

Special Select Standing Committee on Members' Services

Tuesday, April 7, 1981

Chairman: Mr. Amerongen

8:10 a.m.

MR CHAIRMAN: Are we ready to say a pronunciamento about the minutes of the last meeting?

MRS OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move that they be approved.

MR CHAIRMAN: Agreed?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: We have no visitors. There was a threat of some visitors, but they haven't come.

MR APPLEBY: It's a good time of day to have a meeting, Mr. Chairman.

MR CHAIRMAN: Right. Now, business arising from the minutes: there is the gasoline credit card use, and I think that was going to be checked with the two caucuses.

MRS OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I can report that I think most of our members feel that the credit card should not be expanded at this time. They look forward to the next -- what do we call the people who do that study every four years?

MR CHAIRMAN: Review committee?

MRS OSTERMAN: Yes. Anyway, if anything like that would be addressed, it might be addressed at that time.

MR MANDEVILLE: Our caucus felt the same way.

MR STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, in addition to that, a question was raised about a universal gasoline credit card which was allegedly used by AGT employees. Under Item 3a is a memorandum which simply states that we cannot determine that there is such a card in use.

MR CHAIRMAN: Can we just go back a step? I take it that we have a motion by Connie, seconded by Fred, that the gasoline credit card use remain within its present limits until the next MLA salary review commission functions.

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: You have Bohdan's report, which is under Item 3a.

MRS OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, may I ask what they have?

MR STEFANIUK: Normal commercial credit cards. This allegation to the effect that AGT employees have something different has been made on at least two different occasions now. We have not been able to find anything that is unique in the possession of AGT employees.

MR CHAIRMAN: Maybe if somebody discovers such a rarity, they could report to the Clerk.

The subsistence allowance: briefly, that relates to Section 56. Section 56 has been interpreted, I think, as meaning that if, for example, the House last week opened on Thursday, a member arriving here, say, on a Tuesday to be well prepared, would not collect his subsistence allowance for Tuesday and Wednesday. I don't know that the text requires that strict an interpretation, but is that the way it's working?

MR WOLSTENHOLME: That is the way it is working, yes.

MR CHAIRMAN: Are you content?

MR APPLEBY: I guess so.

MRS OSTERMAN: If I recall, the only concern was that there shouldn't be any questions about weekends, because many members stay over or keep accommodation, and so on. There expenses sort of run on.

MR APPLEBY: I don't think there ever has been a question about that, has there? It's assumed that if you rent accommodation during the session, it goes on right along. Some even stay over on weekends anyway.

MR CHAIRMAN: If I remember correctly, the Auditor General raised some question about it. He wanted some interpretation.

MR GOGO: On the first point, I would think paying him when the House opens until the day the House closes is satisfactory to us.

MR CHAIRMAN: You see, the way section 56(1) reads:

Where it is necessary for a member of the Legislative Assembly to live in a temporary residence in Edmonton for the purpose of attending a session of the Assembly, the member may claim and be paid, in respect of each day during the session that he is necessarily absent . . .

It seems to me that could be interpreted as meaning that you're entitled to be paid for a couple of days ahead, if you come a couple of days ahead for the purpose of the session.

MR APPLEBY: I don't think that's an issue at all.

MRS OSTERMAN: Our members were satisfied with the present situation. They did hear that we understood the Auditor General had raised a question about weekends. That could be looked at, making sure it is perfectly clear, if there any amendments to The Legislative Assembly Act.

MR CHAIRMAN: Are you being paid for weekends now?

MR WOLSTENHOLME: Yes.

MRS OSTERMAN: But there's a question as to whether . . .

MR CHAIRMAN: That's correct? Not in my mind. It says "temporary residence . . . for the purpose of attending a session". That doesn't mean you can't go shopping on a Saturday in addition, because you'd be shopping back home otherwise. I'll check with the Auditor General and see if there is any further concern about that. If there is, for what it's worth I'm going to give him that broad interpretation I just mentioned.

Next: Chamber renovations. I don't think we need to deal with that any further, unless you want to express some views on it. We have the resolution, and I'm dealing with Executive Council directly to get that funding approved. So unless it's of some further concern to someone, we can drop it.

MRS OSTERMAN: I don't know exactly what you're dealing on, Gerry.

MR CHAIRMAN: You know, we've had it on the agenda for about six or seven times.

MRS OSTERMAN: Our group has had an opportunity to view the proposal that the architect Stu hired has made. They concur with that proposal and would like to see those renovations go ahead.

MR CHAIRMAN: I don't think I'll do that. What about your side, Fred?

MR MANDEVILLE: I haven't seen that. I missed the meeting when the proposal was made. They're going to bring it down to me in the morning, to have a look at.

MR CHAIRMAN: Okay. Is there anything further on that?

MRS OSTERMAN: Well, we agreed last time that we would check this out one more time and make sure all our members had been apprized of the proposals and decide whether they want to go any further than that.

MR CHAIRMAN: Well, we have a resolution that approves getting the opinions of four architects. We also have a directive of Executive Council, putting the Chamber under the jurisdiction of the Speaker. I respect your views on it, and will certainly take them into consideration.

MRS OSTERMAN: So you're saying that you didn't need the committee to make a formal resolution?

MR CHAIRMAN: No.

Now, the budget of the Independent member: we invited him to attend -- oh, you're representing him?

MR STEFANIUK: We have room at the table, Mr. Chairman.

MR CHAIRMAN: Would you like to come to the table? There's a chair over here.

MRS. ROBINSON: I haven't much input, Mr. Chairman. He did send a memo.

MR. OSTERMAN: We have the memo.

MR. STEFANIUK: Under Item 3d, Mr. Chairman, is a copy of a memo from Mr. Sindlinger outlining his requests for adjustment of the budget for the fiscal year just ended.

MR. MANDEVILLE: He did get his special warrant, did he, for the period of time from when he went Independent?

MR. STEFANIUK: Yes.

MR. GOGO: The interim financing.

MRS. ROBINSON: Yes. He hasn't had a researcher, though. I do know the researchers he wanted to employ said the salary was just not enough. So he hasn't as yet employed a researcher.

MR. APPLEBY: What did we approve? Was it \$17,000 for a researcher?

MR. GOGO: Well, for next year -- that's really what we're dealing with I think -- we approved \$17,000. His total budget, as I recall, is \$42,500, which included the normal growth that everyone else experienced. He addresses the two points here, Mr. Chairman: the researcher and travel. Is that correct?

MRS. ROBINSON: That's correct.

MR. GOGO: What's been approved is \$17,000 for the researcher, and I think \$1,150 for travel.

MR. APPLEBY: What is the situation as far as the budget is concerned? It's locked up right now, isn't it? Anything would have to be special warrants, or whatever?

MR. GOGO: No, it hasn't gone to the House yet.

MR. APPLEBY: It's gone to the printer, hasn't it?

MR. STEFANIUK: It's gone to the printer because I have the proof pages for the Legislative Assembly.

MR. GOGO: From the government members' point of view, I think we have pretty good research. I don't know if any of them have a graduate degree and five years' experience. Presumably Mr. Sindlinger's request is that he can't get somebody with a graduate degree and five years' experience for \$17,000. With respect, Mr. Chairman, I guess I would have to say the amount that's proposed to be appropriated is, I think, in line with what the other researchers are on the government side. I can't speak for Mr. Mandeville, because I don't know.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Well, I think the figure of \$17,000 is in line with what we pay for research in our area in the official opposition. I think that's where we got the figure from, an average of what we were paying.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I think so.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have to say that maybe we'd all like to go out and get people with five or 10 years' experience, but I think Tom's budget should be in line with others. It's certainly far higher than the government members' per capita, because we have to share all the people who work for us. I find it very generous, actually.

MRS ROBINSON: Is this \$17,000 the bottom for a researcher?

MR. OSTERMAN: Yes.

MRS. ROBINSON: Would he be entitled to go from there to the top of that range?

MR. GOGO: He could only go to the appropriation as proposed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, because they're on contract, are they not? They're not in the ordinary . . .

MR. APPLEBY: That's not the lowest level we have. It's not \$17,000. We're below that. That's about an average.

MRS. ROBINSON: I see.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, I think this is what our office came up with, the average. We had some that were higher and some that were lower. This was the average we came up with when we were looking at the budget.

MR. APPLEBY: The government members, you know, have not been looking for people with five years' experience. We've been mostly taking graduates and training them on the job. They've proven out very well. I don't know how you work it, Fred, but it's an in-service training sort of position, no matter how much experience they've had.

MR. GOGO: If my memory serves me right, we spent a fair amount of time in determining this original point at the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We did.

MR. GOGO: So there are really two issues. That's one; the other is travel allowances.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right. Is there any further discussion? Is there anything further you'd like to say about the salary part of Mr. Sindlinger's . . .

MRS. ROBINSON: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there a motion?

MRS. OSTERMAN: If need be, I can make a motion that . . .

MR. APPLEBY: You made the last motion; I'll make this one: that the allowance for the Independent member for research remain as budgeted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any further discussion? Are you all agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With regard to travel, as you can see in Mr. Sindlinger's second paragraph there's reference to having to make some kind of on-site research and do on-site research in Ottawa or Prince Rupert, places like that.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'd be happy to wade into that again. Unless I have misunderstood the tax-free expense allowance that members have, I think we prioritize what we feel is most important to do our job. I realize, you know, that this is something over and above, that members don't have in terms of travel. There's already an allotment under . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: But isn't he talking about travel for a researcher?

MR. APPLEBY: Research personnel for his office, I suppose it would be.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Well, I think the same applies . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. I've been very remiss here. Your name is?

MRS. ROBINSON: Ivy. I think they know me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see.

MRS. ROBINSON: Thank you. That's fine.

MRS. OSTERMAN: There were a few tears wept when Ivy left from upstairs.

MR. GOGO: Was that budget item 200? Is that what I'm dealing with, \$1,150?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Yes.

MR. STEFANIUK: That's the total of the travel.

MR. APPLEBY: I guess I'm curious as to what ours would be.

MRS. OSTERMAN: That also fits under, if I remember us working out the travel for employees, that fits under a similar . . .

MR. GOGO: To cover contract employees.

MR. APPLEBY: But once again we're into the area that we can't sell something like this to our government members' caucus because there is just absolutely a minimal allowance for our researchers to do any travelling. Most travelling done, if there is any travelling done, is within the province. It would be comparative to that budget that we have already in place there. It would be just a small percentage. I'm not prepared to support any increase in a travel allowance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would seem that if we were going to go into this area, if we were going to say that perhaps it's something analogous to what American legislators are able to do -- senators and congressmen and so on. But if we were going to go into this, it would seem to me that the Auditor General would want to have some guidelines. Because you could decide that you wanted to

observe a shipment of grain through the Suez Canal, or something like that. It would seem to me that in the existing practices, this would require some kind of change.

MR. MANDEVILLE: I have to agree that the \$1,150 for someone in his position is not very much money for travel. However, I think we should be looking at this, Mr. Chairman. If we're going Prince Rupert -- there's no use the Official Opposition, the NDP, and the Independent all going out there. I mean, there should be some guidelines on how we're going to . . . We should all get together on it. After all, it's all Albertans' money we're spending.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Yes, that's right.

MR. MANDEVILLE: And I think we should have some type of guidelines. But I do agree that \$1,150 is low for travel there.

MRS. OSTERMAN: I think Fred has made an excellent point. But I think under a budgeting process, it's always been acknowledged that the Official Opposition, recognized as such, has special duties in the Legislature. Their budget should reflect that. I don't know whether if you had 10 Independents you would give them all the kind of budget the Official Opposition has. I guess that's the principle we're looking at and that we determined last time, because that's the principle that had been in place.

MR. MANDEVILLE: In my experience sitting in the Legislature, to change something like this when it gets into the House has been very difficult. Once it comes to the House, to change an estimate in the House is very difficult. There haven't been many precedents in the House that I've seen in my 14 years as an MLA.

MR. GOGO: You mean once the figures are printed?

MR. MANDEVILLE: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, is there any further discussion? Is there something else you'd like to say in this regard?

MS. ROBINSON: No, I think he has said it all in the letter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the letter? Okay. So, are you ready to make a decision? What I think it takes is a motion to change the estimates, because we've already got the matter decided in the estimates already approved.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Do we need a motion then? We've already . . .

MRS. OSTERMAN: Frank made a motion on the first one. Maybe it wasn't necessary. If the status quo is kept, it's not necessary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think it's that serious one way or the other. I mean the subject matter is serious, but the way we deal with it -- as long as we know that they attended the meeting. So is it agreed then that for the coming year . . .

MR. GOGO: That '81-82 remain the same?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. The committee doesn't wish to make any change with regard to travel allowances as budgeted.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Chairman, perhaps we could make a note at this time that the matter of travel allowances might be under serious review for next year's budget. Just to make a note of it, so we'll be reminded of it when the time comes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Would you like to give some thought now as to when you might like to deal with that? We could diarize it.

MR. APPLEBY: Before we deal with the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, normally we start preparing the estimates around July.

MR. APPLEBY: Yes. So it's not very far off.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you like to have . . . Perhaps we could take it as a note to the Clerk and the Clerk Assistant. When the estimates are drafted in July, that matter could be highlighted for special attention.

MR. APPLEBY: Right.

MS. ROBINSON: Thank you for your time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MRS. OSTERMAN: It was good to see you, Ivy.

MS. ROBINSON: Thank you.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to back up just for a moment. I think with the direction our members gave us, at least the minutes should reflect that direction. I realize our suggestions or recommendations to you are only just that, in this particular matter. But I would like to make a motion to show, or the minutes should show, that the government members were supportive of the Chamber renovations being done in the manner that was described by the architects as hired by Mr. McCrae. I would like the minutes to show that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I suppose there's no harm in recording that. Is it agreed?

MRS. OSTERMAN: We did have a motion before. If the motion was accepted, and we also made a motion to go for \$10,000. I would at least like it to show that we are no longer in agreement with that. I would like to make another motion, if it's in order, to rescind that previous motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the reason this came about of course was that it was stated that in order to get a special warrant to get these studies done of the Chamber, I should have the approval of this committee. The matter was then on the agenda of the committee some half dozen or so times, and eventually that approval came. So I then told the Clerk to go ahead and get in touch with

four architects. Then I learned that when the request for the special warrant came to Executive Council, it had not been approved.

I have some indication, that I'm not prepared to elaborate on at the moment, that possibly it would be approved now. I also have the directive, for want of a better word, of Executive Council which says that the Chamber, among other spaces, is under the jurisdiction of the Speaker. Now it would be my present intention, unless something else unexpected intervenes, to proceed to get the four proposals that the committee approved some time ago, then go back to the caucuses with those four proposals, to get further views on what might be the most appropriate.

MR. GOGO: Connie has said that the government members, as a result of the architect being here, those plans being at Government House to the government caucus, the government caucus said that we should proceed -- I forget the time frame; I think as soon as possible -- with the recommendations of the government architect to do the inside of the Chamber. Is that paraphrasing it accurately?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Yes.

MR. GOGO: I think in fairness, Mr. Chairman, our caucus has given us that view to bring here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. GOGO: So I think that should be on the table. I think that's really . . .

MRS. OSTERMAN: Yes. Maybe we shouldn't even, in the first place, have ever dealt with this in motions. I apologize for not understanding how maybe this should have been dealt with. If Chamber renovations are completely within your purview and you look for recommendations, Mr. Chairman, that's just fine. I know we're just in that position. But we ended up dealing with it by way of motions -- making a motion that we put \$10,000 in budget to seek four opinions. And we put in motion whatever, to do with the renovations.

However, at this point in time, because there are motions on the books, I feel it only proper to reflect the members that we represent. It's certainly only a recommendation, but I would like to rescind those previous motions because of how our government members feel, in that they would like to carry on with this right away. You will do as you see fit, and that's fine. I mean, you know what the recommendations are. But to make sure that the minutes are absolutely clear, since that's the way it was handled, in order to set it aside and now be just in a position where there'll be some informal discussions about it, with you taking under consideration whatever it is various members say, in retrospect I would like to make a motion rescinding this committee's recommendation that we go for the opinion of four architects and \$10,000 doing that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any further discussion on that motion?

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: In order to rescind a motion, doesn't notice of motion have to be given to any motion that's made, passed, and on the books? In order to take that motion off, doesn't there have to be notice of motion? I mean I just don't want to get into any problems here in the future. I know in municipal administration it's that way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've never really adopted any formal standing orders. I know there are some strictures in *Robert's* on that kind of thing. We've never said that we would be under *Beauchesne, Robert's*, or anything like that. I suppose by analogy you could say that we follow the procedure in the House.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Well, I have no objection . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the House I suppose it would require notice.

MR. STEFANIUK: I think *Standing Orders* requires all committees of the House to follow the orders of the House. I think we have a standing order which requires that the same rules apply to committees of the House.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, just so I'm clear on this motion here too. We made the motion here that we go ahead with the four architects and look at the proposals when they come up with them. Now you've indicated that the Speaker is in charge of the Chamber. Did this motion say that we're -- you're dealing with a special warrant, and looking at the possibility of going ahead with getting the four architects' designs. Does this motion say that you won't be doing this, or is it just rescinding the motion from Members' Services Committee?

MRS. OSTERMAN: That's right. Because the Speaker has the ability to do what he feels he wants to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the whole thing. I mean I don't want anybody to get the notion that I was just going to take the bit in my teeth and run. There's a further bit of relevant history to this. It was recognized some time ago that the Chamber needed some attention. For example, the soundproofing, or the acoustic covering on the wall, is rather unsightly. So it was my intention to bring some proposals to the Members' Services Committee, so they could express opinions and possibly go to the caucuses with those proposals. In that regard I took advice from an architect, then requested a special warrant to cover the cost of getting those proposals. That's where the thing got stuck. I was told that I could get the special warrant if this committee approved the idea of getting the proposals.

Now I brought it back here a frustrating number of times and, finally, it was approved. Then, as it turned out -- I don't know whether or not it was a misunderstanding, but when it went to Executive Council the request for the special warrant was rejected. Then I think there was some feeling here that the matter, notwithstanding it having been decided, should go back to the caucuses, at least to the government caucus. That in fact is what has happened.

Now if there's any doubt, I would suggest that we accept Connie's motion as a notice of motion. I'll put in on the agenda for the next meeting, since it's a motion to rescind.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Have we not had a motion to rescind something before? Not that it matters, but I thought we had.

MR. GOGO: On the classification question I think we rescinded a motion, but that was at the same meeting.

MRS. OSTERMAN: That's right, we did.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Well, if we haven't been observing the strict rules of procedure in this committee . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, rescissions are very unusual. I'll put it on the agenda for the next meeting, and we can vote on it at that time. We'll accept it as notice of motion.

Are we set to go on (e), airport parking?

MR. GOGO: This is certainly timely, now that the House is sitting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Somehow your name got attached to that.

MR STEFANIUK: Well, we were directed, Mr. Chairman, to look into the matter of obtaining for each member of the Assembly a Visa bank charge card for use in connection with airport parking charges. There are two memoranda under item 3e. One deals with the Auditor General's views relative to use of such cards. The second deals with the matter of restricted use as discussed with banking organizations. I have very real concerns for the Auditor General's recommendation number three, which requires that the member retain the individual charge slips since, as you know, bank charge card statements do not provide copies of the charge slip. There's simply a listing of the charges. So it would then be incumbent upon the member to retain slips, provide those to us, and to turn those over to the Clerk's office.

MR. APPLEBY: That would be the slip from the airport?

MR STEFANIUK: Well, it would be the copy of the actual charge slip. There is another recommendation, under item 4, and by the same token that is not applicable because American Express, as recommended by the Auditor General, is not accepted at the airport parking facilities; only the bank cards are.

I think we have something of an impasse. We have the additional problem of the issuing organization not being able to restrict use of the card. The consequence is that the card may be used, intentionally or otherwise, for other purposes, as are the credit cards which are currently held by the members. That results in our having to internally audit accounts quite closely, invoice members for unauthorized usage, establish accounts receivable, go through a monthly review of accounts which still remain in the receivable status, issue subsequent reminding invoices every 30 days and, finally, upon collection, receive moneys, deposit them under the appropriate accounts with the Provincial Treasurer.

We have no difficulty with the process, Mr. Chairman. I simply wish that the members of this committee would understand that if we enter into this type of arrangement, we have yet another heavy administrative workload. And as was, I think jokingly, said here a couple of meetings ago, the Clerk's staff has, after all, increased by two people in the last nine years; why the heck can't we handle this? We can handle this. But you must understand that we may have to come back and tell you that we need additional staff, and the cost of administering the program could be rather significant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It seems an awful lot of complication, doesn't it, for something that is so obviously in need of doing?

MR. STEFANIUK: That charge card is a bank card which has pretty much universal acceptance. We have certain difficulties with certain cards at the moment.

We have gasoline credit cards which are used by other than the member in whose name they are issued. We must audit; we must bill the member for personal usage. We have airline credit cards which are used for other than authorized purposes, and we must go through those invoices and bill back to the member.

I don't suggest that this is intentional, but a member carries perhaps two or three PWA cards, for a variety of reasons, and he mistakenly provides the card to his wife or husband, as the case may be, to his children who are making a trip, and all of a sudden we have 14-year-old so-and-so and 16-year-old so-and-so having bought tickets for transportation. Similarly, with gas credit cards we'll get charges from a Voyageur restaurant at an Esso station. We must go through and audit. We must, because the Auditor General, after all, does come in once a year and goes through our accounts with a fine-toothed comb, and we must provide evidence to the effect that we have not expended moneys out of public funds for any unauthorized usage. This, with all due respect, I suggest will simply accelerate the problem we already encounter.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would suggest that a memo reiterating the purpose of the cards go from the Clerk's office to all members in possession of cards. I just can't accept anybody going in and buying food on a credit card. There's no way anyone is going to tell me that that's an innocent mistake. I would feel better dealing with that in the future if a letter went, spelling out the use of those cards and the purpose of the card; in other words, the member alone must use the card.

On the question we're addressing, I have to agree with the Clerk. We're capable administratively of doing anything. I've got three or four credit cards in my pocket. The last thing I want is another one, and certainly not a Chargex. So I'm very aware of what the Clerk is saying. To institute a procedure using Chargex cards for every parking, to me is really not acceptable.

I want to commend the Clerk for all the work he has done on this. One thing remains in my mind. I'm thinking of the number of employees who use the airport. I think of the former Minister of Municipal Affairs having a pass at the airport. I wonder if it wouldn't be appropriate for Bo to talk to the commissioner or the chief commissioner of the city saying: this is our problem; do have you any suggestions how we resolve it? I'm convinced there are a lot of city employees who may not even have a pass, but there might be a system of charging. I just think there's got to be a better way than this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It seems ludicrous that staff people in government can collect for this kind of parking and MLAs can't. It's a legitimate expense that's incurred to perform the services of an MLA.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Obviously, Mr. Chairman, we can, if you want to put the system in place as outlined, or even retain parking slips. Members may have to keep parking slips and turn them in. A lot of members complain about having to keep track of things. I don't know whether that means enough to them to possibly keep receipts.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe if they weren't paid if they didn't have the slips, they'd keep the slips.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: I think if anyone wants to collect on an expense, if it's too much effort for them to keep track it isn't worth too much to them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: I think some of these fellows are crybabies when it comes to keeping track of their expenses and so on.

MR. APPLEBY: They've been used to being baby-sat all their lives.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: But I can certainly understand Bo's problem, and I think (inaudible) as affected as anyone. As far as I'm concerned, rather than see for all what's going to be done, that it just be dropped. I personally can't see the hiring of extra staff to look after one or two of us who are rather put on by this parking.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think there are more than one or two.

MR. APPLEBY: Is there a system now whereby if they produce receipts they can get reimbursed?

MR. STEFANIUK: That is something of a tacky situation. What we have attempted to do is to avoid, at almost all cost, direct payments to the member of any kind. It still goes on. There are members who, for example, forget their gasoline credit cards, submit expense accounts for gasoline charges to us, and we reimburse them. They have provided an expense account. We warn those members that they could find themselves eventually confronted with certain problems resulting from an audit by the Department of National Revenue. In spite of those warnings, there are several members who persist in following the practice. Yes, we could reimburse, but we always run that danger of the member eventually being confronted with a problem for having received funds which allegedly the member should not have received, those funds being considered by DNR as taxable income.

MR. APPLEBY: That's right.

MR. STEFANIUK: That's the problem. That's what we're up against.

MR. GOGO: I didn't want to speak again, Mr. Chairman, but I think of 1981, this Legislature going to '83. The House Leader has indicated a new Legislative Assembly Act. There's talk about Mr. Justice Miller's report on benefits to MLAs. I've got a hunch there's no change whatsoever coming in the \$50 per day, and yet we've got all kinds of costs escalating, hotels and so on. Those are not going to be changed. I think this is a must. We've got to provide parking, because it could well be \$7 a day by 1983. That's a serious cost item to members, so we've got to resolve it in terms paying it.

Mr. Clerk, my comments about your discussing it personally with the city administration: is there merit in that?

MR. STEFANIUK: There may be, but that would cover Edmonton Municipal. It still does not resolve the problem with respect to Calgary International, and I understand that those are the two airports we are primarily concerned about. The southern Alberta members who travel by air from Calgary to Edmonton, leave their automobiles for extended periods of time, a week at a time I believe, at Calgary International. We still have that problem. I understand that it's not quite as serious at Edmonton Municipal, although it does affect northern members who may periodically travel south. The real problem is at Calgary.

MR. GOGO: The rates are 25 per cent higher at Edmonton.

MRS. OSTERMAN: My car is left a lot at the airport; I think it's about \$4 back and forth

MR. CHAIRMAN: Suppose this: this leaves aside the problem of the bookkeeping. Suppose that at the beginning of the fiscal year, each member who is likely to incur this kind of expense be provided in advance with a disbursement account -- some money, in other words -- to be used for this purpose on an accounting basis, and when it's used up, ask for more. Whatever isn't used up at the end of the fiscal year is returned. Now that sounds a little bit strange and artificial, but what I'm thinking about is the income tax people. It would seem to me that if money were provided to a member on that basis, the income tax people would almost be driven to the conclusion that the member was spending Legislative Assembly money and not his own money which he was getting back which could then be tagged as income. I realize it's unusual, and it would still not exempt the Clerk's office from vouchering all this stuff. Either that, or maybe we should consult a tax expert.

Another thing we might consider doing is getting a ruling from the income tax office. Of course, if it's adverse, we're in the same pickle.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Let sleeping dogs lie.

MR. APPLEBY: The income tax office is not the question. It's The Legislative Assembly Act, isn't it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. You see, we would have quite a simple way of . . . This could be included in expenses.

MR. APPLEBY: Which expenses?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The member's expenses, like his living expenses. The reason we're in this hassle is that we're trying to charge the parking to the Legislative Assembly directly by means of Legislative Assembly credit cards, so that money never reaches the member. It goes directly from the Legislative Assembly funds to the parking authority.

MR. APPLEBY: Otherwise you're going to be increasing the *per diem* allowance for subsistence.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, yes, you might run into that angle.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Do we pay tax on the subsistence allowance?

MR. STEFANIUK: No.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: How does a department work it? If you're on a committee or something for a department, you submit your expenses and it's paid.

MRS. OSTERMAN: It comes out of expenses.

MR. STEFANIUK: You're being reimbursed for actual expenses incurred with a special assignment. I assume you're talking about a situation where, as a member, you're requested to perform a certain task on behalf of a government

department. You're being reimbursed for actual expenses, having produced evidence of expenditure. Therefore it is simply a question of paying you back for out-of-pocket expenses, and therefore the item is not taxable. We're dealing here with eligibility for certain types of expenses.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that we have several serious concerns with expenses generally; not only with parking expenses, but with various other types of expenses. My concern obviously has to be to administer those expenses in accordance with statutory and regulatory provisions. But I do think that the whole question of method of reimbursement to members should be re-examined in some considerable detail. I hold the opinion, for example, with respect to automobile expenses, that members are not being sufficiently compensated for use of personal automobiles by being provided simply with gasoline, oil, and one or two other services. There is the whole question of the depreciation of the automobile, the repair of the automobile, the insurance costs, which escalate every year. Quite frankly, I would feel that it would be more advantageous for the member to receive a mileage or kilometre allowance as opposed to the gasoline credit card, which would more realistically reflect the cost of operating a personal vehicle. In effect, the public service of Alberta is compensated for use of private automobiles in that way. I understand that there are members of this Assembly who log as much as 40,000 miles a year . . .

MRS. OSTERMAN: More.

MR. STEFANIUK: . . . travelling through their respective constituencies and executing their duties as members.

MR. APPLEBY: Back and forth to the capital.

MR. STEFANIUK: I would respectfully suggest that by receiving the operating expenses for those vehicles, they are hardly being compensated for the investment which they have made. I would respectfully suggest, therefore, Mr. Chairman, that this committee, or a subcommittee of this committee, might dedicate itself over the next short period of time to dealing with that whole question of expense allowances exclusively, and bring in to this committee for consideration a detailed report with recommendations as to how they might be revamped, revised, to better compensate the member for actual expenses, while being mindful of the administrative requirements which are placed upon us by The Financial Administration Act and by The Auditor General Act.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The problem is actually very simple and basic. Back in about 1972, or a little after that, the income tax people assessed a number of members, including some of your colleagues who have been in the House for some time, and decided that their living allowances were not actually expenses, but that they were income, and they taxed them. There were several members who paid several thousand dollars in back income tax as a result of that. That was appealed, and as far as I know it's never come to a decision. Two members, I think, are now ministers, and their appeals are dragging on, and the position that the FIS took on this was that you're getting a tax-free allowance, 50 per cent of your indemnity; that covers all this stuff, and we're going to tax anything you get in addition.

That's one reason why, over and over and over again, we have tried to devise ways of covering these expenses directly from the Assembly and not pay them to the members. You may remember in one or two of the previous members' services

committees, repeatedly we brought up the point that members were sending in claims for their daily living allowance unvouchered. We pointed out that there was a possible risk there of those allowances being taxed because, although there was a daily limit set, the opinion that we had was that within that limit you had to voucher what you were spending. We've worked out a way of covering it where there is a monthly rent being paid on an apartment, how many days you can charge under that, and so on.

So I don't think we can, with certainty, work out a solution to this without getting a ruling from the tax people, unless we are able to pay these amounts directly to the parties who provide the services, the groceries, or whatever. In the case of the federal members of Parliament, they are getting for their spouses, I think, three trips a year to Ottawa. They have constituency offices provided, with salaried people, and so on. They themselves are getting, I think, one trip, or several a month, to their constituencies, perhaps depending on where they live. As far as I know, those payments are being made directly to Air Canada, not to the federal members. I expect they're charging them up on perhaps special Air Canada credit cards; I don't know. But as I understand it, they are not going to the member's pocket by way of reimbursement. So that's where our problem is.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Saskatchewan has a way of paying their MLAs, and it depends on the distance they are from the capital and the method of transportation they have to get there. There's a committee, but they couldn't tell me whether the committee was a committee of MLAs or an independent committee or who it was. But they make recommendations what the expense should be, depending on where they live from the capital and the type of transportation you have to use to get there.

MR. GOGO: Manitoba does that -- X trips a year. But I'll make a quick suggestion, Mr. Chairman, because I want to get back to the parking. I like the Clerk's suggestion that perhaps when the House rises, we have a committee to deal with those matters and make recommendations to the respective caucuses. I think it should be on the table. The Miller report has spelled out certain things, and we don't have much freedom of many changes.

The only other comment I want to make directly to parking, Mr. Clerk: what is wrong with the Legislative Assembly of Alberta being the equivalent of Hertz and having 10 stalls at both airports? Is that practicable?

MR. STEFANIUK: Maybe.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's an idea.

MR. APPLEBY: That's what I was wondering. Would that be sufficient?

MR. GOGO: Twenty stalls, whatever; but the principle? Because you go into those airports and if you use those stalls, you don't go through meters at all, you don't go through checkouts at all; you drive directly into. In other words, you don't get a ticket.

MR. STEFANIUK: In other words, we'd pay a monthly rental fee. We would have some kind of identification for the vehicles using those stalls, so they wouldn't be tagged by the policing authorities, and obviously members who had that authorization would use them. That may be the solution.

MR. GOGO: We could use our present passes we have for the parkade downstairs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would be a question of cost. If you had those stalls set aside 365 days of the year and you only use them for 120 or less -- but it's worth considering.

MRS. OSTERMAN: It would be worth finding out if it can be done four months of the year, or something.

MR. APPLEBY: Even so, we have caucus meetings, and things like this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right. George comes up . . . There would be another way and that would save all the hassle, either now or when the next commission sits; that is, to pay an additional allowance to members. Then there's no bookkeeping, nothing. So if a member comes from Athabasca and we know he is going to be parking at the Edmonton or Athabasca airports, he gets so much.

MRS. OSTERMAN: It's like Bo says: just for the rural members, or those who have to have an extra car; those of us who have gone out and bought another vehicle we wouldn't ordinarily have, that \$6,000 is gone so fast.

MR. STEFANIUK: Where did you get one for \$6,000?

MRS. OSTERMAN: I'm talking about just depreciation.

MR. GOGO: But could that be looked at, a block of stalls?

MR. STEFANIUK: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that all right for that item? The next item on the agenda is pins for members. Can we deal with that briefly and quickly?

MR STEFANIUK: We have two designs, Mr. Chairman, which are under 3f. The first one, which incorporates the dome, the Mace, and the letters MLA, was produced by Birks; the second one, which is the Mace by itself, was the product of the creative services branch of the Department of Government Services.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: Can you repeat that name again?

MR CHAIRMAN: They're not mentioned in Genesis, but they're creative.

MRS OSTERMAN: It doesn't have MLA on it.

MR STEFANIUK: We told them what we wanted; this is what they came up with. I rest my case.

MR APPLEBY: What size are they?

MR STEFANIUK: The size is to be determined.

MR GOGO: The first one you wear; the second one you carry.

MR CHAIRMAN: Somebody carries it for you.

MRS OSTERMAN: I'm not excited about either.

MR CHAIRMAN: No, nor I. The first one looks cluttered to me.

MRS OSTERMAN: Mind you, it might partially be the reproduction too.

MR STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I would like to make a suggestion, employing my limited creative abilities; that is that we utilize the Mace by itself, and for the purpose of reinforcing the staff simply build in metal the letters MLA.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: I was thinking of that myself.

MR APPLEBY: How big would we have it?

MR STEFANIUK: I think you could take it down, Frank, to an inch.

MR APPLEBY: If you could do that, it wouldn't be too bad.

MR GOGO: George, yours is three-quarters of an inch, eh?

MR WOLSTENHOLME: It may be, not much more.

MRS OSTERMAN: Could we see the MLA done in different ways, up and down, or sideways like you have it? Maybe bring back something next time.

MR STEFANIUK: Would you be agreeable with that basic concept, using the Mace with the letters MLA? If you are, then we can go ahead and retain, if you like, the creative services of some private agency to come up with designs for us.

MR CHAIRMAN: There's just one problem with it. All the other provinces have used it.

MR STEFANIUK: No. The House of Commons has designed a pin which incorporates the Mace, and it has -- well, maybe the word Alberta is in there. The fact is that the Mace is a reproduction, whether visible or not, of the Alberta Mace. Our Mace is unique to this Legislature.

MR CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR GOGO: I'd certainly prefer that to the first one.

MR APPLEBY: I'd prefer that too.

MRS OSTERMAN: Yes. Try a few different styles with MLA on it.

MR CHAIRMAN: What do you say we get some color diagrams? You can't put them in every member's book, but we can pass them around at the next meeting.

MR STEFANIUK: There's that whole question of whether we want color in it. You recall we raised this in the past, whether we're going to consider something that was strictly metal or would we consider a precious metal, or an alloy, a plate. When you get into something, quite frankly, that's as tiny as this

reproduction of the Mace, Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, I suggest that color becomes rather useless; the detail would be hidden. The enamelling would be so minute that it would really wouldn't do anything to enhance the pin.

MRS OSTERMAN: Okay, we'll look forward to a diagram.

MR CHAIRMAN: All right. And what about the Clerk's concept of the Mace with MLA through it?

MRS OSTERMAN: I'd like that. I'd like to see different ways of writing MLA.

MR CHAIRMAN: Also possibly different lengths of Mace as compared with the size of the letters.

No. 4, travel allowances for spouses. That was an item that was to go to caucuses and come back. Are you ready to discuss it or deal with it?

MRS OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, that falls under exactly the same situation as the Chamber renovations, in terms of at our last meeting saying we would make the decision at this meeting, that there was information to be gathered.

MRS CHAIRMAN: So you want to give notice of a motion to rescind?

MRS OSTERMAN: Yes.

MR CHAIRMAN: That's a notice of motion to rescind the item in the estimates which provides a travel allowance for spouses of MLAs.

MR STEFANIUK: For what purposes, though, Mr. Chairman? There were allowances provided for a variety of purposes, one being a set number of trips for spouses of MLAs between the home and the capital. Another provision was made for a travel allowance for spouses to accompany members on certain CPA functions.

MRS OSTERMAN: I believe there was an amount in the budget of \$26,000 -- was that the total? My notice of motion would be that we delete that item from our budget.

MR STEFANIUK: That refers, then, to spouses' travel between the constituency and the capital.

MR APPLEBY: That also falls under the category of 3a. It would then go for review, hopefully, the next time there is a committee.

MRS OSTERMAN: Yes, I didn't mean that it would be dropped all together, but would be for this budget. Our members are interested in far more input, and because it also reflects again on the Miller report, they want a lot more discussion.

MR CHAIRMAN: Are you saying that you want to have it reviewed when we prepare the estimates next year, or do you want it put aside until another commission?

MR APPLEBY: Another commission.

MRS OSTERMAN: But I'd like to have information from this committee so that another commission won't overlook something of that nature. I'm hoping that when this kind of commission is set up again, a suggestion can be made that they talk to the Members' Services Committee. The Members' Services Committee would be in a ideal position to make some of the points that maybe otherwise wouldn't be covered.

MR CHAIRMAN: That would depend on the terms of reference.

MR APPLEBY: Fred, what did your caucus say?

MR MANDEVILLE: Our caucus approved it. They agreed to go along with it.

MR CHAIRMAN: Do you want to take it back to your caucus for reconsideration? You've got time anyway, you've been given a notice of motion. So if you wanted to do something about it, there's nothing forces you to bring that motion up the next time. Is that enough for that?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: Now, the coat of arms: very simply, someone at the last meeting wanted to know what it all meant. I have an explanation of it and if you'd like, I'll circulate it. It's a little long to read; you've got it in your book.

MR APPLEBY: This is the sort of thing I think -- quite often you have people out there, in the schools and so on, who want to have an interpretation.

MR CHAIRMAN: I'll enquire; there used to be a little booklet on the Mace years ago, that is now out of production. I'll enquire, if you like, to see whether it's proposed in the government to produce a pamphlet, leaflet or something, explaining the coat of arms. If it is, members can use them to answer enquiries.

MR APPLEBY: Mr. Chairman, I notice that quite often a federal member, when he's attending some opening of a public building or something like that, will present them with a framed bill of rights from the federal House. I wonder if there's any possibility or what the availability would be of something similar of our coats of arms.

MR STEFANIUK: I think the committee should be aware, in considering that recommendation, that it is now practice for members to present flags at openings of buildings. Perhaps a policy should be established as to what is presented.

MR APPLEBY: This is true.

MRS OSTERMAN: Because the departments have certain things, and so on. I believe Stu was also working on something like that, Frank, if you recall Bill Purdy raising that.

MR CHAIRMAN: Could I suggest that the members might like to go to their respective caucuses to review the items for presentation? A coat of arms, as

you know, done on metal plate, with perhaps a wooden shield or backing, will outlast a flag in the Alberta winds.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: Or people who might take them.

MR CHAIRMAN: We had one done for the Sergeant-at-Arms as a retirement present.

MRS OSTERMAN: Oh, nice.

MR STEFANIUK: There is also a framed version of a lithograph that has been circulated, I think, to ministerial areas.

MR APPLEBY: I don't think we can create a policy right now, but it's something we might give some consideration to.

MR CHAIRMAN: Should we let it go for now?

MR GOGO: Are we going to send a copy of this to all members?

MR CHAIRMAN: I'd rather have a better . . . Is that what you want done?

HON MEMBERS: Yes, please.

MR CHAIRMAN: All right.

MRS OSTERMAN: Speaking of something going to all members, I did understand Karen to tell me that minutes will be circulated to all members after they're approved.

MR CHAIRMAN: There's no problem there. We've never been restricted. Are we doing that now?

SOME HON MEMBERS: No.

MR CHAIRMAN: We're not? Well, we don't need any further discussion of that; we'll just do it.

MRS OSTERMAN: Thank you, because a lot of interest has been expressed; thank goodness.

MR CHAIRMAN: It's a nice change. Anyway, what about the official opposition's estimates?

MRS OSTERMAN: Do we need a motion on these estimates, changing from one category to another?

MR MANDEVILLE: Is that going to cause some problems as far as making these changes?

MR STEFANIUK: Administratively it doesn't provide any problem at all, Mr. Chairman, for the members of the committee. However, in transferring funds within any of our allocations, it is the practice and a requirement of Treasury that a transfer form be signed by both the Speaker, in his capacity as minister responsible for the Legislative Assembly, and myself in my

capacity as Deputy Minister responsible for the Legislative Assembly. I therefore considered it appropriate, upon receipt of Mr. Speaker's memo of February 20, to direct it, as you can see by my covering memorandum, to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for his consideration as to whether or not he felt that he wishes to simply approve the transfer or refer it to this committee, in light of the fact that this committee had considered all the estimates, element by element. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly elected to distribute that memo to the members of this committee. That resulted in my receipt of what I would describe as a very snippy memo from the Executive Assistant of the Leader of the Opposition, questioning my right to distribute this memorandum to members of this committee, but I think that's a reflection of his nature generally, which has probably jeopardized his relationship with the Legislative Assembly staff.

MR CHAIRMAN: Careful, I'm not sure this is a privileged occasion.

MR STEFANIUK: That's the kind of thing it has resulted in, and to this date I have withheld answering that memo, pending a decision by this committee.

MR CHAIRMAN: I haven't seen it.

MRS OSTERMAN: Who is the memo from?

MR STEFANIUK: From the Executive Assistant to the Leader of the Opposition.

MR CHAIRMAN: It's not included here.

MRS OSTERMAN: From Andy?

MR STEFANIUK: No, Dwight Bliss.

MR APPLEBY: Anyway, we can probably dispose of it.

MR CHAIRMAN: You see, ordinarily I do sign these things in the course of the year, and all the ministers do too, I'm sure. But the estimates haven't been approved by the Assembly, and I'm just . . .

MR APPLEBY: Well, we could dispose of this by having a motion now that we approve of this transfer? I make that motion.

MR CHAIRMAN: All agreed?

MR WOLSTENHOLME: There's no problem?

MR STEFANIUK: Administratively there is not a problem.

MR CHAIRMAN: So the motion is that the committee recommend that the transfers requested by Mr. Ray Speaker in his memo of February 20, 1981, be made.

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MRS OSTERMAN: I think that's quite proper for us to do that, Mr. Chairman, because we did consider the estimates that way, and then to have them show up differently . . .

MR STEFANIUK: In effect, some concern has been expressed here over the Sindlinger request, for example. If this committee does not have the power to consider transfers, in effect the hon. member who is now an independent member could discharge his secretary and hire research staff who would have three graduate degrees. Does this committee wish to exercise some control or does it not? I'm subjected to the direction of the committee.

MR APPLEBY: Personally I don't think we should be involved in the internal transfer of funds that have been allocated.

MR CHAIRMAN: Ordinarily not, Frank. But the thing is this: after the estimates have been passed, and it's one of those sort of routine transfer of funds, fine, within the limits that are allowed. But here, these estimates haven't been approved yet, and I just felt it would be going beyond my scope.

MR APPLEBY: Anyway, we've covered it.

MR STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, I am concerned because of the tone of the memo I received from the opposition office. I wonder if the member of the opposition present here would care to make any comment, if the official opposition has any objection to the committee dealing with this.

MR MANDEVILLE: Certainly not. I'm sure we're not concerned that it be handled in this manner. It's just a matter that we're not going to have the full-time people in our office that we had before. We've changed the leader, and we've decided to let some of our people . . . Whatever method used is certainly satisfactory to us in the opposition.

MR CHAIRMAN: No. 7, cable television. We have Mr. Ray Speaker's memo of February 11. Do you want to deal with that, Fred?

MR MANDEVILLE: They were talking about having this in the transfer. Do we have cable in the building?

MR CHAIRMAN: Not that I'm aware of. There's been talk of it. My place here is wired for television. As I understand this -- am I correct? -- the thing would be that you would be able to watch in your offices what is going on in the House. Frankly I have some considerable misgivings about that. It's true that -- for example, I have a box here now that I can hear what's going on in the House; I need it because I want to know when I'm to go back in and not just wait for someone to come running down the hall. Of course I have a buzzer as well. But in the West German House, every member's office, I understand, in the Bundestag is equipped with closed-circuit television; at least that is what I was told when I was there. I think the result is that the attendance in the House is rather poor. What the members are doing is working in their offices, casting an eye on the screen every now and then, and saying, oh, Joe's up to speak and Peter's next, then it's my turn after that. And they'll come into the House to speak and then go out again.

MR MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, I discussed this with our leader, and I think we'd just like to let this drop at this time.

MR CHAIRMAN: Okay.

No. 8, the guideline for the communications allowance. I think that was circulated to members last month. Following what I understand to be the principle that we agreed to follow here, that any matter of substance, unless it's appearing on the agenda only by way of information, but if it's appearing on the agenda for a decision, is circulated to both sides of the House so that caucuses can consider it first. Then when I have the signal that the caucuses have considered it, I put it on the agenda.

MR APPLEBY: Great.

MR CHAIRMAN: What's the situation on item No. 8? Has there been a review of that, or have you not had a chance to review? Would you like to have it carried over to the next meeting? Is there going to be any critical effect if we don't deal with this today?

MR STEFANIUK: I need a couple of answers, Mr. Chairman, that connect with this. There were some general intentions, I think, outlined in a previous meeting, with respect to the use of the communications allowance. I understood that the intention was, in effect, to interpret the use of the communications allowance very loosely; leave it to the member's discretion as to how the member best saw fit to use the allowance. We have been confronted with related problems at this stage, in that at least one member, possibly as many as three at the moment, has decided to use the allowance for capital expenditure purposes.

MR GOGO: Signs and so on?

MR STEFANIUK: No, equipment; word processing equipment. In the one instance we have a situation where a member has taken his allowance for two years, 1980-81 and '81-82, has combined the two years' allowance to purchase a piece of word processing equipment. The question that then comes before me is that I cannot pay for word processing equipment out of that particular appropriation which holds the communication allowance, and must arrange to transfer the funds to an element which will enable me to pay for capital expenditure, i.e., equipment.

MR CHAIRMAN: Actually that really isn't as bad as it sounds.

MR APPLEBY: Sounds terrible.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: It sure sounds bad.

MR CHAIRMAN: It simply means this: you get a certain amount of money to communicate in your constituency, and instead of spending it on paper, which is here today and gone tomorrow, you spend it on a typewriter so that the Legislature Assembly, instead of having spent its money on paper, which is gone, is spent on a typewriter, which it still owns.

MR APPLEBY: I don't think that's the point which sounds so terrible. What sounds terrible to me is spending a budget that's not even been considered yet.

MR CHAIRMAN: Oh, well, that wasn't done. I think what's happened is that the money has been advanced, and it will be reimbursed when it comes from the next

estimates. I don't think that's a problem either. That's my understanding of it anyway. But where do you draw the line? Supposing you use part of your communications allowance to buy a date stamp or a rubber stamp of some kind -- it's not going to be used up and thrown away like the paper you spend it on.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: I would be interested in knowing where the paper is coming from to use in this machine. Is that coming from Government Services here, to use in the machine?

MR STEFANIUK: It's not supposed to any longer.

MR CHAIRMAN: It would come out of the allowance as well, I assume. That's something I would have to check.

MR STEFANIUK: If it's being used in the constituency office, the supplies required for the operation of the constituency office must now be taken from that \$10,000 allowance for constituency office operation.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: Another thing that concerns me is that if Bo is going to have to do this, where are we going to draw the line in the future?

MR STEFANIUK: I have no problem in doing this. This again is an administrative function. I simply want this committee to be aware that this needs to be done, in keeping with the kind of general guidelines that were given to me at a previous meeting. As you recall, someone said during the course of the meeting that if the member decides he wants to sponsor a float in a parade, he should be allowed to sponsor a float in a parade.

MRS OSTERMAN: I agree. I think there's an amount for each member, based on what is outlined in point No. 4 here. For those of us who have a very large increase, I see that will be taken note of after our next enumeration, and an adjustment will be made.

MR STEFANIUK: Providing you accept these guidelines.

MRS OSTERMAN: I think our members have had an opportunity to review this. We can certainly work with these guidelines. It's a brand new program, and if they don't quite work out, we will have another look at them. Let us give them an opportunity.

MR CHAIRMAN: Are you saying, then, that for the time being we should follow these guidelines?

MR APPLEBY: Could I ask a question regarding the word processing equipment? Does title to that remain . . .

MR STEFANIUK: That's owned by the Legislative Assembly.

MR CHAIRMAN: It would seem to be it would be in the same category as paper that was bought under the communications allowance and not used. I don't think title to that paper would pass to the member; it would remain in the Assembly. But that is something that could stand clarification. You might wish to consider, on a future date when we're dealing with these guidelines, some addition which would say where equipment is bought with the guideline,

it's understood it remains the property of the Legislative Assembly. That of course raises another point, which is people keeping track of equipment; we get our number and stuff on it. However, let's not go too far.

MR STEFANIUK: I would assume, Mr. Chairman, that if a member elected to dissolve his or her constituency office, we would have the right to walk in and virtually clean it out and claim title to all the physical assets.

MR CHAIRMAN: Inventory it anyway before turning it over to the next member.

So am I clear, then, that it's agreed -- maybe we should have this in the form of a motion, since it could have Auditor General implications. Does somebody wish to put his or her name on a motion to the effect that the guidelines for communications allowance, as appended in No. 8 to the present minutes, be approved, until such time as it's amended?

MR APPLEBY: This has only gone to members of the committee so far, has it?

MR CHAIRMAN: That's right.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: I have a question.

MRS OSTERMAN: No, they went out to everybody.

MR CHAIRMAN: Did they go out to everybody?

MR APPLEBY: I see it's addressed to the Members' Services Committee; that's why I asked that question.

MR CHAIRMAN: Did it go to all members?

MR STEFANIUK: No, to the Members' Services Committee.

MR CHAIRMAN: That's what I thought.

MRS OSTERMAN: I'm sorry, I thought everybody had it.

MR APPLEBY: I would think we should refer this to our caucuses.

MR CHAIRMAN: Back to you, George.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: I have quickly glanced through this, and I don't see where, as a guideline, you can include giving authority to getting a copier or something like that.

MR CHAIRMAN: To buy equipment?

MR WOLSTENHOLME: Yes.

MR CHAIRMAN: That's one of the changes you could make if you wanted to hold the matter in abeyance. Or, as I suggested, if you want to pass a motion to the effect that we approve these, subject to future amendment, which there would be anyway.

MR APPLEBY: I would like to move we table it to the next meeting, since it hasn't gone to all members of our caucus.

MR CHAIRMAN: Agreed?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: Fred, you're going to take it to your caucus? Okay.

MR STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, may I ask one more question, which connects with the communications allowance and with the decision taken by this committee in respect of letterhead. Was it intended that the letterhead design approved by this committee be the only letterhead provided to members, or may a member refuse that letterhead and print his own, utilizing his communications allowance to do so?

MR CHAIRMAN: That has happened.

MRS OSTERMAN: I think that's part of the communications, if they want to do that.

MR GOGO: Just so I'm clear on that, Bo. I obtained 500 sheets of stationery the other day, for which the constituency office would be charged out of that appropriation. If I now want to personalize by putting on it John Gogo, MLA, do I understand that would come out of the communications allowance as opposed to the other allowance?

MR STEFANIUK: Not necessarily.

MR GOGO: Okay.

MRS OSTERMAN: Are you saying it can come out of either?

MR STEFANIUK: Yes.

MR CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are you content with that? No. 9, word processing equipment.

MR APPLEBY: We're still working on that, what method we want to handle it. I would like to have it tabled as well.

MR CHAIRMAN: Over to the next meeting?

MR APPLEBY: Just tabled.

MRS OSTERMAN: Strike it from the agenda until we are ready to bring it back.

MR APPLEBY: Well, I'll just table it and that's sufficient. We don't have a specific date to bring it back on.

MR CHAIRMAN: No, but the question is whether tabled items are going to be carried forward so they're not lost sight of. If you say bury it, we'll bury it.

MR APPLEBY: I would ask to remove it from the agenda, then.

MR CHAIRMAN: Is it agreed?

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: No. 10, is there any other business?

MR GOGO: There are two items, Mr. Chairman. One is under 9, where we have that sample of stationery. I think that's just so impressive. Is there provision, though, for having that reproduced -- that's 8 by 11 -- on a smaller -- how can I frame this?

MR CHAIRMAN: Social size?

MR GOGO: I send out, for anniversary purposes, and I want to use personal notes.

MR STEFANIUK: As you know, we have a letterhead that's that social size stationery. When that stock is exhausted, we would propose to move into the new design. All the stationery is being produced as existing stocks are being exhausted, rather than destroying anything.

MR GOGO: The only other point I have, Mr. Chairman, is in reference to the minutes of February 3, dealing with commissioner for oaths. I should have known better, I guess. I should have sent the \$10 bill four months ago with that application. We discussed here, and it's in the minutes, that our constituency secretaries could be commissioners for oaths and the Assembly would pay. That's now four months old. I had sent it up -- I probably should have sent a \$10 bill and it would have been done four months ago.

MR STEFANIUK: I personally cleared that matter with the Attorney General's Department, Mr. Chairman, and put the program into effect with the appropriate person in the AG's Department. There were a certain number of forms to be completed, and providing that charge was not made for the services and services were restricted to official use, the fee would be waived. A form was provided in that connection. If it's being held up in the Attorney General's Department, I would be happy to know about it so I can follow it up. But my assumption had been that the program was operating.

MR GOGO: Do you want me to chase that down?

MR STEFANIUK: No, I can chase it down, because I would like to know what the heck is going on. To the best of my knowledge, every member was contacted, advising that the program was being put into effect and the forms, as they were being received, were being directed to the Attorney General for processing. If they're being held up, then I'm very concerned.

MR GOGO: I'll bring the name to you after the meeting.

MR CHAIRMAN: Any other business?

MR STEFANIUK: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have two matters: one deals with telephone answering equipment. As you know, approval was given by this committee to

institution of the program. The funds were applied for by way of special warrant and approved. The equipment has been bought and, in many instances, delivered to the members. Concerns arise in connection with the program. One: reimbursement of members who have previously bought equipment. Are they to be reimbursed through their communication allowance, in light of the fact that they went into the program before it received official sanction, and are they to be reimbursed for the full amount of their purchase? Or, if that amount exceeded what was being spent by the Assembly on bulk purchase, are they to be reimbursed only up to that amount? That's the only concern I have that needs to be considered at the moment: reimbursement of members and the policy that will be instituted for the amount of reimbursement.

MR GOGO: It seems to me, Frank, we discussed that. As long as the price were not greater than we're paying -- in other words, I think we said those who bought equipment . . .

MR APPLEBY: As far as I understand, the type of equipment we are supplying is quite a superior type of equipment, which also includes a warranty system. Myself, I think the member should have the option of taking the new type of equipment and disposing of their own as they see fit, or being reimbursed up to the amount we pay for this equipment.

MR GOGO: And the Assembly takes ownership the existing equipment?

MR APPLEBY: No, they keep their equipment.

MR GOGO: Ownership.

MR APPLEBY: Oh yes, ownership.

MRS OSTERMAN: If they decided to take the new equipment . . .

MR APPLEBY: Then they dispose of their own.

MR STEFANIUK: May I make a recommendation which would simplify it from my point of view, and I have a selfish motive at the moment. Can we reimburse them for the value of the equipment they may have bought personally from communication allowance funds, which would be handling the matter on the same principle as we have the one member's word processing equipment? The fiscal year has ended anyway; that's the funds we addressed ourselves to, to begin with because we had no other provision. Would this committee approve that practice? If a member has purchased equipment on his own, that he be reimbursed for it out of communications allowance funds in 1980-81? The year has ended in any event.

MRS OSTERMAN: If the money is there, that would simplify it, and it wouldn't dip into this year's funds. I think that would look after it.

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR APPLEBY: Is that all right, Fred?

MR MANDEVILLE: Agreed.

MR STEFANIUK: I have one nasty item, Mr. Chairman, from the Auditor General. The Auditor General has informed me that there will be a statement in his report for the fiscal year 1979-80 as follows:

During audit examination of equipment purchased by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, this office could not locate various items used by the Members of the Legislative Assembly. To ensure that physical control exists over equipment, it is recommended that the present records be expanded to include the location of all equipment and that transfers are duly noted.

The Auditor General says to me, in his introductory paragraph, that there were 26 instances where inadequacies were observed in fixed assets records and controls. I looked into the matter in some detail and have found that, in effect, our problems are confined to lack of ability to physically examine dictating equipment provided to members. In spite of best efforts and the co-operation of caucus administrators, we have been unable to persuade members to produce for examination equipment which had been assigned to them. The common excuse has been that the equipment is at home, in their personal homes, their constituency offices, or they have given the equipment to another member and have not received it back.

I suggest it's a very serious concern. We're dealing with public money or public equipment, and we are receiving little or no co-operation in certain areas from members. It is perhaps a subject the caucus representatives would wish to take under consideration and bring forth some comment.

MR APPLEBY: Do you have the specific record of the members who are involved?

MR STEFANIUK: Yes, we do.

MR APPLEBY: I wonder, Connie, if you couldn't get that?

MRS OSTERMAN: Yes, I would appreciate a copy of that.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: Is that from a year ago?

MR CHAIRMAN: This is the '79-80 audit. We've done, quite frankly, our damndest, including an almost threatening letter to members, saying we would invoice them for the value of the equipment if they did not produce it. It was merely a threat and not carried out.

MRS OSTERMAN: We might just have to do that.

MR GOGO: Were people here . . .

MRS OSTERMAN: No, I hadn't heard this.

MR GOGO: I have a hand thing, and I think Marg Pratt asked me one time and I said yes, I've got it; this is the number. Is that what we're talking about?

MR STEFANIUK: Yes.

MR GOGO: So obviously some members ignored it. I recall the '79 election, the previous session there was maybe some difficulty; members are no longer here.

MRS OSTERMAN: If they want to check on that equipment, do they come around and ask to see it and you could bring it the next week, or whatever?

MR STEFANIUK: Sure.

MR APPLEBY: Our party would be provided with that list?

MR STEFANIUK: Yes. If I may, I would like to provide it to both caucuses.

MR GOGO: I want to find out if I'm on it.

MRS OSTERMAN: I don't recall being asked.

MR STEFANIUK: But I warn members that it will appear in the Auditor report.

MRS OSTERMAN: I just have a question. That telephone answering equipment, can we put that on our home phone number?

MR STEFANIUK: You can use it in your constituency. There is no restriction on whether it's in your constituency office, your home, barn, whatever.

MR APPLEBY: Have you a supply of them in here now?

MR STEFANIUK: Yes.

MRS OSTERMAN: I'll only use a couple of hours a week, but it's going to be wonderful -- Saturday night.

MR CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any other business?

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.