, I think the consensus clearly seems to be that we have yet to sort of deal with a cleanly defined principle. Somehow that's got to be formatted, and if we're not able to do it today, it's going to have to be done in a subsequent meeting and then people come prepared to vote with some input from their respective caucuses and so on. In the meantime I don't know what the sense is and how responsible it is for us to be encouraging the Chief Electoral Officer to be worrying about more detail if there are some serious issues in terms of the principle involved.

MR. WHELAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm done. I have assisted the committee to the best of the abilities that are available in my office, and we have presented you with all the material that you will need. In terms of my own timetable and time line and view of this, I certainly didn't expect that emerging from this meeting this would be even approved in principle, which is not binding legally. It's a moral obligation but not a legally binding one. I fully expect that caucuses will have to be consulted, only after the committee is satisfied that this should go forward. At that point perhaps there could be another committee meeting to resolve the substance of the matter: can we agree that in principle we're willing to do this? If so, then we'll get on with doing it. But in my own mind I thought this would take some time. I didn't envisage that this would emerge from a meeting of two hours. I didn't have that in mind at all.

MR. SEVERTSON: Well, I concur with you, Mr. Whelan, on the fact that we could never -- and I think we basically have agreed to take this back to our caucuses and come back after that time. What I do wonder is how much we should be doing on the Election Act in reference to enumerations and other aspects till we know where

we're going with this. You could be working on a document for the Election Act of which most of the amendments would be out, because if we don't have enumerations, why work on how we should do it? I think that aspect is premature until we make the determination on a permanent list or the system we use.

MR. WHELAN: Yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. I guess if everyone is clear -- did you want to speak once more, Gary?

MR. DICKSON: I was just going to move that we defer further consideration of the motion on the table to the next meeting of this committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are you tabling it?

MR. DICKSON: Well, "table" means that you need a separate thing to bring it back. We need some deadlines. This means it's coming up at the next meeting, and it gives us a target for us to involve and consult with our caucuses.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not exactly sure of the parliamentary procedure of deferring a motion, but if we all agree that we're going to defer it, I guess that'll be fine. Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: So now we will move on to item 8. I don't know exactly where we're going to end up. We may end up getting in a bottomless pit on this item on the agenda. Perhaps I would suggest, if it's okay with you, Derm, that we limit this to the discussion document that you have on the returning officers. I mean, they're kind of tied together with your draft amendments to the Election Act, but I would just as soon not get into the draft amendments to the Election Act, if possible.

MR. WHELAN: Okay. Well, I'll just deal with the executive summary, which begins on page 1 of this blue-coloured paper. A numeral was in that corner.

THE CHAIRMAN: Derm, it's under tab 8.

MR. WHELAN: Tab 8, yeah. We basically discuss and put forward for your consideration draft amendments to the Election Act dealing only with returning officers. The philosophy is that the most efficient and successful administrators of elections, being returning officers, should be people that are demonstrably impartial, demonstrably possessed of the necessary competence for the purpose. It's my view that the committee and the Legislature and candidates and members would be best served if returning officers were chosen on the basis of merit and after some sort of a public competition.

So we've put forward two draft amendments. I'm not going to get into them, as the chairman suggested. First is that the Chief Electoral Officer would sort of put on the hat of the Public Service Commissioner and select returning officers without any reference to political parties or to members, as they so do now in Quebec and will shortly be doing in other jurisdictions. The second option is not necessarily a great change, but it permits and recommends that the Executive Council continue to appoint returning officers after a public competition and on the basis of merit but following consultation with members for the district, the party leaders in the

House, and the executives of the constituency associations of the member concerned.

The second recommendation is that we feel returning officers, like other Albertans, should have the right to vote, because this device of their having a casting vote really doesn't solve any electoral issue. We have these large numbers of people who are not allowed to vote because it's thought that if there's a tie, they can break the tie, but they cannot. It's going to fail in the court and ultimately result in a delayed by-election. So the recommendation is here that they be given the right to vote, and that if there is a tie after a judicial recount, then within 21 days a further reference to the people is made: let the people decide.

It also discusses a returning officer enjoying tenure. This is a very serious practical problem for Elections Alberta. Returning officers cease to exist basically four months after polling night. Now, it leaves my office without any formal contact with people in the districts. We can't do any preplanning. To give you an example, if we were using an enumeration method, when that slip is left with a voter, we should be in a position to have on that slip the address and the place where you vote so people don't have to be wondering about where they're going to vote. It should be preplanned to that extent. That's only an example. There are many other examples, and we don't have a lot of time for a lot of examples. Generally, it's impossible to build up a cadre of efficient and effective election administrators if they have no tenure. More important, when they don't have tenure, generally they tend to go about the activities that they pursued prior to being involved as returning officers, and you have no real realistic expectation that they may be recruited or appointed again. So there is no sense of continuity or consequence, and there's no building on the expertise of the past to improve the process.

11:03

In the paper, also, the recruiting aids and all of the details are set out as well as the draft amendment to the Election Act with respect to returning officers -- that's given not only with the amendment but with the present statute -- and a brief discussion on the different issues. As you go through the paper, you'll see that it deals with the right to vote for returning officers, the mythical value of a casting vote. You know, it really won't solve any electoral problem if there is a tie. If there is a tie, our view and the view of most political scientists and in fact many elected members in Canada is that in a situation like that the court shouldn't be deciding either. The people should be deciding. So that's discussed, also impartiality, competence, merits, competition, all of these different things.

In the historical context 108 Albertans have administered one election as returning officers; 50 have administered two; 24 persons have administered three elections; 13 persons, four; and believe it or not, there are 15 returning officers in the province in 15 districts -- we only have 83 -- who have administered five or more elections. So there is some continuity.

The question of tenure is not unusual. Some people have been doing this year after year after year. The situation in other provinces: the only other province that limits the duration of the tenure of returning officers is New Brunswick. A year after the poll is concluded in a general election, their appointments expire. Everybody else pretty well has returning officers for an indefinite period of time. Quebec is for 10 years, and the recommendation I would put forward is for a period of 10 years.

The paper sets out the duties, the qualifications, the availability, the method of dealing with vacancies and appointments, remuneration, and other related matters. Again, it's a recommendation that I feel is in the interest of the province of Alberta and the demo-

cratic process here. It's simply a recommendation to the committee for your study and for implementation if and when you deem it appropriate. It is the best advice that I, as your chief election officer and as an officer of the Assembly, can give you. To do less would be intellectually dishonest. The present system of appointing returning officers has caused some problems and, further and probably most importantly, has left us with a vacuum to work with in between elections. It's my view that that's really not a good way to prepare for the event that determines who will govern this province.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Gary Severtson and Gary Dickson.

Maybe I could just make one comment before Gary, that likely this is just discussion at this point. This certainly is a big issue and certainly would want to be discussed at respective caucuses.

So with that being said, go ahead, Gary.

MR. SEVERTSON: I guess I was going to go into a little bit of detail. I wasn't aware that it has caused a great problem other than maybe the duration of somebody not being there. We could leave the system that we've had for a long time if you just took away the four months and had an honorarium in between times. I'm in an area where I've had one returning officer for five elections in a row, so maybe that's part of the problem.

Then when I look at your option 1 and option 2, in option 1 the Chief Electoral Officer appoints the returning officer in each riding, and when you go to option 2, you basically do the same thing, because under 7(1)(a) the Lieutenant Governor in Council will consult with the Legislative Assembly, the Opposition House Leader, and all that and pick a person on offer from a list of successful candidates supplied by the Chief Electoral Officer. You supply the list, so really options 1 and 2 are your choice. That's the way I read it.

MR. WHELAN: Well, we would put up a complete list of all that applied who were competent for the purpose. The idea is . . .

MR. SEVERTSON: The way it reads, it doesn't say that. It says a list supplied by yourself.

MR. WHELAN: Yeah, that would be the way it would be done, but the people would be certified to be competent on the basis of the competition, and the political party or major stakeholders would be consulted.

On the other issue that you're just touching on, if the present system were tenured, it would be a vast improvement and most welcome, let me assure you.

MR. SEVERTSON: I could see some difficulty there, being four months after, depending on what honorarium you're talking about in between four years.

MR. WHELAN: Well, the chairman asked that we not get into the details, but there is a regulation. I put it at the back.

MR. SEVERTSON: I had read through it, so I had some specific questions.

MR. DICKSON: As I understand it, there are three issues for us to deal with. The first one is the right to vote on the part of returning officers, and if that happens, then what's the mechanism to resolve ties. Secondly, appointment A for returning officers, and thirdly, appointment B. I mean the two alternate processes for appointing returning officers.

Just on the right to vote, you know, this is one of these things -- and we've seen it with inmate voting. Section 3 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms expressly says that every Canadian citizen is entitled to vote. This is one of those things that either we change it or somebody brings a court application, probably at a time on the eve of an election when you have little time to adjust to it, the court makes a ruling, and the province is bound by it. I think in cases where the writing is on the wall, I'd sooner see the Legislature deal with it on its own time rather than having the court make the decision and then the Legislature left to scramble. So quite aside from the merits of it, my view -- as I say, we've seen the same thing with inmate voting -- is that at some point, likely at the least convenient time, the province is going to be in a situation where they're going to have to address this. I'd sooner do it in a more proactive way.

On the appointment process, it seems to me that this is going to evoke at least as much interest on the part of our respective colleagues as the last item we deferred. I'd like to see it come back, but maybe at the next meeting when we're armed with some views of our caucus colleagues. Then we'd be in a position maybe to move on some or all three of the different items, but I think that we're simply going to require that kind of input.

11:13

I would make this observation. You're very fortunate if you've been able to deal with one returning officer who has been there for a long period of time. In the city of Calgary we saw some significant problems in the last election. Now, part of that was attributable to redistribution and the short time that people had to be appointed, but I think there are some real problems when you get a new appointment and this person comes along and they sort of start fresh. They don't have that wealth of experience like somebody who's been around through a series of elections. I can think of one Calgary constituency where it was a near crisis for most of the 28-day election period and a week before because this person simply wasn't able to cope with a lot of the pressures and didn't have the background, and it was a question of the past returning officer being brought in to assist him.

I think it also handicaps the Chief Electoral Officer. I mean, who do you speak to in advance to prepare and ensure that they're going to be able to provide a high level of service? So I see some value, just in terms of running a system that's going to be efficient, in terms of having some greater kind of permanence to these people. I think it's one of the things that if I were running a system, I'd want to know who I was dealing with and make sure they were in place and adequately and properly trained in advance and so on. I think there are always lessons that each of these returning officers learn at elections. The tragic thing is when the successor isn't able to benefit from lessons experienced by the last returning officer and the one before that. Certainly in Calgary there's been some turnover, and there were a number of problems with people just not being adequately trained. So I find that element of it attractive in the proposal, but I think it's got to come back after we have some more caucus feedback.

MR. WHELAN: Mr. Chairman, if I may. Again, like the permanent list, this is a pretty substantive change to the way things are being done. I didn't come with the expectation that there would not be consultation with others and that every single item or principle enunciated and recommended would be even discussed. I do feel that it's my clear obligation to point out to this committee the difficulties that I might or might not have in administering elections, and this is of course one of them. I tend to think that with issues that are so substantial as these, you're really talking

about many, many, many meetings before you get to the point where you can even talk about adopting it in principle. These are ideas that are being laid on the table first for your consideration, then it must involve the members in the caucuses, and then of course it would have to involve a legislative program. So it was not the expectation that, you know, we have an immediate response. These recommendations are made on the basis of what is best for Albertans, and if we want to have a democracy that is truly impartial and impartially administered, then the people that do this should be competent for the purpose and chosen according to a method that is openly possessing these characteristics. So that's why it's put forward.

The only other item that I had was these interim amendments, and these, I thought, were things that might go forward more quickly because they're not as substantive a change as some of the other things. Among them are, for example, the removal of the prohibition against the sale and consumption of alcohol during elections -- that's one of them -- using one enumerator, when possible, to save a million dollars at each enumeration. I just mention that because I'm hoping that the chairman will give me a little time, if I can, if there are no other questions . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, we are running on borrowed time here.

MR. WHELAN: On fumes.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have a couple of other items on our agenda, Derm. You know, we're pretty tight here, unless the members want to come back after lunch or go through the lunch hour.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, I have another meeting.

THE CHAIRMAN: So I think that what we'll do, Derm, with your approval, is have a meeting. We'll set a meeting in June, and we'll discuss these two items of voter registration and returning officers along with this. Okay? Is the committee agreed on that?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. WHELAN: Mr. Chairman, I might say that, you know, if anyone would like to come and talk to me about these things on an individual basis, either Brian or I will be glad to give you the briefing or to enter into a discussion on any of these papers and their development. Then if you have questions, we'll perhaps deal with them that way.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks for the invitation.

MR. SEVERTSON: One comment. You mentioned this other document, Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act.

MR. WHELAN: Well, what I had intended was to ask the committee if we might put this on the agenda for a future meeting, and I had prepared in advance the . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: You know, you're going to have to set your priorities of what you want this committee to discuss, because any one of these documents can take an all-morning discussion, Derm. So, I mean, we have to, you know, do a priority thing. We will try to arrange a meeting with you on these issues, and I'll talk to you as to which ones we can squeeze in at a certain meeting. Okay?

MR. WHELAN: Yeah. Well, in relation to this one, Mr. Chairman, I was just simply hoping that it might be tabled or given to members of the committee for future discussion. It might be six months from now, whatever. But it's about the end of my year of regurgitation of the Act, and I doubt there'd be much more. I think you've got enough for two or three years, personally.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, okay then. That being said, we'll leave a lot of things in limbo here.

Oh, item 6. Members of the committee, we had deferred item 6, before Derm leaves, on the appearance of the Canadian Chief Electoral Officer and the Quebec officer. Do you want to give direction to me on that item, Roy?

MR. BRASSARD: Well, Mr. Chairman, in view of the fact that we need to debate or discuss this whole proposal a little more, I would feel more comfortable if we waited to invite Mr. Kingsley here until after we've had a little bit clearer direction in our minds.

THE CHAIRMAN: Another meeting?

MR. BRASSARD: Yes. My own feeling.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Do members concur? Okay; I believe that's what we'll do.

Thank you, Derm and Brian, for your time. We have as committee members a lot to do. Thank you.

MR. WHELAN: You're very welcome.

THE CHAIRMAN: Committee members, we're going to try to hold you together here and finish off the last two agenda items. Okay?

[The committee adjourned from 11:22 a.m. to 11:23 a.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we're going to, with the committee's approval, go in camera with our discussion on item 9.

MR. DICKSON: Do you want a motion to that effect?

THE CHAIRMAN: Sure. Would you please? All those agreed with the motion to go in camera?

MR. KOWALSKI: Is this a tradition of this committee to go in camera?

THE CHAIRMAN: We're talking about some personal things with the Privacy Commissioner. Traditionally we have when we're talking about having a discussion on wage remuneration and so on.

MR. KOWALSKI: It's the tradition of this committee?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. KOWALSKI: It certainly is not the tradition of other legislative committees. Is there something that motivates this committee to be in camera?

THE CHAIRMAN: It's up to the committee members.

MR. KOWALSKI: I've only attended two meetings, and it seems we've been in camera twice, which is awfully strange.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, certainly we did when we were on the issue of hiring the new Auditor General. When we discussed that issue, we did go in camera.

MR. KOWALSKI: We don't go in camera when we discuss changes -- we never have gone in camera in Members' Services under the changes to the Legislative Assembly Act in terms of salaries of MLAs and everything else. Why would we want to be different with other people?

MR. BRUSEKER: Because we're more sensitive than they, I guess.

MR. KOWALSKI: I guess we are. Mr. Chairman, I just have a concern about secret meetings; that's all. I'll abide by the majority rule.

THE CHAIRMAN: So then we'll have a vote. Do you want a vote on your motion, Gary, to go in camera? I was the one that brought it up, but if we want to stay on *Hansard*, that's fine.

MR. DICKSON: Well, maybe we should just back up. What I understood we were going to be talking about -- and maybe I'm presuming too much -- is fixing the salary for the new Information and Privacy Commissioner.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, in conjunction with an existing contract that he has as Ethics Commissioner. So we're going to try to sort out to some extent either setting a wage scale or setting a direct wage for the new freedom of information and Ethics Commissioner.

MR. DICKSON: You see, we're talking about the position; we're not reviewing actually the performance of an employee.

THE CHAIRMAN: True.

MR. DICKSON: I mean, as I've thought about it, I'm not sure that I can defend what we're doing having to be done in secret. Notwithstanding the fact that I was fast off the mark to move the motion, I think I've been persuaded that we should stay in open session and then deal with it if we reach the point, I guess, where we feel we're dealing with somebody's personal qualifications.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. DICKSON: Maybe revisit this?

THE CHAIRMAN: Sure.

The other thing I wanted to state then -- we'll stay on *Hansard* if that's the wish of the committee. I will have Cheryl Scarlett come in, if you wish, to answer some questions with regards to the position of Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The Ethics Commissioner has a year and a half left on his contract. The new amendments that were passed by the Legislature state that the freedom of information officer will be hired for a year and a half also so that at the end of a year and a half those two contracts will come up simultaneously and expire at the same time. So I guess we can either as a committee set his wages, his remuneration, with a value that would be set, or the committee could set a wage range for the freedom of information and Ethics Commissioner, and the personnel people could do the contract negotiating with Bob Clark, the same as we have done with other officers.

Frank.

MR. BRUSEKER: What have we done with respect to the Ethics Commissioner? Is there a specific figure, or is there a range out of which we picked the specific figure? There is a figure on a longer page in our briefing package here. I'm wondering: when we established the position of Ethics Commissioner, did we establish a wage range, as we do with deputy minister and manager?

THE CHAIRMAN: Maybe Cheryl can answer that. Since he was part-time, I suspect not.

MRS. SCARLETT: Actually, there are two. The ranges for the positions are equivalent to senior position salaries. Normally, with the exception of the Auditor General's salary, all of the other Leg. officers have been set within the C level of that range.

MR. BRUSEKER: Meaning what?

MRS. SCARLETT: The C level right now is between \$66,200 and \$98,100. Those positions have been set within that range.

MR. BRUSEKER: Is Bob Clark currently being paid on the presumption that his job is half-time, third-time, five-eighths time, or what?

MRS. SCARLETT: The present contract for the Ethics Commissioner is based upon 50 percent.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, we're making this decision on the basis that Mr. Clark is going to become that commissioner for protection of privacy; right? Has he accepted it, or are we assuming that he will? The only reason I want the answer to that question is to make my thought process be different. We have no guarantee that Mr. Clark will accept that position. It could be subject to financial negotiation; right?

THE CHAIRMAN: Probably. Yes.

MR. KOWALSKI: Okay. On the other hand, I think we should make the decision not with any consideration whatsoever about the individual in it; we should be looking at the office and dealing with the office. We have no criteria right now to evaluate what role the freedom of information and protection of privacy individual will do. Whether it is comparative to that of the Ethics Commissioner or not, we're just assuming, so we have to be subjective. We have no objective hard-core information. We could debate this for 14 more hours. As far as I'm concerned, if we wanted to say that it should be in the same range as the other one, the Ethics Commissioner, it's okay with me, because I don't think that after six hours of debate we're going to be able to quantify it any other way.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Just a little further, before Gary Dickson. What I would suggest the committee look at is salary range C, which is the same as the Ombudsman, you know, as a wage range that would allow some flexibility to Cheryl Scarlett and David McNeil to enter into negotiation and see whether Bob Clark would accept a position comparable in wage remuneration to the Ombudsman. That's my general feeling.

Go ahead, Gary.

11:33

MR. DICKSON: I was just going to say, partly in response to Ken's query, that in fact when we were wrestling with the issue of whether we were going to recommend as a committee that the Ethics Commissioner hold the dual role, we actually looked at some charts and so on that talked about not only the pay of the different information commissioners across Canada but some comparison of the responsibilities. I'm sorry; I didn't bring that stuff with me, but I expect that Diane can access it. There were two meetings when we were talking about what the role of the Information Commissioner was. So we might be able to cut the six hours of discussion down a little bit.

My sense is this. Probably the position that's most comparable to this is the office of the Ombudsman. It would seem to me that that would be an appropriate guideline to look at in terms of what the pay would be for this new position, but obviously it has to be discounted. I mean, we're going to have one person holding two jobs. We're responsible, the committee, to monitor both of those jobs and both of those individuals. So I guess, just as sort of a ballpark approach, I'd take the sort of pay that we found appropriate for the office of the Ombudsman, reduce it by the amount of pay that's being paid to the Ethics Commissioner, and look at the difference to bring it up to, roughly comparable, what the Ombudsman is making. That's sort of my approach.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. That being said then -- and I was talking to Cheryl and David McNeil -- the proper way, if it's fine with the committee, would be to make as one motion

that the Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioner be allocated a salary equivalent to salary range C on the senior position salary schedule.

Then if that's okay with the committee . . .

MR. BRASSARD: I would move that motion.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. All in favour of that motion?
Am I rushing things through, Gary?

MR. DICKSON: Well, how's it going to be reflected?

THE CHAIRMAN: There's going to be another motion.

MR. DICKSON: Maybe you can tell me what the next motion is because this had been sold on the basis initially that there was going to be a big cost saving. So I want to see how that's going to be reflected.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Then the second part of that thing would be that the salary be negotiated with Robert Clark as freedom of information officer on a part-time basis of 50 percent and -- I'll read you the other motion.

That the salary be negotiated with Robert Clark as freedom of information and privacy commissioner on a part-time basis, 50 percent, base not to exceed 50 percent of the maximum of range to which the position was allocated, meaning, for instance, his salary will come 50 percent from the Ethics Commissioner's budget and 50 percent from the freedom of information budget.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I'm not sure I understand. Could I just ask for a little explanation? Would you see a figure in the \$80,000 price range that then falls in salary range C being a final salary?

THE CHAIRMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. BRASSARD: For the position.

MR. BRUSEKER: For the total dual position.

THE CHAIRMAN: That's right.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Are you making that as a motion then?

THE CHAIRMAN: No. I'm throwing that out to the committee members. What I was thinking about was where we would end up at the end of this discussion. The only reason I was bringing up the second motion was to clarify the first.

MR. BRASSARD: My motion was to establish the price range for the position.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, salary range C. We've agreed to that.

THE CHAIRMAN: We haven't voted on it yet.

MR. BRUSEKER: Oh, okay.

MR. BRASSARD: If we offer it to a man who's going to do it 50 percent, then I assume that that would be at 50 percent. We haven't really given it to any person yet, so we have to establish the price range for the job.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. If I might just offer a comment then. I don't know if it'll help or confuse the issue. We already have established the price of the Ethics Commissioner, if you will, in our current position of just under \$40,000.

MR. BRASSARD: But that's a separate issue altogether.

MR. BRUSEKER: That's a separate issue altogether.

Now, Mr. Dickson has said -- too many Garys on this committee. Mr. Dickson has suggested that the position is close to or somewhat comparable to that of being the Ombudsman. If we took 50 percent of that salary, 50 percent of what the Ombudsman is currently making, and added it to the Ethics Commissioner, the figure that I come up with is \$83,385, which then falls in the salary range C, and I would suggest that might be an appropriate target to consider working from.

MR. KOWALSKI: Probably what Frank says is correct. But to the previous motion, it's just that if you establish the range, it's even better than giving finite dollars, because there's going to have to be some give-and-take in the final negotiations. If you have the range, you've got it covered any way.

MR. BRUSEKER: I'm just trying to get at some guidelines or some principles to help underline where the negotiations would go.

MRS. SCARLETT: Just for clarification, in terms of the administrative processes, right now there is an employment contract with Bob Clark for his responsibilities with ethics that has set a salary of \$39,000 based upon him doing it 50 percent of the time. What would happen is: for his responsibilities for the freedom of information and protection of privacy component it's proposed that there be a separate employment contract addressing those responsibilities that again pays him representing 50 percent of the time. So we've already negotiated for the ethics responsibility, what Mr. Clark gets paid for that.

The process normally would be that you would go back and say that if someone was doing freedom of information full-time, this is the range we'd look at. Let's identify a full-time salary, and you

would divide that, then, by two to get a 50 percent salary. So you've got the 50 percent salary going towards the budget of freedom of information and the ethics salary going towards the ethics budget. Combined, those two still add up to a certain figure, and they're processed that way.

MR. BRUSEKER: I think we're all on the same wavelength.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Then I will ask for a vote on Roy's motion. All those in favour of salary range C? Opposed? Carried.

MR. KOWALSKI: I have to raise one other subject matter now. This is leading out of the first question. This conversation is going in the line that Mr. Clark is the person who will be getting it. Now, Mr. Clark is also a former Member of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta and does receive a public pension. Has he been receiving that pension in his position as Ethics Commissioner, and if so, how then will that be dealt with in terms of his full-time employment now and in terms of the double-dipping issue? That's a matter that has to be dealt with.

THE CHAIRMAN: He has told me that he will give up his MLA pension when and if he becomes a full-time officer of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. KOWALSKI: How will he give it up? It's important to know how he will give it up. Will he defer it, have it addressed to his wife, put it to his estate? Which method will it be?

MRS. SCARLETT: I can't comment on that, but I can comment in terms of the general administration relative to the implementation of the double-dipping. Any contracts that were entered into prior to the regulations for double-dipping coming into place are grandfathered. So based upon that, if a member was eligible for a pension, they continue to be eligible to receive the pension, which is the case in the situation of the Ethics Commissioner.

Now we're entering into a new contract for these new responsibilities, and under those there is not an eligibility to receive. They are bound by the regulations that are now in place. The regulations say that any member receiving a pension, if they're going back to work in a public-sector environment, cannot work longer than 84 full-time days before their pension is suspended. Okay? In the case of somebody working half-time, you would prorate that to 84 times two, to be the equivalent of those half-time days. When that magic figure is reached, that pension is automatically suspended by Alberta Treasury. It's also my understanding, regardless of that, that if someone receiving a pension wishes not to receive it or have it suspended at any time, they can advise the pension people to do that.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Clark is a very honourable man, and I have no difficulties or no misconceptions whatsoever about his integrity with respect to this matter. I just want to make sure that arising out of it is not going to be a public optic basically saying that the gentleman who now has these dual positions is also getting his pension. That's the only reason I raise it.

11:43

THE CHAIRMAN: All I can say is that what Bob Clark told me was that he was going to give up his pension. So I don't know, in concise terms of what you say, whether it will be a deferred pension or whether it will be going to someone else. I can't answer that, Ken.

MR. KOWALSKI: I was going to make the comment -- because this is a public meeting -- that if Mr. Clark assumes these positions and if Mr. Clark works on a full-time basis and if Mr. Clark continues to receive the MLA pension in any way, shape, or form, then Mr. Clark's credibility will be badly hurt provincewide.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, and I think he's well aware of that. So I would assume that it will be a clean deal of no pension for the time he is working in this capacity.

The other side of this motion is that we enter into negotiations with Bob Clark for freedom of information and privacy. Would the committee give authority to the personnel office and David McNeil, which we have done with previous officers that we have hired, both the Ombudsman and the Auditor?

MR. BRUSEKER: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. The wording of that motion, if it's fine with you, Frank, is
that the salary be negotiated with Robert C. Clark as the Information and Privacy Commissioner on a part-time basis not to exceed 50 percent of the maximum range to which the position is allocated.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is everyone in favour?

MR. DICKSON: Well, I was just going to say, Mr. Chairman, that I have the greatest respect for Mr. Clark as an individual, but to be consistent, I think I've argued right along that it's a problem to have one person holding both offices. So I'm going to have to oppose the motion for that reason and on that principle alone.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. The motion, I think, was carried by previous hands.

That's all I have under that item. Thank you, Cheryl, for coming. We appreciate it.

MRS. SCARLETT: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have a couple more items to get through here, gentlemen, and we'll make it by noon I hope.

Tab 10 is a couple of conferences that were scheduled. As you can see, one for September has been canceled. The other one we discussed briefly at our previous meeting, the National Ombudsman Conference, which was moved from Fredericton, I believe, to Minneapolis. So we could have someone from our committee attend this conference?

Roy.

MR. BRASSARD: We'd agreed, Mr. Chairman, that the chairman would attend this conference before it was transferred to Minneapolis. So I'd move that the chairman consider attending this conference.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, we hadn't agreed.

MR. BRASSARD: Oh, had we not agreed?

THE CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. BRASSARD: Then I would make that recommendation that our chairman attend the conference November 15 to 17 in Minneapolis.

I'm sorry. I know we had discussed it.

MR. DICKSON: Is the Ombudsman going to be attending the Minnesota conference?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Any other discussion? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried. Okay. Is there any other business? We've got a lot of other business that's been deferred to the next meeting date. We now have to come up with a date for another meeting if there's no other new business.

Gary.

MR. DICKSON: Just in terms of scheduling the next meeting, you had indicated, I think, a date in June. Is that going to afford us the kind of time with our caucuses to get adequate input on these very major issues in terms of both a permanent voting list on the one hand and the second issue, being perhaps a different process in terms of DROs and returning officers.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah. But it's like a snowball in hell. What kind of chance would I have of getting the committee together in July and August? Likely none. I mean, if we suggest the first week in September, is that leaving it too long? What are your wishes?

MR. BRUSEKER: Is there a chance by the end of June?

MR. BRASSARD: I was going to say the end of July some time.

MR. DICKSON: I'd go with that. I think that makes sense.

THE CHAIRMAN: July?

MR. BRASSARD: I would recommend that we meet some time in July.

I'm not sure where some of these recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer came from. It must have come right straight out of his office. I do know that we have talked about this permanent enumeration list for long enough now that I would like to see it go to caucus for instructions.

THE CHAIRMAN: So of the three or four things that Derm is throwing forth here, the priority of this committee, if I'm reading it right, is the enumeration, the voter registration. That's the priority of this committee in general.

MR. BRASSARD: The first one. Yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. The second one I guess would be the changes in the returning officer, whether the Chief Electoral Officer does it or the Lieutenant Governor; right?

MR. DICKSON: The third presumably would be the miscellaneous amendments, buying liquor and serving liquor on election day.

THE CHAIRMAN: Should we try to pick a date in July?
Ken.

MR. KOWALSKI: My only suggestion to you, sir, is that if you want to pick a date in July, pick one in Stampede week in Calgary. Chances are most people will be around that city on the Tuesday and the Wednesday, and it's pretty close for everybody.

MR. DICKSON: Good suggestion.

MR. BRASSARD: July 11?

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

MR. SEVERTSON: I can't make it on the 11th.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'll tell you what we'll do. We've got three other members that aren't here. We'll try to see if they can accommodate July 11 or 12. Okay? Frank, are you generally . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I prefer the 12th, you know, personally.

THE CHAIRMAN: We'll try to co-ordinate one of those two. Diane'll do back-and-forths for a while. Okay?

I need a motion to adjourn.

MR. BRUSEKER: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Frank. All in favour? Carried.

[The committee adjourned at 11:51 a.m.]