

## Special Select Standing Committee on Members' Services

Monday, May 9, 1983

Acting Chairman: Mr. Appleby

5:45 p.m.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I'm sure you're all aware of why I'm here. The Speaker was going to be away, and he asked me if I'd chair the meeting. I said, as long as the committee was agreeable. I understand that was discussed and cleared at your last meeting, so we'll go from there.

He gave me a memorandum outlining some of the things that developed at the last meeting. From that, I understand that the budget for the Leader of the Official Opposition was approved. According to the memorandum I have from the Speaker, the chairman of your committee, the following remain to be decided by the committee: one, approval of a sum for two-member caucus of the New Democratic Party; two, the approval of a sum for the office of the leader of the Independent parliamentary coalition; three, approval of a sum for the two-member caucus of the Independents; then the overall approval of the estimates for the Legislative Assembly. Those are the things he listed for me. I expect we can go from there. We're now open to motions, suggestions, comments, or discussion.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, following our discussions last week -- if I can put it that way -- we took it upon ourselves to sit down with Mr. Purdy, who asked to go over the things we're attempting to do. Following his suggestion, we've come back with a new proposal to you people. Before we get into that proposal, I think there are some points that can be made. I know some of them we all made a number of times last time, but there are some new points that I would like to bring out. Some people were comparing what the opposition was getting, so we decided we should take a look at what the government was getting too.

If you take a look at this sheet that's being handed out, we examine the caucus budgets of the different provincial jurisdictions and the federal government, the per-member allocation is considered -- if you look throughout, there are other criteria that are more important. As you look through it, I think there are three general principles. In the federal government, there is a minimum budget that a caucus will get regardless of its size -- and this appears to be true in Ontario as well -- recognizing the point Dr. Buck and I were trying to make about the different roles of government members compared to opposition members. In Manitoba, even though the basic budget is 1,000 per member, each caucus has three secretaries. They recognize it in that way. But the most common case is that the total budget for the opposition is greater than that of the government's. I stress this again. If you look through most of the cases, the total budget for the opposition -- I'm talking about all the opposition, third parties and caucus, wherever that case applies -- is greater than the government's.

The other point I'd like to make is that in Alberta for the 1982-83 fiscal year, the lowest per-member allocation for the opposition was the more than \$57,000 received by Tom Sindlinger. So what we had proposed last week was a reduction of 15 per cent from this amount.

The other point I would like to make is that what the government members proposed last week meant that the NDP caucus, with one member, received more in 1982-83 than the NDP caucus would receive in 1983-84, with two members. Finally, caucus size is not always an important consideration for government

members. For example, when the caucus was reduced in size by one when Tom Sindlinger left, that did not cut down the amount the government received.

I point out that with this new proposal -- let me go through what we are proposing now and be frank with you. The \$658,000 that we propose will allow for the things we would like to do as an opposition. I think I was frank about that the last time. What I've proposed here now for the caucus -- because we've already voted on the other one -- is \$240,000. It's our estimation that this would allow us to maintain the work that we are now doing; it would not mean a cutback, whereas I mentioned last week that the other would mean a severe cutback. I don't know if any people had discussions with Mr. Purdy. He thought the \$658,000 was totally unreasonable, but somewhat less than that might be acceptable to the members. I point out that this would still leave us some \$10,000 short of the Official Opposition budget of last year. I point out again that because we have less does not mean we have less work to do. That's the point we tried to make, and we've tried to come back with what we consider a maintain-the-line budget. Whether there are two members or 30, we still have the same number of estimates to go through and the rest of it.

With those initial remarks, Mr. Chairman, I present our proposal.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Are there any other comments?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the hard work of the Member for Edmonton Norwood in coming forward with these pieces of paper that outline a new proposal. However, from my position, I think the principle of fairness and equity has to prevail. I think all MLAs are in essence Members of the Legislative Assembly. I have a difficult time finding anything acceptable in an argument which indicates that some members of a particular caucus are to be treated with considerably more positive response from the taxpayer of Alberta than members of another caucus. I think we're all Members of the Legislative Assembly. We've already had a discussion in this committee, and we've already agreed to provide a substantial level of funding for the office of the Leader of the Opposition. I think we did that based on a principle that was fought hard around this table and is basically a principle that appears to me, anyway, to be an amount of dollars equal to the average of the various ministers' offices as recorded in one of the documents before the Legislature.

My constituents should not be in a position to have a level of service provided to them by their MLA that is considerably less than that which is provided by another hon. member of the House. I believe the principle of fairness and equity is sound and defensible, and I have to speak against the motion put forward by the Member for Edmonton Norwood. I intend to vote against it.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I wasn't aware that that was put forward as a motion. Is it?

MR. MARTIN: No. I was throwing it out as discussion, but I will make it a motion.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Well, that's for the time being anyway. There are a couple of things I should clear up. In the first place, I'm here as a non-voting member of this committee, so you can take it from there. The other thing that I understand is that you had an agreement at the last meeting that the budget of each caucus would be considered on a global basis. This is what we will be looking at today. Right?

To go back to where we were, do you want to put this as a motion?

MR. MARTIN: Okay, I move that our proposal that's advanced in this paper be accepted.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I get a little disturbed. I'm looking through these figures that were presented as what happens in other provincial assemblies. To a large extent, it's sort of irrelevant because of the numbers we're looking at. The Member for Barrhead was speaking about serving his constituents. I agree with him that in large degree, what we're looking at in the caucus budgets is servicing constituents. But there is another element. In the government caucus, certainly we spend some sums on research which are not related directly to our constituencies.

Inevitably there are economies of scale, and I think we discussed this last time, when you were not here. Economies of scale do come into the picture. When we look at some of these other assemblies -- say, Ontario -- I believe the number of private members on the government side in Ontario is exceeded by the number of private members on the opposition side if you combine the Liberal and NDP caucuses. Yet if one looks at the budget, there's not really very much significant difference between the two.

Now when we're talking here about economies of scale, when we're talking about an 11:1 ratio between private members on the government side and the opposition side -- it's all very well to talk about economies of scale and amounts being somewhat similar, or that in some parliaments government funds exceed the opposition funds and in some it's the other way round. When you're talking about numbers of 11 to 1, I think there has to be some realization that there is a very large number on the government side who have to be funded for the services necessary to their constituencies. When we came up with a budget of some \$869,000 for the government members -- roughly \$20,000 apiece -- there were economies of scale in those figures. It was on that basis that on the last occasion I made the suggestion that with the current size of the opposition members, at four, something in the ratio of 2 or 3 to 1 in relation to the per-member allocation for the government members was, to my mind, reasonable and fair.

I'm sure not everybody on the government side would agree with me. But when we look at the figures presented tonight by the Member for Edmonton Norwood, if I have this correct the suggestion is that in addition to the funding of the office of the Leader of the Official Opposition, some \$230,000, we're looking for an additional \$240,000, which is roughly a 6:1 ratio of opposition to government members. I have to presume that what the Member for Edmonton Norwood is suggesting is that we should look at the same caucus budget for the two Independent members, \$120,000 each. So the caucus budgets for the four opposition MLAs would come to almost half a million dollars, whereas we have some \$870,000 for 44.

I find those ratios quite unacceptable. I couldn't justify them to my constituents, who I know would be down my neck, regardless of whether they voted for me or for another candidate in the election. We each represent everybody in our constituency equally, whether they voted for us or not. I can't buy the argument put forward last time by the Member for Edmonton Norwood, that they had to service people in the other constituencies, any more than I have to service people in Spirit River-Fairview, Little Bow, or Edmonton Norwood.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, what I'm hearing is almost unbelievable. If this is going to be a functioning legislative committee, I cannot understand how we cannot look at this in a non-partisan way. We are talking about two absolutely different things. We are not talking about the member from Hinton serving his constituency or the Member for Barrhead serving his constituency; we're talking about the difference between the role of a government

backbencher and the role of a member of the opposition. If the hon. member from Hinton, a man coming from a country that started parliamentary democracy, has talked himself into believing that the two sides of the House are the same, I can't believe it, hon. member. I just can't believe it. When we're talking about justifying this to our constituents, there's consistency. And when you look at opposition and government budgets, there is a consistency. In just about every case, the amount of funding for the opposition is nearly identical to funding for government, be they large or small numbers.

If anybody wants some bedtime reading, I can give you a list -- especially the hon. Member for Drayton Valley; she'll probably be upset about it, but the hon. Member for Drayton Valley said that there is no difference in the role we as opposition members and government backbenchers have to play. There's no difference in serving your constituents in your constituency. But the role of the opposition is completely different, hon. Member for Drayton Valley.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Walter, would you address your remarks through the Chair.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, what I am trying to say to the hon. member is that there is a difference. There's a great difference. It's the difference between having a benevolent dictatorship and having the parliamentary, democratic system we operate under. It's that basic.

If we want to look at budgeting and say that the opposition is asking for too much in relation to the government, let's compare round red apples with round red apples. Let's throw in the budget for the Premier and Executive Council, for administration, about \$8.4 million; the Speaker's office, about \$187,000; government members, \$869,000. I'm rounding off the figures: a total of \$9.5 million. Let's compare that with what opposition members are asking for to shadow, to question, to look at the expenditure of dollars by that government caucus, that Executive Council. Then we're going to be looking at a figure that doesn't make our request look so large, Mr. Chairman, to the hon. member from Hinton, because we have a job to do which is completely different.

Mr. Chairman, the last point I want to make: if it has already been decided by this supposedly non-partisan committee that we are going to give the opposition members just what we think they want to get, then we are really wasting our time. All I'm asking the government members who are members of this supposedly non-partisan committee is that we look at the presentations in some state of realism and forget the partisan politics. Look at the two different roles we have to play.

We are not asking for funds for the Member for Edmonton Norwood, the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, the Member for Clover Bar, and the Member for Little Bow. We are asking it for the offices we will be working for. I will accept anything that government members get for serving my constituents. But we have already voted on that, Mr. Chairman; that's in a different vote. What we are talking about is the role the opposition members have to play in the parliamentary system. That's the way we should be looking at it, not: are they getting more than I am getting. But the offices are what we are talking about, not what the four members get. It's basically that simple. Otherwise we're just wasting time, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any further comments?

MR. MARTIN: Just a couple of comments. The Member for Clover Bar has certainly said it well. I don't understand. We're not trying to compare with the work that you do in the constituency, Dr. Reid. That's what I thought we had an office for, and all the rest of it. What we're talking about, in terms of the opposition role, is the research, backup, and travelling the opposition

has to do, similar to what some of the cabinet ministers have to do. That's what we're talking about.

What we're really asking -- and I won't enlarge on it too long -- is acknowledgement of the role of opposition. I came back in good faith, because I recognized at the time that the \$658,000 would have been an increase in the scope of the opposition. I came back after our discussion with what would maintain the status quo our budget. If we could get away from the number games, but I said before: does the role of the Official Opposition, or the opposition in general, change? Frankly, I wish we had 30 members; we could do a much more effective job of shadowing. But we don't have that. That would not mean we'd need a corresponding increase in research all the time. The more numbers you had, perhaps the only thing you'd need would be the odd secretary more. But we're not talking about numbers; we're talking about the whole Official Opposition.

Frankly, when people talk about their constituents, I don't think people would be too upset if the government were generous with the small opposition. I think you can justify that to your constituents. Any editorial comment I've seen recognizes the role of the opposition. I don't think that would be a major problem.

But if it is in this committee, what's the point of our going through and making a budget if the government backbenchers in this committee are deciding our budget? What's the point of it? Why don't you just send us a memo and tell us what we're getting? It would save all of us a lot of time. That really seems to be the case. Obviously, by sheer power you have the voting numbers here. We'd have saved ourselves a lot of hassle. Just send us a memo, saying: in the wisdom of our generosity, this is what you're getting next year. Why go through this procedure. If the things we say do not make any sense to you, or you're not prepared to listen or negotiate, what's the point of it all?

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, if I can get back in, because I think I initiated the discussion last time. Looking through the previous budgets, I could see no rationale for deciding how much of the dollar allocation to the Social Credit group of four -- because \$440,000 was what was budgeted -- nor for the NDP caucus of one, at \$107,000, nor for the office of the sole Independent, that would indicate how much was allocated to fulfilling exactly the offices mentioned by the members for Clover Bar and Edmonton Norwood.

I spoke at some length last time, Mr. Chairman -- you weren't here -- about the role of the opposition in parliament. That's where I started off, with my philosophy and my concept of funding those offices: Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition, the office of minority party leaders. I couldn't come up with any better word than parliamentary coalition to describe the present status of the two members for Clover Bar and Little Bow, who were elected as Independents but in our parliament choose to function as a coalition.

We then get down to the individual members of those caucuses. Within the government caucus, for instance, we have a group of researchers. If one at looks the approximate figures that I think were put forward by the Member for Cypress, then there is adequate funding for each member in the opposition to have a researcher, a secretary, and some supplies, in addition to the funding for the office of the Leader of the Official Opposition and the office of the leader of the parliamentary coalition or minority party. That's where the economies of scale come in. Certainly for a member of any parliament to have funding which will allow for an individual secretary and an individual researcher for each member, that is getting pretty liberal funding -- and I'm not using that word politically -- for a member of a parliament in a province where there are some 80 members for 2.25 million people.

It's on that basis that I would find great difficulty in going to the figures that have been brought forward tonight by the Member for Edmonton Norwood. They're different figures from last time, admittedly. But I would have difficulty going out to the constituents and justifying funding in addition to one researcher and one secretary per member of the Assembly. On the government side, because of economies of scale, we do not need that level of service. But I think with an opposition of four, in addition to the funding of the offices of the leaders of the groups within the parliament, I think one secretary and one researcher is pretty good going.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to bring to the attention of the members of the committee the practice in the federal House of Commons. When we look at research people on staff there -- this is taken right out of that little black parliamentary book -- for the government backbenchers there are 17 researchers; 16 for the Official Opposition, and 10 for the NDP caucus. That makes a total of 26 researchers for the opposition versus 17 for the government backbenchers. So through you to the hon. member from Hinton, Mr. Chairman, quite obviously down there they recognize that they do need more researchers than just one secretary and one researcher. I think it's a known fact by some jurisdictions that want to really look at parliamentary democracy that you need more than one researcher and one secretary.

Mr. Chairman, I presume that if we are going to give the NDP caucus -- and I don't care if it's the NDP caucus, the Communist caucus, or the WCC caucus; we're talking about parliamentary principles. The members don't really count in the overall game, when we're looking at parliamentary democracy; it's the roles they have to play. So using the example that we've already voted \$230,000 to the office of the Leader of the Official Opposition, if the government members in this committee happen to pick some arbitrary figure -- and let's just use the figures that were suggested last time, \$1,550, for a total of \$330,000. I presume the government, in its wisdom -- because it would never ever say it was being fairer to the opposition to slash their budget. The remaining 300 or whatever we need to make it up to at least last year's budget -- and all the members of the Legislature voted and thought that was a fair budget last time; it came to something like \$610,000.

I don't know if the government is presuming to do that or not, Mr. Chairman. But surely the government, in its wisdom, is not going to slash the total budget of the opposition when we look at the fact that there were six last time. There are only four this time, so that means the four are going to have to do at least the work of the previous six. I just want to know from the hon. member from Hinton if they are looking at the total figure being \$610,000 plus 10 per cent. Or have the government members addressed themselves to what total figure they are going to give the opposition? I use the term "give", Mr. Chairman. I'm addressing that to the member from Hinton.

DR. REID: Edson.

DR. BUCK: Sorry, hon. Member for Edson.

MR. MARTIN: I still have not got from the Member for Clover Bar -- we have to go back and talk again briefly. I know we said it, but I'll speak again about the role of the opposition. Alan, I do not remember turning around and asking you questions in question period. It's the ministers we have to deal with. We're checking their estimates; question period is with them. I think the Member for Clover Bar brought in the fact that that backup we're dealing with is over \$9 million, when we tie it all together. That's what we have to deal with. We have to put that in perspective.

The other point, Dr. Reid, I'm interested in your analysis of opposition. I don't know that you've ever been there. But it seems to me that you're taking it upon yourself, as a government backbencher, to decide what is adequate for opposition. I don't think you were necessarily elected to do that. As I pointed out, when you compare the over \$9 million we have, plus the Executive Council can go to the civil service any time they want and get information, we're dealing with huge amounts of money that we have to try to shadow. That's our role. It doesn't put us into the idea that we're first- or second-class citizens. That has nothing to do with it. Frankly, I wish we had more members. I'd rather be on the government side. I think you people would too.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I wish the member would address the Chair.

MR. MARTIN: We didn't do that before; it was informal. But I'm prepared to do that.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: We have quite a gathering here. I don't want it to develop into a one-on-one situation.

MR. MARTIN: Fair enough. The point I am trying to make is that if you decide this is inadequate, then I suppose it comes back to you deciding. Why are we doing this? I expect a memo telling us what we're getting. I think the House of Commons refers partly to what your problem was. If you look at that idea, there is some recognition of how many members you have. But there is also a recognition of the different roles, not only in terms of the Official Opposition but also in terms of the third party, which is now relevant in this Legislature. Why do we not look at some rule like that, so we don't have to go through this hassle every year? But let's make it a realistic one. I know this is heresy, but the opposition could be much bigger at some time. At some point, it's probably even going to be a Conservative opposition, so let's set some guidelines like this so we don't have to go through this. But let's make it a realistic one for an opposition regardless of what the numbers are.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member has a pretty good point when he says let's get some guidelines. If we had something in statute, we wouldn't be having this problem right now. Of course, it's something that developed over the last number of years when we went into the various programs to give members a lot more assistance in their work, especially in the research element. But it's not in statute, so it's a difficult position the committee finds itself in right now.

Are there any other comments?

MR. KOWALSKI: The Member for Clover Bar threw a question to my colleague from Edson. It was phrased in such a way as: what the government is going to do. I'm a member of this committee. I also happen to be a member of the government. I'm not sure how my colleague from Edson would respond to the Member for Clover Bar, but I certainly have no hesitation in responding to the Member for Clover Bar on the point of some principles.

If we take the \$610,000 that was allocated last year, I think we have to remember at the outset that there are one-third fewer members in the opposition. So as an opening statement, I would take a reduction of one-third off the \$610,000 and arrive at a figure of approximately \$410,000. I use that as a base. At the last meeting, we agreed to what a principle should be in terms of defining the dollar figure for the funding of the Leader of the Opposition. We basically said that we agreed it should be equal to the average amount given to a minister of the Crown. We set it at something like \$230,000. I did some calculations over the weekend. It doesn't come out to

\$230,000; it's less than that. But I have no argument with that; I'll accept it.

I've already made the point once tonight -- and I made it at the last meeting as well -- that all members of any caucus should be equal and should be treated on an equal basis. The funding for the PC caucus is approximately \$20,000 per person. In my estimation, two times \$20,000 for the members of the NDP caucus would give us \$40,000. That comes out to \$270,000.

We had some discussion of what the office would be for the other party. We don't have another party in the Legislative Assembly; we have two Independents. I suppose one could make the argument, and I would allocate \$100,000 for them for that particular office, plus \$40,000 for each member of the caucus. That would amount to some \$410,000. So I base my arguments on the basis of principles. If last year it was \$610,000, two-thirds of that this year amounts to approximately \$410,000.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Plus your natural increase each year. Is that right?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, that's rounded off. The natural increase would already be in there, because the actual figures based on the principles I would put forward are less than that.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, to the hon. Member for Barrhead. It's quite obvious that the hon. member is not going to change his views, but I would just like to inform him that he's saying: if we have an opposition of one, in our benevolence we would give him \$40,000 plus change and say, here you go, fella; shadow the budget, shadow the 30 cabinet ministers, shadow the government members. Is that what the hon. member is saying?

MR. KOWALSKI: That individual member would also be the Leader of the Opposition, in my estimation. He would automatically get \$230,000, plus that.

DR. BUCK: So the member is basically saying that the workload decreases as the opposition gets smaller. Is that what the member is saying?

MR. KOWALSKI: In essence, I'm trying to arrive at some point of principle, Walter.

DR. BUCK: No, Mr. Chairman, I'm asking . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: The principle would basically be so much funding for the Leader of the Opposition and an amount for the members of that caucus equal to the amount of funding that would be provided to members of the government caucus.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, the member is basically saying that the smaller the opposition gets, the less work they have to do. Well, I would like to say to the member, before he answers that question -- it's quite obvious he's not going to answer the question, because he knows what the answer would be. The answer would be obvious.

But we should be looking at it the other way: when the opposition gets smaller in number, the global budget of \$610,000 should increase one-third. Those four members have the work of the previous six members. Would the member like to think about that? The work does not decrease; the work increases proportionately. How the Member for Barrhead could possibly justify -- throwing a few pence to the peasants is basically what the committee is proposing to do.

I could understand if we were to say that the budget last year was \$610,000 for the opposition, and a 10 per cent increase makes that an additional



\$61,000. Maybe then the committee in its wisdom and fairness, and in appearing to be fair, would say: maybe the opposition members need an additional \$100,000 or an additional \$50,000. How any committee that tries to appear non-partisan and tries to protect democracy and the parliamentary system in this province, thinks that they will slash the budget -- I can't believe what I'm hearing, Mr. Chairman.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, could I correct something that may be on the written record? I would never refer to a member of the opposition as a peasant; I would refer to him as an hon. member. I would like that very clear on the record.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I didn't say the member said we were peasants, but we're going to be treated like peasants.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I don't think we should be debating that particular point. Let's get on with what we have to do.

MR. MARTIN: Let's get this over then. What are you going to give us? We can go round and round, but obviously a decision has been made. So rather than waste your time and ours, let's get at it.

MR. PENGELLY: Mr. Chairman, I agree with the Member for Barrhead when it comes to the so-called coalition of Independents. There's an assumption there that they are somehow different from the other elected MLAs, and I can't accept that. They only represent one constituency. They are not representing all 79 constituencies in Alberta. I don't think they should have any more than a member of the government caucus.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question? As I understand it, the motion presented by the NDP caucus is that the committee would approve the working paper they presented this evening, known as the A budget.

MR. HYLAND: Just a correction from our last agreement. It would have to be the amount, not the working papers.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Yes, the amount in the working paper. All those in favor?

DR. BUCK: What is the total, Mr. Chairman, for the record?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: \$240,593. All those in favor of the motion? Two. Those opposed? Five. That motion is lost.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to propose a motion in terms of dealing with the allocation of the members of the NDP caucus. In my view, the motion I want to put forward is based on the principle of equality and fairness. It relates to the equality and fairness, based on the amount of dollars allocated to members of the PC caucus. The motion I would like to put forward now is that the members of the NDP caucus receive an amount equal to the per capita allocation provided to members of the PC caucus, or \$40,000.

DR. BUCK: Can I throw up now or later?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Does anybody wish to speak to that motion?

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, this is not a situation, but I have to defend the philosophy I presented last time. That philosophy was that we fund the offices and then allow a reasonable amount -- and we've already been into it this evening -- for each private member on the opposition side. With the numbers such as they are just now, I think there's no doubt that we have to regard both members of the NDP caucus and both Independents as private members.

I spoke before, both last week and this week, about the economies of scale. Those economies are undoubtedly real. I find it a little difficult to accept that we treat four opposition members who are split into two groups or into three groups -- two, one, and one -- on the same budget basis as a group of 44. There are economies of scale to do with office equipment and machines; there are economies of scale to do with researchers. I find the proposal of the Member for Barrhead just as impossible to swallow as I found the proposal of the Member for Edmonton Norwood. I think the realities are that we have economies of scale and, while I disagree with the opposition that they need the same funding for fewer members, I think that to decrease the funding of the individual members on the scale suggested by the Member for Barrhead is equally difficult to accept.

I didn't get back into the discussion before the previous motion was defeated, because I thought I had put my proposition clearly enough. It was obviously misunderstood by the Member for Clover Bar. I found his theorem that as the number of opposition goes down on a pro rata basis, you increase the funding. That's quite interesting, because I would have been very interested to hear his howls of indignation had the opposition increased from six to eight and we had suggested decreasing the funding by one-third. That's the other side of the suggestion he made, of increasing funding by one-third because the numbers had gone down by one-third. Arithmetic is a finite science; it's not a matter of wild and woolly theorizing. The proposal put forward by the Member for Clover Bar to defend an increased budget for a decreased number would result in a decreased budget for an increased number. I would have liked to hear the howls of protest coming from him if that had been suggested by the government side in this committee.

The proposition I put forward the last time, that because of the small numbers -- and for the benefit of the Member for Edmonton Norwood, it would definitely change where the government had numbers much fewer than 44 and where the opposition and private members had a much greater number than four. Certainly, I would not be proposing the number that I suggested before, of two to three times. Whether it's \$40,000 or \$60,000 for a private member, as long as it would provide them with a secretary and a researcher apiece, I find it adequate. But I don't think that \$20,000 will provide adequate backup services for caucuses of two or one.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: My understanding was that it was \$40,000, wasn't it? What was the motion?

MR. KOWALSKI: A \$40,000 total.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Oh, for the caucus; I see. Any further discussion?

MRS. CRIPPS: Question.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Would you repeat the motion for us, Ken, the way you want us to vote on it here?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Barrhead. You asked that we be formal.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the motion that I put forward -- and I'll read it again, because I have it written down.

That the members of the NDP caucus receive an amount equal to the per capita allocation provided to members of the PC caucus, or \$40,000.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: You've heard the motion. All those in favor of the motion? Two. Those opposed? Six. That motion is lost.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a motion -- basically the same motion I made a week ago -- that the amount of funding for the members of the NDP caucus be \$100,000 and that it be arrived at through calculations of \$50,000 per person.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any discussion?

DR. REID: For a point of clarification, to the hon. Member for Cypress. Are you suggesting that were the caucus three or four, say, it would be \$50,000 each?

MR. HYLAND: That's right. That's why I say in the last line "be arrived at through calculations of \$50,000 per person".

DR. REID: Would that necessarily continue expanding in an arithmetic progression as the number of the members of caucus went up, or is it just the present circumstance?

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, to answer the member's question. Obviously it wouldn't progress past the life of this committee. At any time, the committee is not bound by the decision; it can change the decision from time to time.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, a question to the hon. Member for Cypress. Can the hon. member indicate to the members of the committee where the figure \$50,000 came from? When we look at past experience, the former Member for Calgary Buffalo, who was sitting as an Independent, was given a budget of \$57,000, I believe. The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview was given \$107,000. He was the leader of a recognized party; I believe that must have had some weight in the decision. And we proposed to give the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury \$101,000. In light of those figures, can the hon. Member for Cypress indicate to the committee how he arrived at the figure of \$50,000?

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, it arrives out of a couple of things. It's true that the Member for Calgary Buffalo received \$57,000 in the last allotment, and the leader of the NDP received \$100,000-plus. My suggestion comes partly from the proposal I put forward last week, about funding the offices. If this proposal passes, the NDP caucus receives \$100,000 and the Leader of the Opposition would receive the \$230,000 passed at the last meeting. In essence, opposition is picking up an additional \$50,000, because if we followed through the set-up of a minister's office -- and that's how we arrived at the \$230,000 -- and according to our average estimates in government caucus, the ministers are not entered into those calculations, so those are actual calculations of actual members. Here there would be an increase of an additional \$50,000 in both groups as they presently exist in the Legislature. Because of our present set-up, it would be more than if it were even one member. Mr. Chairman, to the Member for Clover Bar, it would even be more than there would have been in the previous set-up for one member if he was leader of a recognized party.

MR. MARTIN: I'll make one short comment before the vote. Recognize that there's no doubt that from what we are trying to do as the Official Opposition now, this is a severe cutback. I made that point the other day, and I mean that sincerely. That's why I came back with a proposal; people had suggested that we do that. We sat down with Mr. Purdy. I say that this is not particularly good for the government; it's not good for anybody when the opposition is dismantled. The point that we still make is that small opposition -- I recognize that there's an overwhelming mandate for the government, but there is still small opposition. Surely, as was the case when the Premier came in, he recognized that, because he'd been having difficulties before. I was hoping for slightly more generosity of spirit, but I also recognize that I'm outvoted at this particular time.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Chairman, to the member. I trust you're talking about a caucus budget.

MR. HYLAND: Right. Didn't I say that?

MRS. CRIPPS: I don't know. That's what we were discussing last week, a caucus budget, in addition to the leader's office.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is there any more discussion?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'd still like to ask the question of the hon. Member for Cypress. In light of the previous experience, where the Independent member had \$57,000, the WCC was proposed at \$101,768, and the NDP representative received \$107,000, why are we slashing?

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I think I said at the beginning of the evening that I could find no rationale for the figures last year. If we had asked members who were receiving those funds, I'm not sure that they would have a rationale either. That's why, at the beginning of last week's discussion, I suggested that we get away from this mixed funding.

I presume the \$6,000 difference between the leader of the New Democratic Party and the leader of the Western Canada Concept Party somehow related to the fact that the New Democratic Party had run in the general election and had received some 18 per cent of the popular vote. But it doesn't say that anywhere that I could find. To get back to the economies of scale, the \$50,000 proposed by the Member for Cypress is quite satisfactory to me. It allows one secretary, one researcher, and some supplies per member of the caucus, in addition to the funding of the office of the leader of the caucus. That funding should cover the functions that have been described this evening.

The Member for Clover Bar is asking for some rationale behind the figure put forward by the Member for Cypress. I don't see the difficulty with funding one secretary, one researcher, and some supplies for each member of an opposition caucus, compared to the funding on the government side of roughly one secretary for every two and a half, and one researcher for about every six, I think. I can quite accept the 1:1 ratio for secretaries and researchers on the opposition side, compared to what I have on the government side.

MR. MARTIN: Just a couple of quick points. It would be difficult to get one researcher and one secretary plus some supplies and travel at \$50,000. We've agreed to that.

I understand there was a rationale before. I don't know if some of the members were on this before. But there was the idea that the others were leaders of political parties at the time, for the over \$100,000. I understand

that was the rationale. And with the Member for Calgary Buffalo, because he was a single member -- and of course was once a member of the government caucus -- it came to a lesser amount. But the lesser amount was \$57,000, as has been pointed out.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I have one question to the Member for Cypress, and I'll raise it to him through you. I'm trying to understand the principle he's advocating, and he can answer yes or no. Are you suggesting to me that the principle you're advocating is that a member of an opposition caucus, in this case the NDP caucus, should have two and a half fold what a member of the government caucus should have, in terms of responding to his or her constituents? Is that the principle you're advocating?

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I guess that's the principle I'm advocating in suggesting the \$50,000 in comparison to the just over \$20,000. We've talked about that, that there may be additional responsibilities. I wonder about that, but I'm prepared to give the benefit of the doubt and look at the \$50,000 per person.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Chairman, quite frankly I couldn't support the motion in that context. If I'm voting for it as an NDP caucus, I can support the \$100,000 for the NDP caucus, over and above the \$230,000 for the Leader of the Official Opposition. I don't have any problem with that. But if we're talking about \$50,000 per member, and they go to four or five members, there's no way I can support it. We'd better be clear on what we're talking about.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I believe we're passing this year's estimates, and I believe the Member for Cypress made the point that if a committee has to adjust this next year, then it will be so adjusted. Hon. Member for Drayton Valley, that's what we're talking about.

MRS. CRIPPS: Well, I can support it as a caucus budget. There's no problem with that.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I attached the figures so that we would at least know how I came up with the \$100,000. That's how I calculated it.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Well, it's a budgetary item that I understand the committee would be approving, which would be at this time \$100,000. If that situation should change and require extra funding, that would be a matter for a special warrant or something like that.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, that would require another committee decision.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Yes, right. I would think so, anyway, from the way I look at it.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I think there is a provision in the draft Bill in front of the Committee on Privileges and Elections. There is provision for special warrants if that circumstance does arise.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: If the numbers should change.

DR. REID: The Speaker can make a recommendation. That provision is there.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Are there any more comments on this motion? Could you restate it for us, Al?

MR. HYLAND: Basically, what I said is that the NDP caucus be funded at the rate of \$100,000 and that I arrived at that by calculating \$50,000 per member.

AN HON. MEMBER: For a caucus of two, is it?

MR. HYLAND: For a caucus of two.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any more discussion on that, then? Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of the motion? Four. Opposed? Two. And two abstentions. The motion is carried.

According to the notes the Speaker gave me, that takes us now to a sum for the office of the leader of the Independents. Would somebody like to make a motion regarding that amount, or make a comment or suggestion?

MRS. CRIPPS: I move that the office of the leader of the parliamentary coalition be funded at \$100,000.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Just give me a moment. The Clerk has told me that there are some amounts here. There is a submission right here.

I expect all the committee members have had an opportunity to study the estimates that are in the budget proposals. With respect to that, we are ready to entertain motions.

MRS. CRIPPS: I made a motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: What was that, Shirley?

MRS. CRIPPS: I moved that the office of the leader of the parliamentary coalition be funded at \$100,000.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: When we speak of the parliamentary coalition, I notice the budget item says "Independent members", so I assume the committee is looking at the same group of people.

MRS. CRIPPS: That's right. Last week, we discussed in principle -- or at least Dr. Reid did -- the term "parliamentary coalition", for want of a better word. I don't think anybody has come up with a better word.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: That's fine. As long as we know we're all talking about the same thing in the committee.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure of the motion. Could the hon. member clarify the motion, so I know what I'm speaking to. Are we speaking about a parliamentary coalition? The Speaker of the Legislature speaks of the leader of the Independent group. I'd just like to know what the hon. Member for Drayton Valley is speaking to. Does her motion mean one person, two people?

MRS. CRIPPS: Two people.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: This is for the leader of those two people? Is that right?

MRS. CRIPPS: That's right.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, when I offhandedly coined the phrase, I thought somebody else had already used it. The concept I had was that we were allocating an amount that would be allocated to the leader of any

parliamentary coalition, including the existing one. The difficulty is that coalitions can be of different types.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: As long as we're clear that when we speak on this particular budget item, estimate, it's the two Independent members as a group that we're talking of. I understand that Shirley's motion deals with the leader of that group. Is that right?

MRS. CRIPPS: Yes, it is. What we discussed last meeting was about the offices, as the Leader of the Official Opposition and the leader of a minority party.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I think we can go from there.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I have to be very clear on this. Are we talking about \$100,000 for the office of the leader of the Independents or parliamentary coalition?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Right.

DR. BUCK: Will there be a different vote for two members receiving -- what was the previous vote, \$50,000 apiece?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: There will be a separate vote for the two members of the caucus. Or if they call it the coalition, there'd be a caucus then, I understand. So there would be a separate vote for that.

MRS. CRIPPS: According to Mr. Amerongen's letter to you -- and that's why I framed my motion the way I did -- he said that there were three areas left to deal with: the caucus of the NDP, the office of leader of the Independents, and the caucus of the Independents.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The sum for the two-member caucus. We have two items to consider. The first one is the leader, and this is your motion for \$100,000.

MRS. CRIPPS: That's right. Item B in the memo to you.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any discussion on that motion?

MR. PENGELLY: Mr. Chairman, the Speaker has used the terms "leader of the Independents". So we are assuming they are a parliamentary coalition.

DR. REID: That's the presumption I was making.

MR. PENGELLY: I would like to hear from the hon. members.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Do you mean the Independent people? Ray, what terminology would you wish for your group?

MR. R. SPEAKER: The words "parliamentary coalition" were acceptable. We've called ourselves Independent coalition. That's what we're saying publicly, in terms of our name. It's an Independent coalition. This is acceptable, if you want that in your minutes. But initially, just after the election, Walter and I agreed on the terms "Independent coalition". In all our submissions to the Speaker, we used that terminology. Walter and I indicated that I was the leader of the two persons in the Independent coalition. So that's on record to that effect, quite some time ago and in public.

MRS. CRIPPS: With the permission of the committee, I would term my motion to mean that if there is any Independent coalition of two or more, the same funding would apply. That's why I termed it "office of the parliamentary coalition". So we're setting a principle here.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: That might be complicating things. As I understand it, we're only dealing with the Assembly the way it exists today. Is that not right? And this is what you as a committee have to consider estimates for and provide approved funding for. So I think other groups that might arise in that connection would have to be dealt with as they did last year, when Kesler showed up.

MRS. CRIPPS: Okay, fair enough.

MR. MARTIN: If my understanding is correct, do we not have to meet every year to go over the budget? So if situations change next year, they'd have to look at it.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: It can change during the year, too. So that would have to be provided for, maybe on an emergency nature of some sort. Right now, we're dealing with this budget for the Independent coalition or the parliamentary coalition for two members, and this is what we require funding for.

MRS. CRIPPS: The office.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: This is the leader.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, again, I think we are derelict in our responsibilities as members of a committee if we just arbitrarily pull numbers out of the air. Now, someone in their wisdom -- the hon. member has made a motion -- decided on \$100,000 for the office of the leader of the parliamentary coalition. That is a figure that someone has pulled out of the air.

We have already voted funds for the Leader of the Official Opposition. We know the Leader of the Official Opposition gets an additional \$34,000 in salary, \$4,000 or \$5,000 towards a car, and approximately -- well, in round figures -- \$25,000 for secretarial. Those are some of the things that have always, as we have perceived, been the perks, or whatever you wish to call them, for the Leader of the Official Opposition.

My question is: once you remove that amount of budgeting, what is the difference between the remaining two-member caucus compared to the NDP caucus? Why is one group being treated differently than the other? We've heard so much about equality of members and so on. I can't see any differentiation. If we want to treat all groups fairly: we represent a point of view, the same as the hon. members of the NDP caucus represent a point of view. Then the only difference I can see in funding the two groups is removing that \$34,000 plus \$5,000 plus \$25,000 -- ballpark figures -- from the figure of \$230,000. If you're treating both groups the same, then the figures should be different than \$100,000.

MRS. CRIPPS: How many Independents ran?

DR. BUCK: Are we setting those parameters? Are we talking about members, or are we talking about parties? I want to know.

MR. KOWALKSI: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry, but I have to go back to the fall of 1982. I'm unaware that a party known as the Independent Party in the province



of Alberta sought election in Alberta. As I recall, the Member for Little Bow ran as an Independent and the Member for Clover Bar ran as an independent Independent. There's no party label, no registered party, or anything else that I'm aware of. Since that time, we've heard some new phrases: parliamentary, Independent coalition; the coalition of Independents; and a whole series of other things.

I think the Member for Clover Bar is dead right that they all have to be treated equally. I've already given my submission on the basis of equality. I have a difficult time understanding where this new party has come from.

DR. BUCK: Let's quit the charade and pass the vote.

MR. PENGELLY: He didn't answer the question.

DR. BUCK: I've answered the question and told him my point of view. Let's quit the charade and pass the vote.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: From this viewpoint, it would appear that members are elected to the Legislature. After they are elected, if they want to form coalitions, group in certain ways that they feel would be of more advantage to them, working that way, they certainly have the opportunity to do so. I'm not too sure just how the coalition was formed or how it came about, but I think it has to be recognized at this stage of the game. As far as I'm concerned -- I mean, I'm not a member of your committee -- but it seems to me that they have a legitimate claim to being recognized as a group.

Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of the motion to provide \$100,000 to the leader of the Independent coalition, the parliamentary coalition -- is that the motion?

MRS. CRIPPS: The office of the leader.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The office of the leader. Okay, all those in favor? Four. Those opposed? Two. Two abstained. The motion is passed.

The next item on the list of the memorandum I received is approval for the sum of the two-member caucus of the Independents.

MR. HYLAND: I move that the caucus of the Independents receive \$100,000 for two members.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any discussion on that motion? Are you ready for the question on that? All those in favor of the motion? Four. Those opposed? Two. Two abstained.

Then we have to have the overall approval of the total estimates of the Legislative Assembly. Do we have the figures for that, Charlene?

There's another change here that the Speaker requested. Would you explain it to us, Mr. Stefaniuk?

MR. STEFANIUK: This is contained in the memorandum I assume all members of the committee have, because it is addressed to the committee. It requests reconsideration of the budget of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker to provide for dictating equipment to an amount of \$1,347.02, to be exact. Mr. Chairman, we respectfully suggest that if the committee is willing to consider this request, the figure be rounded off for budgeting purposes to \$1,350.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Now, as I understand it, that request from the Speaker was to replace the obsolete, 11-year-old equipment.

MR. STEFANIUK: Right.

MR. HYLAND: I would so move.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Moved by Alan. Any discussion? All those in favor? Four. Those opposed? The motion is carried.

MR. STEFANIUK: Two additional memoranda were brought to the committee this evening, Mr. Chairman, both originating with Mr. John Gogo, the Member for Lethbridge West. May I say a word, Mr. Chairman?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Do we have to do that before we approve the total for the estimates?

MR. STEFANIUK: Well, if it's going to affect the estimates, then perhaps we should.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. STEFANIUK: If the committee wishes to consider these items.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, there were a number of other requests from individual members before. I think we referred them. I think the precedent has been set. We should do that with all the individual ones that come up.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I think I was the one that suggested the referral to the Committee on Privileges and Elections, because one item in particular, the *per diem* allowance for expenses during a sitting, was in the Legislative Assembly Act. But we now have items which are not really under the Legislative Assembly Act's purview, and are definitely not in the purview of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, which is currently looking into the white paper and attached draft Bill for a revision of the Legislative Assembly Act. I also got snarled up in parliamentary procedure; I've since been told that one committee cannot refer to another committee.

Perhaps what we need to do is have this committee meet to address what is really quite a grab bag of items, some of which will require amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act and some of which will not.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I can understand the concern of the Clerk, though, because if any of these items are going to be approved, then they would have to be budgeted for.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, if I may just attempt to clarify. There were a number of submissions earlier, and a number of questions were raised by members of the committee relative to things like automobile expenses, I recall, and so on. If my recollection is correct, those matters were not referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections but rather deferred for consideration by this committee at some future date, notwithstanding that the budget was being considered at this time.

So I think that Mr. Martin is probably quite correct in his suggestion that a precedent may have been established for the deferral of consideration of certain items to some future date. But I do not think the minutes will show a referral to another committee. Perhaps Mr. Blain, as Clerk of Committees, could . . .

MR. BLAIN: Your recollection is correct. You are quite correct, Dr. Reid. One committee may not refer to another; that referral can only be done by the Assembly.

Mr. Clerk, your recollection is correct. The Members' Services Committee was to meet at a later date to consider the items that were placed . . .

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The Chairman's remark at the last meeting in regard to this sort of item -- if we approve the budget as submitted, and perhaps later on have a special meeting relating to those items. Is that what you would like? Then it seems to me it would be appropriate to invite other members. If as a result of this meeting we were to recommend some additional funding, then I suppose we'd have to try to raise it by special warrant.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, when I made the suggestion last week, I was definitely suggesting that those items which required changes to the Legislative Assembly Act be referred to the standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, which this committee cannot do. I think the proper way to do it would be to have a meeting of this committee to attend to the items such as were just described by the Clerk and also the items which would involve amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act, and those items would have to be put into the Legislative Assembly Act as amendments at the time of committee study. What's the number of the . . .

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Well, I think the decision . . .

DR. REID: There's no number attached to it, is there?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: That would be something the committee probably would have to grapple with at a future date. Right now the decision would be: if you do not wish to pursue these items at this time, thereby causing necessary budgetary changes, we can wind up the estimates and whatever you want to do about those other items would come later.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I think we should put through the vote for the total, as suggested in item 4 on page 3 of the Speaker's letter of May 3, 1983, so that we have at least wrapped up estimates for the Legislative Assembly so that we can send them to the Treasurer for printing. We can then have further meetings of this committee to address the two groups of issues, those which require amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act and those others which are budgetary items but do not require amendments.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I might say that with regard to the one item about photographs, brought up by John Gogo, those were done by tender and the tender runs until 1984 -- black and white. So that couldn't be changed this year, anyway.

MR. HYLAND: Could we ask how much extra the tender would cost to go to color?

DR. REID: Well, we didn't tender it on that basis.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, that expense is not provided out of Legislative Assembly funding. By some curious quirk, that expense has been funded for years and years by what is now Public Works, Supply and Services. The staff of that department, being the tour guides in the building, make the arrangements for the photographers and subsequently for delivery of the photographs to the members. So that at the present time, this program is not funded at all through Legislative Assembly appropriations.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Those other items you suggested referring to privileges and elections, and since then we find that that would not be in order. However, no doubt the committee will be discussing these in the future, but they could not really be dealt with unless -- well, the photographs could not be dealt with. I don't know what your wish is about the other one.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, in view of the fact that we passed the overall amount instead of going item by item through the government's and the opposition's budgets, I'd like to take back to our caucus those special items and see if maybe one or more of them may be applicable only to, say, the government caucus, and that would have to come out of our total funding.

MR. MARTIN: I would suggest that we defer it so we can pass the estimates, and then look at those individual items at some future meeting. Otherwise we're going to have another meeting before we have these passed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that agreeable?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, the reasonable requests that were made by the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray and the one where we're looking at mileage -- what are we going to do? Go one more year before we do this? Is that what we're saying?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: That was passed.

DR. REID: It wasn't passed. We'd have had to fix an amount. I think what we had better do is schedule fairly quickly a further meeting of the Members' Services Committee.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: You did put that item in the budget, did you?

MR. BLAIN: You couldn't. It's statutory.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I thought you had a \$50,000 travel appropriation.

DR. REID: Not for the Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray or other northern constituencies. That's a general travel item.

MR. HYLAND: We're talking about a separate item.

DR. REID: The difficulty is that if we defer the approval of the regular items of the Legislative Assembly budget until we can decide what amount to recommend to the Legislature, in the meantime we'll be holding up the printing of the estimates for the Assembly, as they've been approved so far.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: But that doesn't preclude consideration of these items and asking for special funding. Is that what you mean?

DR. REID: If it is done reasonably quickly, Mr. Chairman, it may still be possible to put it into this year's estimates as an addendum, but I think we should approve this so it can at least get printed by the Provincial Treasurer for tabling in the Assembly.

MRS. CRIPPS: I'm referring to Walter's question. Mr. Blain said that had to go through the Legislative Assembly Act. Is that right?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The *per diem*.

MR. BLAIN: Any change to the *per diem*, yes.

DR. BUCK: But, Mr. Chairman, it's the responsibility of this committee to make recommendations. That's why we're structured.

MR. HYLAND: We can do that in committee or wherever. We can go into committee study, can't we?

DR. BUCK: Usually the Legislature accepts the recommendations of the select committee; otherwise why would we have a select committee? It can turn down or amend, but it usually accepts.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I move that we approve the dollar figures already agreed to and that we further meet next Monday night to discuss these other matters.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Charlene, do you have a figure for us?

MISS BLANEY: Yes I do.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, I'm reluctant because we have been revising figures until this very evening. I would respectfully suggest that Mr. Kowalski's motion be accepted, subject to such changes as may have been effected as a result of the last six meetings of the Members' Services Committee, if that is acceptable to the committee. Not having checked the figures personally and having the ultimate responsibility for their administration, I'm reluctant to deal with an exact dollar figure this evening.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HYLAND: Does that mean we're going with a meeting on Monday night?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: That's the fifth item on the Speaker's list. He would like some possible direction for the Chairman in regard to a meeting of the committee to deal with a number of other items which should be given attention as soon as time permits.

MR. MARTIN: Can I suggest it be at the call of the Chair when the figures are ready?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: When everybody is here together, we could maybe get a date.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, Shirley and I are not available Monday night; at least I'm not.

MRS. CRIPPS: I'm not available any Monday night.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Maybe we'll have to go with Ray's motion then. Is it agreeable that it's left to the call of the Chair?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I know it helps the Chair greatly if he can get some feeling of which night most members are available.

MR. MARTIN: When can we have the estimates together for what we're voting on?

MR. STEFANIUK: These will be worked on immediately. I'm making the assumption that having approved that motion by Mr. Kowalski, these will go ahead without being referred back to the committee.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that the idea of the committee?

MR. MARTIN: I just meant when can we have an estimation? Obviously we're going to be voting on other things that come up.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: They'll come up in the House next.

MR. MARTIN: The extra things.

DR. REID: We need the meeting to discuss those things.

MR. MARTIN: If the figures aren't ready, there's not much point having a meeting.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: How many items were there? What were those items?

DR. REID: There's quite a grab bag, Mr. Chairman. I hate to describe things that way, but there's quite a selection. Several suggestions have been made by different members of ways of approaching the automobile problem.

Mr. Chairman, could I make a suggestion? Perhaps we should take the proposals that have been made and try to come up with some rational decision, which will then be circulated to the committee before a meeting, rather than doing it on an *ad hoc* basis.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: There are several items that Louise has here. One is the MLAs in the north, and three others, like Mr. Weiss, wear and tear on members' vehicles in these remote constituencies; another was allowing the constituency office secretary to travel to the Legislature once or twice a year; another, I think Mr. Gogo's, is refrigerator and oven.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I suggest we put these all together and send proposals to the chairman. They can be distributed among the members of the committee, and then the Chair can call a meeting so we come to the meeting informed of the various proposals put forward for financing the various problems.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is there anything further? Would somebody move we adjourn?

DR. REID: I so move.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

*The committee adjourned at 7:26 p.m.*