

[Acting Chairman: Mr. Appleby] [9 a.m.]

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The minutes have been circulated, and I expect everybody in the committee has seen them. Are there any corrections to be made? Any omissions? Would somebody like to move approval?

MRS. EMBURY: I so move.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: If the committee agrees, we could probably move to 3(e), Blue Cross Coverage, because we have Mr. Sid Kinasewich with us from Blue Cross. Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Would you carry on, then?

MR. KINASEWICH: Sure. What I've done, basically, is handed Mr. Scarlett an outline of a couple of alternatives as far as what Blue Cross can offer. We showed what your existing plan covers, and then the two alternatives which, on the supplementary health, show the 80 percent of prescription drugs with the direct billing card and the 100 percent of prescription drugs with the direct billing card. There is no deductible to satisfy, whereas the plan you presently have has a \$15 deductible that you have to satisfy prior to obtaining any type of drug — that sort of situation.

Mr. Scarlett has an outline of the benefits that are available, which are basically the same as what you have at present. The only difference is that you can get the use of the plastic credit card. If you are on the 100 percent plan, at the time of obtaining the prescription you just go into the pharmacy, present the card to the pharmacist, and they would bill Blue Cross directly for the total cost of the drug.

Are there any questions pertaining to this?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any questions or comments?

MR. KINASEWICH: It's a lot more convenient. What happens on the reimbursement type of basis is that you lose receipts, which cannot be replaced, and you're basically out of pocket the expense. With this, your hands are washed of the whole matter from the time of obtaining the prescription.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Kinasewich, you're responding here as the result of a memo somebody showed you, with a request made by one Member of the Legislative Assembly for clarification on some items.

MR. KINASEWICH: I believe so. Mr. Scarlett contacted me.

MR. KOWALSKI: What you're basically saying in the letter dated September 16, 1985, is that where you've got the existing one under the supplementary health plans for Alberta government employees [inaudible], that basically is what the Members of the Legislative Assembly currently have?

MR. KINASEWICH: Correct.

MR. KOWALSKI: And the only difference between alternative A and the existing is that you get a credit card. With alternative B you get 100 percent drug coverage, plus the credit card. Is that correct?

MR. KINASEWICH: Right. Plus there are no deductibles.

MR. KOWALSKI: Plus no deductible. But all members of the public service in the province of Alberta are currently under the 80 percent reimbursement for prescriptions, with the \$15 deductible.

MR. KINASEWICH: That's right.

MR. KOWALSKI: That's what we have. I think that clarifies that for me. Do you have the costing implications if we were to go with either A or B?

MR. KINASEWICH: That's just a portion of the plan, and I thought I'd tackle that at this point in time. There's also dental. The way we costed it out is the cost of both the medical and

dental services. Maybe I'll just carry on with the dental plan, unless there are questions.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any other questions or comments on the supplementary health plan? Okay, go ahead.

MR. KINASEWICH: Under the dental plan the benefits that are available to the public service people are 80 percent of basic dental service as well as 50 percent maximum per person for extensive dentistry and 50 percent coverage for orthodontics. I believe there is a program set out for management people and the executives with the government whereby they can apply for 100 percent coverage as an option. You have to pay an additional charge in that sort of situation. We've quoted that particular service, showing the 100 percent coverage for the basic dental, with no annual maximum, 50 percent coverage for extensive dentistry, which covers your crowns, bridgework, and dentures, and 50 percent coverage on orthodontics, which has a \$1,500 lifetime maximum per dependent child.

It's a beefed-up program from what the standard is with the provincial government, and that's basically what Mr. Scarlett asked me to quote on.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any questions or comments on that?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, I'm not certain, offhand, that the present dental plan only covers 50 percent of major work or orthodontal work. I believe the coverage there may be higher under the present plan if you have the option. I would like to have those figures verified before a final comparison is made.

MR. KINASEWICH: The information I received was that the coverage was basically 50 percent. It could be a little bit higher. If it is, Blue Cross is in the situation where we have larger maximums in that area as well which we'd be able to quote under that basis.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any other questions on that dental portion?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, before the presentation goes any further, are we to understand that whatever premium may be

quoted at the end of this presentation is contingent upon buying all these coverages as a package, or can the premium be split for the various portions of the coverage quoted in this presentation? In other words, will we be quoted a separate premium for the supplementary health plan, a separate premium for dental, and a separate premium for vision, or is this contingent on the whole package being accepted?

MR. KINASEWICH: The way we've quoted it is on the basis of the total package. If just a portion of the package was appealing to the whole group, the Members' Services group, then we could quote it on that particular basis, whether it be directing billing or dental alone.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry; it's a very naive question. It's really too bad we didn't get this information ahead of time. I think it would have been a little easier for us to grasp the total situation.

It sort of follows a little on what Bohdan said. While there are some changes under alternative A, I guess one of the questions I thought was raised by the member was that it would be handy to have the drug credit card. Are you saying that you just can't have a drug credit card with the existing?

MR. KINASEWICH: If the Members' Services group elected to have the drug credit card only and not the dental package, we'd be able to underwrite on that basis.

MRS. EMBURY: Could you tell us how much that would cost?

MR. KINASEWICH: The way we've quoted this is on a cost-plus basis: the cost, plus whatever we charge for administration of the plan. The admin figure, which is on the next page, is 9.5 percent, which wouldn't change.

MRS. EMBURY: I know, but aren't your quotes there for either alternative A or B?

MR. KINASEWICH: Excuse me?

MRS. EMBURY: Aren't your quotes of cost for either A or B?

MR. KINASEWICH: Yes, it's an estimate. What

we've done is taken a situation, looked at what type of claims we would expect, and broken it down into a per-member cost per month.

MRS. EMBURY: I was just asking about the the credit card. It would still be 9.5?

MR. KINASEWICH: Right. We would be able to do that. But a per-member cost, just a rough figure, would be somewhere around \$29 a month.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: That would be on the percentage of the claims in addition to the total annual cost.

MR. KINASEWICH: That's right.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any more questions? We're actually still on the dental, I guess. Could we go to the vision care, then?

MR. KINASEWICH: Sure. For the vision care we've quoted a \$100 benefit, which for eyeglasses covers frames and/or lenses, replacement glasses, or contact lenses, every 24 consecutive months, and for dependent children under 14 years of age, once every 12-month period, providing a new prescription is required. That's what the benefit outline is, which is pretty well standard.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any questions or comments on that one? You've touched on the administration costs, Sid. Would you like to go through the balance of the proposal?

MR. KINASEWICH: Sure. What we've done is shown, at the bottom of page 1, a costing on an annual basis of alternative A, alternative B, and what your existing approximate cost should be. On page 2 we've added in our admin cost, claims admin, which obviously increased the particular figures we have. Then we have a per-member cost of \$62 for alternative A and \$77 for alternative B. Then we've shown some Alberta-based companies that have coverage with us and what level of coverage they have.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: What's that note about underwriting?

MR. KINASEWICH: It basically states that the underwriting would be on a cost-plus basis, as

we've talked. Whatever the claim figures are, we charge an admin on that and charge accordingly. If there are no claims, then there is no cost for doing business.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, to Sid. I guess this is an extension of the question I asked a little earlier. Under the supplementary health plan under the existing, you have "Alberta government employees — other health benefits." I want to be really clear in my own mind that the current services provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly by Alberta Blue Cross are today the same as that provided to employees of the government of Alberta. Is that correct?

MR. KINASEWICH: It's a \$15 deductible, with 80 percent reimbursement. You have to retain receipts and submit them to Blue Cross once or twice a year.

MR. KOWALSKI: As per the members of the public service.

MR. KINASEWICH: Right.

MR. KOWALSKI: So what does that phrase "other health benefits" mean?

MR. KINASEWICH: If you look in the outline Mr. Scarlett has handed around, there are other benefits . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: . . . that would apply to everybody.

MR. KINASEWICH: Prescription drugs, as well as your ambulance services, semiprivate and private wards, and so on.

MR. KOWALSKI: Okay.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, we're now paying \$45,000 out of our budget for these services?

MR. KINASEWICH: It's an estimated cost. It's what we estimate the cost to be.

MR. HYLAND: We're paying that now.

MR. KINASEWICH: Right.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: That's the existing plan.

MR. KINASEWICH: And that's showing you on the reimbursement basis, with 80 percent of basic dental and 50 percent on option 1, which is extensive dentistry, and 50 percent on orthodontics. If you increase any level of coverage, your claim costs are obviously going to be a little higher, and you would then require more funds.

MR. KOWALSKI: One more question, Sid. With respect to alternatives A and B, under the current plan would an individual member or an individual member of the public service have an option to buy alternatives A or B on their own, or does that have to be done on a group basis?

MR. KINASEWICH: On a group basis.

MR. KOWALSKI: So there's no provision for my saying "I accept what we have, but I want alternative A," and I just giving a cheque for the basic difference. That can't be done?

MR. KINASEWICH: No, it would have to be done as a whole and be standard across the board.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, I simply want to be sure that the committee understands the coverage that is provided now. The question to the Blue Cross representative is: is it correct that we are now providing to staff and to members Blue Cross coverage for supplementary health and vision care through Blue Cross, and that the dental plan is being provided through another insurer?

MR. KINASEWICH: Correct.

MR. STEFANIUK: To what extent are we currently providing vision costs?

MR. KINASEWICH: Pardon me. I was just going to mention that vision care is not included.

MR. STEFANIUK: So at the moment we are only providing to the members and to the staff of the Alberta government supplementary health care under Blue Cross. We are providing dental care under another insurer, and I don't

think we have any current provision for vision care. So vision care would be a new addition, and the acceptance of dental coverage from Blue Cross would mean, in effect, the cancellation of current dental coverage which is provided to the members. I just want to be sure that the members understand that.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Understood? Are there any other questions or comments by anyone regarding any portion of the proposal? What is the wish of the committee?

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I think there's a difficulty here. Reading through the minutes — and I know I haven't been at the last couple or three meetings — we started off with a request from a member about the drug coverage, and we're now looking at several other items which were not thought of originally; for example, vision care. I've never heard any member discuss the vision care package at all. I'm not sure whether this dental package is identical with the existing one. The existing one is of two levels, a basic one which is provided and an optional one which individual members may or may not have bought and for which, I think, individual members pay the total premium. I'm not sure, but I think it covered optional dental, which includes the orthodontics and things, and is entirely billed to the member. Some members have taken it and some have not.

MR. STEFANIUK: That's right.

DR. REID: Those who are longer in the tooth mostly have not, and those who have younger children mostly have.

MR. HYLAND: Or those who weren't married and didn't have children when the plan came out didn't take it either.

DR. REID: Well, that was unfortunate. But I'm not sure that we really know what we're comparing here for the individual members. There's a loss of certain options here if we get into the dental one, which we have available for new members who are joining.

MR. STEFANIUK: As I said at the outset, Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure that the figures which are quoted here for existing coverage on dental plan are accurate. I'm not saying they are not.

I'm saying I'm uncertain that they are accurate, because I think the provision for major work and orthodontal work is greater than 50 percent under the current plan.

DR. REID: If you buy the option.

MR. STEFANIUK: Yes.

DR. REID: This is the difficulty, you see. It's very difficult, because the basic one does not include orthodontics and many members have just the basic.

MR. STEFANIUK: If we look back to Mr. Gogo's letter to the Speaker, which is in the binders under 3(e), the second sheet right behind the blue sheet, the concern that was raised by the committee was . . .

DR. REID: The drug benefit.

MR. STEFANIUK: The drug benefit. It concerned, in the first instance, coverage of 100 percent of the drug benefit and, in the second instance, the question of having the use of a plastic card, which would enable the druggist to bill direct as opposed to having the insured submit a claim. I think that was the concern that was raised with the committee.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: That was the information that was requested or desired?

MR. STEFANIUK: That's right. I think this has gone beyond . . .

DR. REID: That's the point I'm trying to make exactly, Bohdan. I think we are looking here at something that was not in the original purview of the committee.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I guess Mr. Gogo probably approached Blue Cross for this information, did he?

MRS. EMBURY: No.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: He's chairman of that committee; that's why I was wondering.

MR. HYLAND: No. He was but not anymore.

MRS. EMBURY: No, it came through this

committee, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Yes, but I wonder what he actually asked them for, though. Were the Blue Cross people aware of what John Gogo had in his memo?

MR. KINASEWICH: No.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: So what does the committee wish?

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank our guest for coming. I find the information very interesting and appreciate having it. If there are no more questions at this time, we don't have to take up his time any longer.

MR. KINASEWICH: Can I just mention that the way we've quoted this particular basis, we would be able to facilitate the request of just the direct bill card on its own. The underwriting situation would still be the same, on a cost-plus basis, so there would not be a problem.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Would the committee wish to give this some consideration and contact Sid again at a later date if they want a different quote?

MR. STEFANIUK: I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if the committee might not wish to request of Blue Cross that they answer the specific questions this committee was requested to look into. Those are, on the one hand, provision of 100 percent coverage for drug costs and, two, provision of 80 percent coverage for drug costs, and in both instances availing the Members of the Legislative Assembly with a plastic card which would enable the charge to go directly to Blue Cross as opposed to compelling the member to accumulate receipts and file a claim at some later date. Those are the specific questions I think this committee raised.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Could you obtain that information?

MR. KINASEWICH: I sure could. I'd be more than glad to supply that.

DR. REID: As a supplement to that, Mr. Chairman, is it possible to have a plastic card

with the current \$15 deductible? I don't think it is, if I remember correctly.

MR. KINASEWICH: No, it isn't. To implement a deductible with the direct bill cards — it basically can't be done. That's why there are no deductibles to satisfy under any of the direct bill programs.

MR. STEFANIUK: Those are the specific questions the committee wanted answered.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. You'll be getting back with that other information?

MR. KINASEWICH: Yes.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Probably to Mr. Stefaniuk, the Clerk.

MR. STEFANIUK: I think it was channelled to Rod, because the contact was established there. Then the information will be passed on.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Very good. Thank you very much. Do you wish to table that till the next meeting?

MRS. EMBURY: I'm prepared to make a motion that we do not accept the recommendation as requested by the member. If people wonder why I'm jumping the gun, my reason for saying that is the fact that we haven't got the information back from the gentleman, which I think will be interesting. But it's just a premise of mine that I think there should be some deductible. I don't wish to set a precedent at this time to change that.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, through you to Mrs. Embury. I'm wondering if it's a question of a deductible or a question of premium-sharing by the member and the public purse. Is it really a concern as to whether or not there is a deductible if the cost to the public purse is no greater than it is at the moment? The deductible simply means that the member or any insured at the moment pays the first \$15. The first prescription that costs \$15 is paid for entirely by the insured. Beyond that, 80 percent of the prescription cost is paid for by the insurer. But is there, in effect, any real concern if the member is willing to absorb the

cost of a greater premium and the cost to the public purse remains the same while giving the member a benefit he's willing to pay for — if the cost to the public purse is the concern?

MR. HYLAND: Which would match the option in the dental plan we have now.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: This isn't really under consideration.

MR. HYLAND: No, but I say that that would be the same as the dental plan we have now, because you have the option of having the common or the extra.

MR. STEFANIUK: And you pay for the extra.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Sheila has a motion now. What was that actually?

MRS. EMBURY: That we do not consider the request of the member at this time.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any more discussion on that question? All those in favour? Opposed? Four to three; the motion is carried.

MR. KOWALSKI: It's not tabled; it's defeated. It's ended, then.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Yes.

DR. REID: Just for now.

MRS. EMBURY: It can always come back.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Well, he's coming back with information anyway.  
We'll go to 3(a), ACCESS.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I think the section on ACCESS resulted from a request I made a number of months ago to have Mr. Senchuk from ACCESS come and meet before the Members' Services Committee. We've certainly had that discussion with Mr. Senchuk. Second point: when we did have the discussion with Mr. Senchuk, there was need for clarification of some particular information or the validity of some of the information he provided. I note that in the file we have here there is a letter dated June 24, 1985, with

respect to this matter.

I also understand that there may very well be an evaluation or a discussion ongoing right now about proposed or possible renovations to the Chamber of the Legislature Building. I'm not sure where we are with respect to that matter, and it seems to me that pending a further review of that matter, we might not want to deal with this subject on ACCESS until we have more information with respect to that. It's my understanding as well that we have been informed that there will be no fall session, so it seems to me that in terms of best usage of our time, we might simply want to defer discussion of this item today and have it tabled for a subsequent meeting till we might have some more information with respect to what is going on on possible renovations to the Chamber as well, because there may be some implications. I'm just not sure, but I would like to suggest that we simply table this.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Mr. Stefaniuk could probably update us on that.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I might briefly add that there has been some discussion with Public Works, Supply and Services relative to restoration and renovation of the Legislative Assembly Chamber. Having regard to the fact that the contract for the existing sound system, which is contracted to us by AGT, expires in the summer of '86, we are currently taking a look at the sound system and the possibility of replacing it as well as doing other upgrading work in the Chamber. We have presented the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services with a so-called shopping list of items which require immediate or longer term attention.

Among those items is the question of closed circuit television cameras, possibly patterned after the installation which presently exists in Saskatchewan and in the House of Commons and which is going to be proceeded with in the Ontario House. I am meeting with the Deputy Minister of Public Works and some of his senior officials tomorrow to review the shopping list. I know that officials from that department are planning a trip in the very, very near future to Regina to view firsthand the television installation there.

Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, it would be entirely in order to table this matter until we can learn

of further developments and the reactions of the government to upgrading the Chamber, including the television facilities in it.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is it agreed to table it?

DR. REID: One thing that could perhaps be involved in those discussions with Public Works is the possibility of — I think these cameras are either fixed or remote controlled, not the sort of thing we have at the moment — installing those in any event and then contracting the service out to somebody; in other words, not making it a sine qua non that there has to be a contract with somebody before that is considered. In other words, even if we don't come to an arrangement with ACCESS, put in the cables and necessary . . .

MR. STEFANIUK: Yes. It is foreseen, Mr. Chairman, that any installation would be a remote controlled installation. In other words, what this would ultimately do is remove the necessity for reporters being on the floor of the House, since they would be provided with a direct feed of the proceedings of the House. We would also foresee that such an installation would meet with what I think has been defined as the requirements of this committee, in that the committee indicated a wish to have the entire proceedings of the House covered as opposed to just question period. We could then proceed to arrangements for broadcasting the entire proceedings of the House again, as opposed to only question period or news clips.

DR. REID: Those could be two separate functions. In other words, it could be a function of the Legislative Assembly to provide the feed from within the Chamber, and it could be a separate matter to provide the broadcasting.

MR. STEFANIUK: Yes. They are very separate, indeed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: At one time the committee suggested — I guess it was July 27, 1983 — coverage of all proceedings outside the question period.

MR. STEFANIUK: That's right, and this is what is kept in mind. There was some concern by the members that coverage had been reduced to

question period only, and I think there was also concern for the number of centres in Alberta that were not provided with a broadcast of that coverage.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I really want to encourage the Clerk to go forward in a vociferous way in his discussions in this regard with officials from Public Works. I think there are tremendous numbers of new potentials in terms of communications that can be looked at in light of what is happening in other jurisdictions throughout the country. I for one — and I don't think I'm out of order in saying this — and other members of the committee would like to tell him to go with our best wishes in terms of heavy negotiation on this matter, because I think it's really important. The more up-to-date the equipment in the Assembly can be, the more options we as the Members' Services Committee will have to resolve the question of communication to the public of Alberta.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any other comments? Agreed to table it?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: 3(b), Long-term Disability Insurance.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, on April 17, 1985, I had a motion that was agreed to by members of the committee, and the minutes and the blue sheet that are attached in that section have follow-ups dated May 8 and June 19, 1985, including a letter from the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. In the letter from the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration, as far as I understand it — and perhaps the Clerk can clarify — that long-term disability insurance can be provided for Members of the Legislative Assembly as it is now being provided for, I guess, everyone else associated with the government of Alberta. Basically, we have several questions to address ourselves to this morning: one, whether or not we want to move on providing this and, secondly, responding to the three questions Mr. Stevens has in his letter of June 5, 1985.

I would like to move once again that this committee agree that long-term disability insurance coverage be provided for all members

and that the basis for calculating eligibility be such that a government contribution should be made for Members of the Legislative Assembly and that the office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for the administration of this item.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Questions or comments? Do we have any idea of the budgetary ramifications with regard to that?

MR. STEFANIUK: The provision now, Mr. Chairman, which has become a departmental one for everyone, is 1 percent of gross salaries. So the provision would have to be for 1 percent of members' indemnities and tax-free allowances.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: And the total for that amounts to roughly what?

MR. ELIUK: I believe it's somewhere around \$37,000 to \$40,000.

MR. STEFANIUK: Did you say we have it built in?

MR. ELIUK: We have built it in, on the assumption that it would be passed, so we wouldn't have to alter our budget figures.

MR. STEFANIUK: By the end of this meeting, Mr. Chairman, we will be distributing to members the proposed estimates as prepared by the administration, and the cost of this coverage is foreseen in those estimates. Of course, anything contained in that proposal is subject to alteration by the committee.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Am I right, Ken, that you included two items in your motion?

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes. That the contribution be provided by the government of Alberta and, secondly, that the office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for the administration of this program.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: What about question 1 in Greg's memo?

MR. KOWALSKI: It's answered with my first statement.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any comments? All in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

3(c), Members' Office Automation, Progress Report.

MRS. EMBURY: There's nothing further to report at this time, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Anybody have anything else to add to that? We'll carry that forward on the agenda. Is that agreed?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, do you want to carry it forward to the next meeting, or some predefined time, or wait until such time as a member may raise it again?

MRS. EMBURY: I think it will be raised as an agenda item when it's appropriate.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: It's tabled until it's called again.

MRS. EMBURY: Right.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: 3(d), Differential Funding for Large Rural Constituencies, Mr. Gurnett.

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Chairman, the thoughts I prepared and also the information from Mr. Amerongen are included for members. It's an action that I hope there will be some progress on. As I indicated in my covering letter, I don't know the historical background of it and whether or not the kinds of suggestions I made have already been thoroughly dealt with and, for various reasons, found to be impractical. I simply raised it out of my observations that it would be very beneficial in the kind of geographical situation some of us are in and would hope that we can take some action on it.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, one brief comment. May I draw to the members' attention that in addition to the outline of services provided in Saskatchewan, we have included in the documentation an excerpt from the comparative study of Canadian Legislatures, 1984. I respectfully draw your

attention to the section that begins "In the Constituency" and is followed by "Table 8: Support Services in Constituency." That may give members some idea of what is done in other jurisdictions across the country.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I'd like to address one of the questions Jim raised. Jim, you asked if it had been considered in the past. We have had a lot of discussion on this issue, because you can imagine that there are concerns to different members, be they rural or urban. People do bring these before us. The last time that I recall our giving major consideration to this issue, of course, was to travelling. One of the biggest items for anybody in a large rural constituency is physically getting around their constituency, particularly the ones who don't have roads that service all the areas. That was when we made what we thought was a reasonable adjustment so those rural members who had difficulty would be able to use an airline when appropriate.

I notice that one of your suggestions is to have more than one constituency office. As I understand it, there are members who have more than one office now. I suppose the question of debate is obviously the amount of money we have available to us. If that's the point of the concern being raised, I could certainly speak to that too. Although the need is different in an urban area, our costs are pretty high for rental and secretarial services and whatnot. I think we could debate infinitum about the possibility of more money being needed to meet our individual needs, but I wanted to raise the point that, as I am aware, there are some now who manage to have more than one office out of their allowance.

While it's not a real answer to your question, I don't know if anybody else can clarify that for me. I'm sure there are . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I think the request being made by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview is one that touches the heart of most of us. The two items he's identified in his August 6, 1985, memo, pointing out the need for additional part-time secretaries and the like, are valid. I refer to the briefing material we have in the document that has a comparison of Canadian Legislatures. I note that under Alberta it indicates one secretary for three

members. Basically, I guess the only caucus grouping in the whole system that has one secretary for three members is the government caucus. It's not my understanding that that applies to either the Official Opposition or the other opposition party. I think their percentage is considerably higher than what the government caucus is, the basis of one to three.

If you look under Quebec, item (b), which is really a fascinating bit of information, it says that the member has an annual sum of \$72,000 for hiring personnel. We are clearly nowhere near the ballpark being used in the province of Quebec.

We've also had a tradition in our province that periodically there is a public review of those services that are provided to constituents and constituencies — not to members but to constituents and constituencies. I recall that the last major review we had was in 1979, when a judge and other public people in the province of Alberta undertook a complete review of this matter and made some recommendations. I guess all Members of the Legislative Assembly accepted those recommendations, and there were no changes made to the recommendation package.

I think what is really necessary is that at some time before too long there is need for another similar public review. At the time of the public review, perhaps questions of the type that are being raised by Mr. Gurnett at this time should be addressed.

I recall as well that in 1979 there was considerable public antagonism to the report that was brought forward by this particular judge. Somehow it was viewed that these were benefits to members rather than benefits to constituents and the people of Alberta. There was a lot of criticism that somehow the Legislative Assembly had given itself significant benefits, and that was a matter that was simply not true. These services were provided to constituents. I really believe that we have to be in a position to provide more services to the people of Alberta, to all of our constituents, no matter where they are. But I would feel rather uncomfortable with the Members of the Legislative Assembly taking the initiative to provide those, in light of the massive debate that occurred in 1979 and the criticism government members had to take on the chin in this matter.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any other comments?

MR. GURNETT: Mr. Chairman, just by way of information. In the memo I sent, one of the suggestions I mentioned is this idea of making space in provincial building facilities available, which in a sense wouldn't have a cost attached in the same way. I wonder if that has been explored in the past.

MR. PENGELLY: Not all constituencies have provincial buildings, Jim. That's in the urban areas.

MR. HYLAND: If you're in a provincial building, too, one department has to pay the rent to somebody. There may be a charge internally inside of government or government to Legislature or whatever.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: It would be a chargeback.

MR. HYLAND: You're going to be charged, and some of the rates in a provincial building would take up your whole allowance. You'd be better off renting privately.

MR. GURNETT: I asked the question, though, because I know that in a number of cases there is vacant space available in provincial buildings in various towns. So it would seem to me that if you were able to hire more people locally to have more secretarial time and were using space in provincial buildings that was otherwise unused, there is a certain efficiency there. I wouldn't see necessarily paying rent in a provincial building if you were having to compete for space that was at a premium and other places were available.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: If I'm not mistaken, the way Public Works, Supply and Services operates is that, as Alan said, somebody would be responsible for paying that. That would come out of your constituency office allowance, for paying rent, no matter whether it's a provincial building or otherwise.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I think there are some suggestions, based on what I know of the arrangements other members have made in their constituencies, that Mr. Gurnett may not

be aware of. For example — and I think Bohdan can give some details — there are tremendous variances in the ways the constituency office setup is handled. I happen to have — and I'll say it — the worst constituency in the province for having to provide offices. If this were to be implemented, I would require four if I were to have more than one. The way I handle it is to have one in the central community and rent a dayroom in a hotel or something like that, if I'm going to another community. Otherwise, there always seems to be some supporter who will let my office staff park for a few hours in an office in a clothing store, or something like that. I think Dr. Buck has 12 or 15 assorted gas stations, clothing stores, and other people around his constituency, where he gets a sort of telephone answering service. The other thing, of course, is the possibility of putting a toll-free line into the one office, under the communications allowance.

As far as the government building is concerned, back at the beginning that was considered fairly fully by a previous Members' Services Committee. It was felt that the use of government offices was an unfair item, in that government buildings are not distributed equally across the province. There are large areas where there are none, and there are others where there's a government building in every community. This committee has to address things on an equalized basis across the province.

MR. HYLAND: I remember a discussion, I guess outside the committee, among private members, on the concern that having a legislative office in a government building really ties the Legislature too closely to government per se, even though it's the same people. Maybe it's our feeling, but it just ties us too closely to another government service instead of a legislative type of service.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I guess this item does go back a long, long time. I think Bill Purdy and I were some of the original ones who discussed this in Members' Services when the committee was first set up. This matter of using space in government buildings has been an ongoing thing. As you can see this morning, a number of comments have been made relative to putting that sort of arrangement into effect. So it does make it difficult.

We have the comments from Ken, though, as

to the need for another review in the not-too-distant future. It was 1979 when this independent commission made its last review, and certainly circumstances have changed. That was the time we did put these benefits into effect in the constituencies, and they've proved very invaluable to members; no doubt about that. I think the public support for those types of services — probably the views have changed somewhat over the years. I'm not sure, but I think they can see the benefits of it.

So what would be the wish of the committee in dealing with this question this morning?

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, can I make a suggestion? I think the presumption is that there will be another judicial commission after the next election. I think the timing has usually been after elections, although there wasn't one after the last election. Perhaps what we should do is table this matter in this particular Members' Services Committee and await the results of the next commission and see what happens. If there appear to be gaps in the system, then Mr. Gurnett, or indeed any other member, can bring the matter back here and address any perceived gaps in the coverage, subsequent to that judicial commission — not necessarily a judicial commission; I don't think it has to be headed by a judge. I'm not sure of the wording.

MR. HYLAND: I guess my question to Ian would be: is it possible to add to that, for us to keep a list of things we've talked about in the committee? When such a commission is formed, we can just say: "Look, these are the concerns that came from members to the committee. We dealt with them but thought you should be aware of them and consider them when you're looking at your . . ."

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Terms of reference.

DR. REID: It would depend on the terms of reference. If I remember correctly the last time, the members of that committee did not speak to any current Members of the Legislative Assembly. They did speak to some previous members.

MR. KOWALSKI: That's incorrect. They did speak to the leaders of the opposition but no government members. I was very surprised at

that.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Not only that, they went far beyond their terms of reference in their recommendations.

MR. PURDY: They spoke to retired people too.

DR. REID: They spoke to previous members, but I thought they spoke to no current members.

MR. HYLAND: All I'm saying is that we start keeping a list, saying: "These things have been talked about in our meetings in the past. We thought you would like to be aware of them." Just leave it at that. If they don't want to consider them and toss them out, so be it.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I'm sure the minutes could be researched and these things listed, as Alan said.

MRS. CRIPPS: Not that specifically, but I remember raising the issue of provincial buildings when I was first elected. We were not provided with office space at all to serve the constituents.

DR. REID: For the first year.

MRS. CRIPPS: I think it was for the first year and a half. One of my election commitments had been that I would have an office in Drayton Valley. That was an expense that the member incurred directly. There was absolutely no way you could get into a provincial building at that time, and I don't think it has changed. The reasons given were pretty valid and pretty convincing, when you stood back and took a look at them. But I agree with Alan and Ian that we should maybe make available to any commission that is established the concerns of members in the service to their constituents.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, just by way of information. Although it is not a requirement, traditionally that commission that is established to review members' indemnities and expense allowances has requested the Clerk of the Assembly to provide the secretarial or clerical assistance to that committee. I have done that on the last two occasions when such a commission has been established. If it is the wish of the committee, perhaps the Clerk might

be the vehicle through which concerns raised relative to indemnities or expenses could be brought to the attention of the commission when it is established.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: When those concerns are all tabulated, you could probably review them with the committee, to see that everything is included that they wish.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to raise a bit of a red herring, I guess. I think one of the tragedies . . . I don't know if Jim, for one, has had the opportunity to talk to different members and find out. You so often don't, with all the work to be done. It's very difficult to share the information, and constituency offices are just one example. I find really fascinating the different ways people utilize their allowance and make it work for them, given the differences in our constituencies.

I've often thought it was a shame that the administrator, probably, more than anybody else in the Assembly, has this vast wealth of information about the constituency offices, because that has been the person that generally had something to do with all of them. I've wondered how it would be possible to share some of that information. As I said, that's why it's tough. I don't know now, with the computer services, if there's much that can be pulled out to be available. Even an idea of what people pay for rents across the province, the secretarial staff, the number of hours secretaries work — that type of information; if there's anything that could be compiled so that we could have it to look at. Then, along with the suggestions that are raised, I think we would get a better picture of what should be the basic services we could anticipate. There have been a lot of changes since 1980 or '81.

It's too bad Chuck was out of the room, but he probably caught the last part of this anyway. I don't know if there's anything that can be shared.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, as was mentioned earlier, the arrangements vary very considerably from one constituency to another. As Dr. Reid stated, there is one member who probably has a dozen so-called constituency offices which are telephone contact points. At one time — I'm not sure if we have them any longer — we had shared

constituency offices. I know there was a time when a number of members in Calgary pooled their financial resources to share a single office facility and were enabled, therefore, to employ full-time secretarial help or a constituency office assistant to serve those three constituencies. I don't think that exists any longer. There are members who have more than one office now, through certain arrangements.

It would not be impossible to provide information as to the varying types of arrangements which exist, but such a study would require the examination of every contract we have for lease of space or employment of manpower in each of those offices. If the committee so wishes, that kind of study can be undertaken and published for the committee.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I've always found that the most important form of information one can obtain is by simply asking somebody. Quite frankly, I really don't think there's much need to ask the Clerk or the Director of Administration to do a study when we're all here all the time. If Jim wants to sit down and talk to me and buy me coffee, I'll tell him what we're doing in Barrhead and he can tell me what they're doing in Spirit River-Fairview. I can sit down and talk to Mr. Purdy and say, what are you doing there? He will tell me in five minutes.

I'm sorry; I think the people we have in the Clerk's office are working all out right now. Frankly, I don't see much merit in having another study done, when this is as easy to get information on as it is right now. People are here all the time. We all have telephone numbers. We can sit down and talk to one another: "Frank, what are you doing?" — you tell me and I'll tell you, type of thing. It's there.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to back up what Ken just said. Seriously, the last thing most of us need is another piece of paper to look at. Secondly, I think if Jim calls any of us, he can very easily get a cross-section from other rural members, just as long as the coffee doesn't come under promotional allowance.

MRS. CRIPPS: You have a motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The thing is that if the review is done by another commission, practically all the members who have been working under this system of constituency allowances would have still been in the Assembly. There would be hardly any ex-MLAs they could go to for information about this system. So probably the next commission that examines the subject would have to go to the sitting MLAs or the ones that have been sitting.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I would also anticipate that the members of the Members' Services Committee, whoever they are at the time, would want to avail themselves of an opportunity to meet with this particular group or commission and to say, "Let's have a chat about what we think is important."

MR. PURDY: It could even be part of the terms of reference when the commission is established.

MR. KOWALSKI: Absolutely. Sure.

DR. REID: Exactly.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: It's agreed, then, that we leave the matter to be considered at some future date by a commission or committee? Is that what the feeling is? Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: There are no visitors this morning. Is there any other item out of the minutes that anybody wishes to raise?

We'll proceed to other business, then. Use of Communication Allowance for Language Lessons, under 5(a).

MR. PURDY: I move that that proposal not go forward.

MR. PENGELLY: Mr. Chairman, I agree with Bill that if we include that, the problem is: what don't we include? I move that we do not consider that at all.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: 5(b), Allowable Expenditures/Guidelines for Constituency Allowances: hospitality expenses for gatherings hosted or partly hosted by members. This is a memo prepared by the Speaker before he left. You have it in your supplementary information.

MRS. CRIPPS: What difference does it make whether it comes under communications or promotion when they're interchangeable?

MR. PENGELLY: You can move the budgets around, can't you?

MRS. CRIPPS: That's what I say. What difference does it make where it comes? It's just semantics.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Not really, because you transfer funds from one to another.

MRS. CRIPPS: That's right, since we made that change.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Anybody have any other comments?

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering whether this is a valid expenditure from the promotion, communication, or constituency office allowances. To put it into more concrete terms, I'm just wondering whether this a valid use of any of those three interchangeable budget items for the member. I know that on many occasions I will meet with people for lunch about a matter to do with constituency affairs. It may be the chamber executive; it may be a representative of town council, a school board, the hospital board, or anything else. On the occasions when I pick up the tab for that, I always regard that as being part of the things that are attributable to the nontaxable allowance that I receive as a member of this Legislative Assembly rather than being either a promotion or a communication.

MR. PURDY: I've got to agree with Dr. Reid, Mr. Chairman, that items such as this should not be used in any of the three allowances we have. It should come out of the nontaxable expense allowance we now receive as members.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any other

comments?

DR. REID: If there are no more comments, perhaps I should make a motion that this should not be regarded as a valid expense against any of the three allowances — constituency office, communications, or promotions — and should be regarded as a valid drawing against the member's nontaxable expense allowance.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: There's a matter here for the administration, of course, as to guidelines.

DR. REID: I think that's what I'm trying to give them, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: How do they classify things into this type of expenditure? Where does the borderline come in?

MR. PURDY: I think the typical example would be that you're invited to participate in some social function in the community but you've got to buy your tickets at \$30 a couple or whatever it is. That comes out of your tax-free allowance. That's where that should come from, and that's where these expenditures should come from. Any item like that — as Dr. Reid says, he takes the executive of the Chamber of Commerce out for lunch and picks up the tab. It's a legitimate expense out of your tax-free allowance, but it should not be out of any of the other three. The guidelines are there, and I think the Clerk and his staff should be able to follow them. In essence, what we're saying is that coffee, donuts, meals, and things like that should not be taken out of any of the three allowances.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I sent a memo on one item to the committee a year or two ago, I guess, and I suppose I was somewhat surprised that the committee didn't go along with it. It was the serving of coffee in your constituency office. Why is it that we can serve coffee to anybody that comes into our office here in Edmonton but we can't get assistance in funding it in our constituency office?

MR. HYLAND: I guess for the same reason you can mail anything from your office in Edmonton out of general admin but the constituency office comes out of constituency office.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Yes, but you can't charge it to your constituency office account.

DR. REID: You're talking about the coffeepot in the constituency office.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Yes, and pay for it out of your office allowance or communication allowance.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I agree with what you're saying, by the way. I have no difficulty with what you're saying, but I think the question at hand here is for basically — call it what you like — communications or promotion or entertainment outside of your constituency office.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Oh, I agree.

MR. KOWALSKI: The motion here basically says "outside of your constituency office." The other item is one that I agree with you on, and if we had another motion on that, I'd be prepared to support that.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: We'll deal with the first motion. I just wanted to raise it at this time because it's something I've been concerned about.

MR. PENGELLY: Mr. Chairman, I second that motion.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Yes, I think we had three seconders. All in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Now, having raised the other question, I wonder, Mr. Kowalski, since you approve it, would you like to make a motion? You know, I'd be quite happy to have it charged to your constituency allowance.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I think we might want to take a look at it under (g), where it says Stationery/Office Supplies Charged to Members' Allowances. That might be the more important area where we might look at it. We're coming to that item a little later.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I'll remember.

MR. KOWALSKI: I would certainly view coffee as an office supply.

DR. REID: But not the coffeepot.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I'm not worried about the coffeepot; we've got that.

MR. ELIUK: That's very legitimate, because we have several orders all the time regarding the purchase of coffeepots, wall clocks, and these very small types of things.

MR. STEFANIUK: Microwaves.

MR. ELIUK: Fridges.

MR. KOWALSKI: We'll deal with that in (g).

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: We'll go to 5(c), and that's Text of Promotional Allowance.

MR. KOWALSKI: I have some comments I want to make on that, Mr. Chairman. This again is one of those items we've been dealing with time and time again: what is the correct definition and what is not? I really empathize and, I guess, in many ways sympathize with the what the people in the Clerk's office have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. I think it's really important, however, that we don't box ourselves in with a whole bunch of interpretations that will cause us more problems in the future than they might not cause us. Basically, if you look at the background information that's included, called Annexure 1 and Annexure 2 — that's an interesting word that I didn't know even existed until yesterday when I was starting to go through this. Under Promotional Allowances, on Annexure 1 we have the current text. Under Annexure 2, we have a proposed new text.

I would like to make a motion, so as to get a discussion and debate going, that section 3(2) be changed, and this would be the new text.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Under the proposed new text?

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes, but this would be the text. The wording is different from what you see there. I move that section 3(2) now read:

A promotional allowance for a fiscal year shall be used only to pay for the purchase in that fiscal year

- (a) of pins, flags or other things suitable for the Member's constituents and others,
- (b) of items suitable as gifts to be given in the course of a Member's work.

I'll repeat that if you want to follow, because what you see in the proposed text is that (a) would read:

of pins, flags or other things suitable for the Member's constituents and others

"As tokens" would be crossed out. And (b):

of items suitable as gifts to be given in the course of a Member's work.

The remainder of that statement would be crossed out, and there would be no (3). That would be crossed out as well; it wouldn't exist either.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Discussion?

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to back up this suggestion by Ken. I was looking at it, and I thought maybe we should take out the "pins, flags or other." But it would read all right as it's suggested. It's the old business of the more you try to write a definition, the more trouble you get into, because there's always something that comes along that seems to be reasonable. We've had examples in the past that seemed to be reasonable and examples that didn't.

You really are looking at the individual member's discretion. I don't think this committee should take on the role of trying to decide what that individual member's discretion should be. I think it's up to the individual member, who then has the responsibility of behaving in a reasonable fashion with this allowance. I think the suggestion that's made for an amendment of the proposed wording really does that. It puts it on the individual member to make the decision and to be responsible for their actions.

I'd like to second the proposal.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: And you move an amendment?

DR. REID: No. I was considering taking out "pins, flags or other," but as long as it has the "other things suitable," in actual fact it's simpler to just take out the "as tokens."

MR. ELIUK: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the promotional allowance and the way it's written, number (1) reads, "of not more than \$2100 in

respect of each fiscal year." That has changed, and I wonder whether that wording . . .

MR. STEFANIUK: There's an order coming to the committee to amend that.

MR. ELIUK: There is? Okay.

MR. KOWALSKI: That's \$2,400 now?

MR. ELIUK: It's \$2,100 base, but over and above that depending upon the size of your constituency.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, just quickly on that question, there was a decision made by this committee some time ago to provide an additional allowance. The fact that that decision was not recorded as a formal amendment to an existing order of the committee has been brought to our attention by the auditors. We are in the process of amending the order now and will probably bring it to the next meeting of the committee for consideration. It's an administrative cleanup.

MRS. CRIPPS: I would like to support the motion, because I believe there are items members may wish to use which are far more appropriate than some of the items that are supplied through the Legislative Assembly office at the time. A member should certainly have the discretion to use something that they feel is appropriate as opposed to, say, a honey pot, which I think is grossly inappropriate; I don't care who it's given to or for what purpose, unless it's a honey bee.

MR. GURNETT: Well, as a farmer, I can't agree.

DR. REID: You've got a fair few honey growers.

MRS. EMBURY: Shirley hasn't had Peace River honey.

MR. GURNETT: I'll bring some up some time.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Are you finished, Shirley?

MRS. CRIPPS: Yes. I just support the motion, because I think there's a lot of room for

discretion and a lot of circumstances where a member's personal preference should be taken into consideration, given the occasion.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Chairman, if Jim felt free to speak on this topic, I was going to ask if he had any ideas. I only say that, Jim, because I thought you as a new member might bring some ideas that we would appreciate hearing.

This has been an ongoing and a difficult issue, as I'm sure all committee members know and the staff of the Legislature will accede to. Using those words like "pins" and "flags" — when this promotional allowance first came into being, that was one of the items we as members didn't have access to, particularly pins. So I think it's still very appropriate that it be considered in the light of pins or flags. There has been quite an expansion of that concept. Right or wrong, the question has been: how were items approved that would be acceptable? Maybe it was on individual members' requests, and they tried to just provide a cross-section of items that would assist us all. As Dr. Reid said, I think it has to be applicable to the person's own area.

Where we run into problems — and we get these requests that we've already dealt with today, and I think they're legitimate — is that at some time somebody has to make a decision on what is a borderline item. In the past we have been through it regarding flowers, bouquets, or plants to individual people or groups of people in constituencies. As I understand it, we basically have accepted — and I can be corrected if I'm wrong — that that was an item that should come out of our tax-free allowance. It's just like what we've said today. The coffee, luncheons, et cetera for groups should come out of our other allowance and not be taken out of this one.

So I think we really have to hopefully take this item back to our caucuses, discuss it with people, and let them know the concerns that arise. I happen to know that as time goes on and our accounts are going to be more subject to scrutiny, we have to be very cognizant of what members are using their allowances for.

I note it's stated at the bottom, under Appeals, that the appeals "shall be decided in the first instance by the Speaker." I was under the misconception that an appeal would come to this committee. I just wonder if that could be corrected.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The question is decided by the Speaker — he makes the decision on it — but you can appeal it to this committee.

MR. KOWALSKI: If we were to review the Legislative Assembly Act, 1983, I think we'd find that that isn't so. I think the Legislative Assembly Act of 1983 said that the Members' Services Committee shall decide. I'm not sure what the date of this is.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, looking carefully at this wording, it says that if there's a question, it shall be decided in the first instance by the Speaker, "subject to appeal to the Members' Services Committee."

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Yes, the question is decided by the Speaker.

DR. REID: I think it really says that the appeal is to this committee. I think we're looking at legalese as opposed to what we think it should say. I think in actual fact it does say what we want it to, Ken. The appeal is to this committee.

MR. KOWALSKI: No argument on that, if that's the interpretation.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, I think there may be a practical approach to this. For example, this committee has not sat for a number of months. I think it last sat in June. What could in fact happen is that if someone were not authorized to decide on the question, at least in the interim, a supplier may be unfairly delayed in receiving payment. So I think this is probably designed in this order to resolve questions, at least on an interim basis, for the benefit of someone who has provided a service.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Actually, it's a matter that if the question has to be decided, if it's queried by the administration, the Speaker decides. But if the member is not satisfied, he can appeal to the committee. That's the procedure.

MR. GURNETT: Just to come back to the motion, I was going to raise a question in connection with the motion that suggests

deleting item 3. I appreciate the idea of the motion, to make available the possibility of gifts in addition to sort of small tokens, as was the word that had originally been used. It's a good step and does allow more room. I appreciate the comments that have gone before about the need that that would then be done with a great deal of thought and care on the part of the member.

In connection with deleting number 3, I want to ask whether there's an administrative reason why, if we move to having two separate categories -- the pins, flags, and tokens category and the gifts category . . . Would we then need to have 3 in, so we were indicating which it fell under? It seemed to be there for some purpose, and I wonder if we're deleting it too quickly if we do approve the subsection 2 that has (a) and (b) parts to it.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Ken, it was your motion to remove 3, wasn't it?

MR. KOWALSKI: Absolutely. I don't see any need for it at all. But I think the question Mr. Gurnett raised is a valid one. I'd like to know the explanation as to why it's even in there.

MR. HYLAND: I just wonder, partly from what Jim said, if it's taken out of the allowance it would normally be taken out of without members saying -- we get the computer printouts now, which we never used to get before. If you watch your printout and your one allowance is running out, with the transferability of allowances you can just go to the Clerk's office or write him and say, move this amount of money out of this allotment into this, and away you go. I don't know if that's possible. But with the printouts coming every month, you can see what's happening.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: When you have this transferability of the allowances from one to another, I often wonder why it isn't a global allowance.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, that is a concern we have. The transfer process is creating an awful lot of what appears to be unnecessary administrative work. Our transfers in the month of March of this year, I believe, amounted to 150. That's a lot of accounting work. The administration, through the Speaker,

proposes to bring to this committee a new order which will group the three allowances and eliminate the need for transfers.

MR. KOWALSKI: That would make a lot of sense.

MRS. EMBURY: It's amazing it hasn't been done before.

MR. KOWALSKI: It's because of the history of the way in which this was all organized. We wanted three new directions in terms of a constituency office, a clearly identified promotional allowance, and a clearly identified communications allowance. But as the years have gone by, I think the administration work has just created administration.

DR. REID: Initially they were not transferable.

MR. KOWALSKI: That's correct.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The allowance will be for the three purposes, but we won't have to transfer.

Very well, we have a motion.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I just want to get back in after Sheila's remarks. I was trying to make it very clear, in seconding the motion by Ken, that this is very much putting the load on the individual member to behave in a reasonable fashion. The individual member is responsible for decisions the individual member may make. It can't be dumped on this committee. In other words, I don't think this committee should be trying to dictate what is reasonable behavior. So it shouldn't be up to this committee or, indeed, as was just said, a caucus as a whole. The decisions they make are the individual responsibility of that member of the Legislature.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, could I request that we go off the record for a moment?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The recording was turned off from 10:26 a.m. to 10:40 a.m.]

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: As I understand it and as I think you all understand it, it's to pay for the purchase

(a) of pins, flags, and other things suitable for the Member's constituents and others, and

(b) items suitable as gifts to be given in the course of a Member's work . . .

and delete 3. Is that correct? Are you all agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Then we'll go to 5(d).

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, because I moved this one originally, I'd like to say, along with what Dr. Reid said earlier, that it should be the signature of the member, and you shouldn't be able to authorize it to anybody else. In this case, I think it's just one person to go to instead of having to go through two or three.

MR. STEFANIUK: In other words, Mr. Chairman, a member's constituency staff would not be authorized to sign these purchase orders on behalf of a member. We're not dealing with agents at all.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that for promotional items?

MR. HYLAND: Whatever.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: For supplies too?

MRS. EMBURY: Anything.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Okay, fine. I just want that clear.

MRS. EMBURY: Do you need a motion?

MR. HYLAND: Anything that comes out of the allowance.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Before we go to a motion, or maybe on the motion — Chuck, do you have some comment on that?

MR. ELIUK: That will mean that any purchase order would have to be originated by the member. Their staff in constituency offices

would not be involved in committing funds for the office. Is that going to pose any problems for you when you're in Edmonton? That was the only reason agents had been included.

MR. HYLAND: They can send it up.

MRS. CRIPPS: They can send us the purchase order and we can sign it.

DR. REID: They can send it to us either with the courier or through the mail.

MR. KOWALSKI: If a member is not in touch with what is going on in his or her office on a day-to-day basis, I think we have problems. The responsibility rests with the member.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: We're ready for a motion on that now.

MR. ELIUK: The other point I wanted to bring up, or the Speaker wanted us to talk to, is amount. Are we fixing any kind of limit on the dollar value of the purchase order itself?

MR. STEFANIUK: That was a question the Speaker raised. The concern was for the possibility that a member might, by a single purchase order, which he or she has the right to give to a supplier in the constituency or elsewhere, or by a combination of purchase orders, commit funds in excess of the allowance available to the member.

MR. HYLAND: Then he pays out of his own pocket.

DR. REID: Surely, Mr. Chairman, if that happens, isn't there a way that the member doesn't get his salary cheque until the account is back in balance?

MR. STEFANIUK: I don't know that we have a right to withhold a salary cheque. This is the kind of question that comes up.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: You want to put a ceiling on it.

MR. HYLAND: The ceiling is there.

MR. STEFANIUK: The chairman of the committee feels something of a need for a

ceiling. In discussing this with me, he said, "If you were a member, what would prevent you from taking one of these, walking into Edmonton Motors, and signing one for the value of a Cadillac?"

MR. HYLAND: I never thought of that.

MR. STEFANIUK: My retort to that was, "Edmonton Motors knows that cars bought out of public funds are tendered, so I probably couldn't buy one on the basis of issuing a purchase order." I think there is some legal responsibility on the part of the supplier.

However, if it were an unusual item — for example, a computer. Is there anything to prevent a member from committing to the purchase of a computer, the value of which is in excess of the funding available to the member?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The funds available would be the ceiling, wouldn't they?

MRS. CRIPPS: That was my point, Frank. I think the ceiling would be the available moneys in any member's funds at the time the purchase order was issued. Surely, that's not an item we put in.

MR. STEFANIUK: So it's not something you wish to stipulate in the order form.

MRS. CRIPPS: I wouldn't think so. It's something that would be common knowledge among the members.

MRS. EMBURY: I understand that when an item is purchased over \$2,000 or \$3,000 — I don't know what the amount is — the Legislature has to seek approval before that money can be paid out. Therefore, that's already . . .

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: From whom?

MRS. EMBURY: I thought this happened last year.

MR. STEFANIUK: No, that affects government departments, Mr. Chairman. It does not affect the Legislative Assembly. To acquire assets in excess of certain amounts, government departments must seek prior approval, and the acquisitions are made through a central

purchasing agency. That same ruling does not affect the Assembly.

MR. KOWALSKI: I think we've responded to the question, though, Mr. Stefaniuk. If you look at the form called Authorization by Member of the Legislative Assembly for Agent to Sign:

This authorization is given by the Member and accepted by the Agent subject to the following conditions.

Number 2 is:

Before any order is signed or given, the uncommitted balance of the member's combined constituency allowances will be checked to ensure positively that the balance is adequate.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, these forms that deal with an agent are eliminated by a decision already taken. Members have just said that they want no agents acting on their behalf.

MR. KOWALSKI: I was interpreting that the MLA would in essence be the agent for himself or herself.

MR. HYLAND: What would be wrong with this form if that one line were changed: authorization given by the Clerk, or whoever, and accepted by the member subject to the following conditions? Then he signs. You take one side of it out and just have the other side of signatures. Nobody can come back at us and say they weren't aware of what was involved when they went to a purchase order.

MR. STEFANIUK: Are you suggesting that the conditions which were proposed for application to an agent should apply to the member?

MR. ELIUK: The original intention of this form was merely to allow the member to appoint an agent. It was not intended for the member himself to have to sign as authority to be able to sign. The fact that you accept the purchase order and the whole scheme is authorization that you would be the one signing for it.

MR. STEFANIUK: But what it says here is that the member would have to live with these conditions, so that (1) to (3), if the committee so wishes, could be made to apply to the member and would be printed elsewhere.

MR. HYLAND: When we're changing to a new system, I'm wondering if it would be beneficial so that everybody is absolutely clear that they're making the decision, that they have to sign the document.

MR. KOWALSKI: Perhaps the solution to that is that on the first page, "Legislative Assembly Office, Orders for Goods or Services," where it says at the bottom:

WARNING These purchase orders are to be signed only by Members . . .  
Period. Cross out the rest and add the text you have under item 2. Under the warning thing, it will basically say, "When any order is signed or given" it should be checked. It's there very clearly under a warning signal.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: That's agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Chuck, is there anything else on that item?

MR. ELIUK: No. That's going to change a bit of the procedure in the wording in the rest of it, though, by the agent not being authorized to sign for purchase orders.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Did the committee want the revised form to come back before you approve it?

MR. HYLAND: No. Otherwise we're never going to get it out.

MR. STEFANIUK: Is it also a decision of the committee, Mr. Chairman, that there be no dollar limit stipulated, as was proposed?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. KOWALSKI: Just one question for clarification. I don't often use this sort of scenario, but this is the way I basically pay my bills for such things as newspaper advertisements announcing that the MLA will be at a certain spot. Because of the time frame and their sending me their statement, which is usually at the end of the month, when I get it I issue them a cheque and fill in the form and

send it back to your office, Chuck, for you to pay me back. I want to be really sure that that system will continue under this provision. I'd hate to think that when I get my bill for a newspaper or something, maybe three weeks after the thing is on, I have to do one of these things and they're not going to get paid for a month thereafter.

MR. ELIUK: I think the original intention, Ken, was to have a purchase order precede any kind of purchase, be it advertising or anything else. So in your case, that would make a difference.

MR. KOWALSKI: That certainly isn't my intent.

MR. STEFANIUK: Why wouldn't you issue one of these purchase orders to the publisher of the newspaper, or whoever, at the time you're placing the ad and have them bill us directly rather than reimburse you?

MR. KOWALSKI: Two basic reasons, Bo. One is that I accept the responsibility that comes to me for making decisions. In that case, I'm never sure when they will send it out or when it will be paid. From time to time, they may make an error in their office and it may be two months before the bill is sent, or the thing may be lost in the mail or what have you. Then all of a sudden I get a nasty call from them where I'm living in my area, saying, "How come you don't pay your bills?" This way, it's clean. I get the bill, I issue them a cheque within a day or two, and they get paid. Nobody can come back to me and say: "Hey, this government is really slow in paying its accounts" or "The MLA can't do it." I've seen that happen to Members of the Legislative Assembly in the past. For me it's a clean, clean process. I can accept the purchase order provision and everything else. I think it eliminates the paperwork, it reduces the whole flow, and I personally know that it's taken care of because the responsibility is going to fall on me.

MR. STEFANIUK: I hear what you're saying, and yet this was devised with the concurrence of this committee so that a member would be enabled to track expenditures against various allowances when they are incurred and avoid that problem with which we were confronted last year; i.e., overspending allowances and then

facing the consequence of having to make up the difference from personal funds or, as we had to resort to this year, having the overexpenditure charged against the next year's funding.

MR. ELIUK: I'd like to speak to something else. There are two additional controls for the purchase order. One would be to ensure against what you were talking about, Ken: an invoice being lost or the neglect of one party to pay it. With the issuing of a purchase order, we in our office, as well as you and perhaps even your constituency staff, could make periodic follow-ups to any outstanding purchase order for which we have not received an invoice and either phone the vendor for an invoice or follow it up on an ongoing basis. That's one of the systems we hope to implement internally in the administrative office, to ensure that if invoices, one, may not have been sent or, two, were lost, we could follow this up.

The other control feature is that we would ensure against the possibility of a duplicate payment, and we ran into that situation. What the purchase order would do is that every invoice would need a purchase order number, and we have a control mechanism within our accounting system to check all purchase orders. If another purchase order comes up, it will reject the transaction and we will have to investigate to see if we have paid a particular invoice twice or what the problem is. We want to eliminate that possibility. Whenever a member doesn't issue a purchase order or makes a commitment without it, we receive an invoice and have paid it, and three weeks later we get another invoice. It could be an entirely different invoice number, and we can pay it again and never be sure. It happened to a couple of the members. It wasn't the fact that we had overlooked the situation; we just didn't have the mechanism: a purchase order. We need a purchase order number that our system could check against to ensure against duplicate payments.

MR. KOWALSKI: Can I say one other thing? All of this discussion and debate we've had with respect to this particular form has become about as a result of a small number of people who have apparently had some problems at the end of March 31, 1985. Never in my thoughts were we going to eliminate the scenario that

I've outlined. If we're going to fix something that ain't really broke, that's going to cause some other problems, I have a real concern about it. I really believe that what I'm saying is much more efficient, and that provision should still be retained in here. You're still going to have the so-called Order for Goods and Services. I'm going to be filling it out and sending it to you with the receipt or a copy of the cheque, and you're going to be sending it back to me. But I will know that these other people have already been taken care of, and it will negate one additional piece of paper that you're going to have to send out to them.

MR. STEFANIUK: What you're saying, Ken, is that you will complete a purchase order form and send it to us with proof of your payment to the supplier, and you will want to be reimbursed.

MR. KOWALSKI: That's right.

MR. STEFANIUK: We will still have a record of it. I don't think we have a problem on that basis.

MR. KOWALSKI: That's the clarification I want. When I get the bill from them, I'm going to pay it but I'll send it back to you, and you'll have it anyway.

MR. ELIUK: That's fine.

MR. KOWALSKI: You will be totally unaware of the transaction out there.

MR. STEFANIUK: What we have provided for here, that we had hoped would happen, is that a copy of this form be sent to us immediately, at the time the commitment is made. In that fashion, we would be enabled to flag a member's account to show that a commitment had been made and, if you like, hold those funds in escrow until such time as the invoice arrives and payment is due. We will simply not know that you have made the commitment if you don't send us a copy, and we will reimburse you on receipt of the order form with the attached documentation to cover the expenditure.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: I think we have it clarified. Ian, did you have a . . . ?

DR. REID: I was going to make exactly that suggestion. The individual member, if they pay an account directly, to aid the payment or to keep themselves happy, can issue the purchase order and attach to it some evidence of payment and have the payment made to themselves. I don't think it would cause any trouble to Chuck's system.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: You know, you go down and buy a couple of [inaudible] and some sympathy cards, you let them accumulate until it's worth while, and then you send them in.

MR. HYLAND: You don't want a cheque going out for \$2.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: No. Is that clear? That system is agreed, then?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MRS. CRIPPS: Did we agree to the deletion of the "or authorized agent"?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Yes, that's agreed to.

Travel Allowance from the Constituency to Edmonton, (e).

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Chairman, this has been raised as a very real issue for some people who, rather than driving to Edmonton the 52 times a year like some members — say, Ken or me, who can't fly to Edmonton — have to drive a considerable distance to get to the airport.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Outside the constituency?

MRS. CRIPPS: Or inside. In looking at that, I think we should remove the "outside of his constituency". So my motion would read that payment under the 52 trips to Edmonton allowance, over and above the 15,000 kilometres established for within the constituency travel, could be made to a member on the basis of trips to the airport.

DR. REID: So that would cover you to Peace River or Grande Prairie, as an example.

MR. GURNETT: Oh, I see.

MRS. CRIPPS: An example would be Mr. Gurnett having to drive to the airport, which should not be considered part of the 15,000 kilometre travelling allowance within his constituency. I presume he would not drive to Edmonton 52 times a year. He may drive 25, but the other 25 times he might drive to the airport and fly. So that distance travelled to the airport and back should be included in the 52 trips, if that's in the best interests of facilitating that service for the members.

MR. STEFANIUK: I think what Mrs. Cripps is basically saying, if I hear her correctly, is that the trips to Edmonton could be by a combined mode of travel and still be regarded as a single trip. Mr. Chairman, I think what that would require is a simple amendment or change in the order which provides for these trips. If the committee so wishes, we will do the appropriate drafting and submit it to the committee for consideration at the next meeting.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Item 5(f), Catalogues — items listed to be supplied.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, a very straightforward problem, I think. As a matter of practice, members have been supplied with stationery and office supplies out of regular stocks, which are maintained here in Edmonton, to both their Edmonton and constituency offices. In the event they have requested items which do not constitute regular stock, those items have been charged against the appropriate allowance of the given member. It presents a situation where members are perhaps unhappy with that practice or with the explanation which has been provided as to past practice in that regard. What needs to be considered by the committee, we respectfully suggest, is whether or not an amount should be budgeted which would indeed provide all items of stationery and supplies to members out of the general administration budget.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Including not normally stocked items.

MR. STEFANIUK: Right, those we have to

order. Members have hybrid computers in their constituencies, for example, which require special paper stocks or continuous forms or whatever, which we do not normally stock. Under the present practice we would charge the cost of those back to the member, and a decision should be taken as to whether that practice should continue or whether we should now provide all of those things. We are suggesting that recent experience would require an additional expenditure out of general administration of approximately \$35,000.

The concern that has been raised to me in connection with this proposal is whether or not there will be a tendency for members then to order many more things than they are now ordering if their allowances are not tapped for those items, and will future experience indeed show that the expenditure is much greater than it is at present and that the \$35,000 we are estimating at the moment will not suffice? The decision, obviously, is in the hands of the committee.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a motion in this regard. Before I make the motion, a question for clarification. We have an [inaudible] scenario here when you look at the page called Items Charged to Constituency Office Accounts. The motion I basically want to make is that, in essence, these items be paid for under the Legislative Assembly. But the question I have is: do we want to go through a listing of what we're going to be accepting or not accepting, because there are a couple of items here that I would like to have crossed off, but there are also a couple of other items I would like to have added.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that including the coffee?

MR. KOWALSKI: Including the coffee and related supplies. If I word a motion that causes me to then have to go through and list all of these things in here, I daresay that before the morning is out, there will be 17 amendments to that motion.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, the list is not appended to this memo to suggest that these are the items which can be charged, but merely to give the committee examples of the types of items which have been charged back. It is not

suggested that this constitute a list of eligible items for charging.

MR. KOWALSKI: We're still going to have the dilemma, Bo. We're going to have to come back and identify what would be acceptable or not acceptable.

MR. STEFANIUK: Well, yes. If you ordered three pairs of high-heeled size seven and a half shoes, I'd have a problem.

MR. KOWALSKI: That would not be acceptable.

DR. REID: I don't think he can wear size 7.

MR. KOWALSKI: No, but my secretary wears 9 triple-E.

I would like to move that stationery and office supplies currently charged to members' allowances be henceforth covered by the administration of the Legislative Assembly and that an amount of \$35,000 be provided to the general administration estimates for 1986-87 to cover this item.

MRS. EMBURY: A question. I have no trouble with supporting that basic motion, except for some of the items that are listed on this page. I would like to ask if the member who made the motion would consider deleting such things as a brochure rack, a dry imager, locks and keys . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: I can understand a brochure rack. I don't know what a dry imager is.

MR. STEFANIUK: That's powder for a photocopier. It's a special developer one member must have.

MR. PURDY: That's a xerox.

MR. ELIUK: That's toner.

MR. KOWALSKI: I would have to say no to that one.

MRS. EMBURY: I'm sorry. Somebody told me that was a xerox machine.

MR. PURDY: I said that, but I was mistaken. It is a toner.

MR. STEFANIUK: It's an office supply.

MRS. EMBURY: Okay. Brochure rack, locks and keys, construction partition wall, area rug, and fire extinguisher: to me, those items appear to be things that would go within your rental contract on an office.

MR. STEFANIUK: In other words, those are furnishings. Is that what you're saying? And that furnishings should not constitute stationery and office supplies? Is that the distinction that should be made?

DR. REID: Furnishings are leasehold improvements. Surely constructing a partition wall is a leasehold improvement.

MR. PURDY: Ken's motion before the committee right now is very specific. It says "stationery and office supplies." But you cannot categorize fire extinguishers as office supplies. That's part of your lease-back arrangement, the same as a partition.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the suggestion I'd like to make is that we deal with the motion and then this committee go through a list of acceptable or nonacceptable — this list will change every time we have another meeting, because somebody will come up with another one.

DR. REID: I think that's a good idea; in other words, address the motion. It's pretty broad.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any other questions or comments?

MRS. EMBURY: Well, it does present a problem. How can we approve something when we have a list here of examples? All I'm saying is, can we not . . . To me, a brochure rack would be a furnishing that would come from Public Works. But surely a lock and key — Alan raised the question, is it on the filing cabinet? I assumed that was the door to the office. And the wall — wouldn't those things be part of your contract?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: And the rug.

MRS. EMBURY: Can't you categorize those differently?

MR. STEFANIUK: If the motion passes as stationery and office supplies, then certainly, knowing the intent of the committee, we would not authorize for expenditure out of general administration funding items which fall into the category of furnishings or equipment or structural changes. That would have to be negotiated elsewhere. We could get into gray areas. The lock and keys — if they were for a filing cabinet or if they were for the security of the office, are they supplies?

MR. HYLAND: That's what I was going to say. The stuff that's furniture would come out of your allotment if it's furniture that's not normally supplied by the Legislative Assembly.

MR. STEFANIUK: Relative to partitions, some members decide that it is to their advantage to lease space which is hollow and cover the cost of partitioning themselves, or the agreement they reach with the landlord is such that they rent a square footage but must partition from other areas that the landlord proposes to lease to someone else.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Ken's motion is to provide \$35,000 for stationery and office supplies. Any more comment on that? Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, if we want to give guidance with respect to this, we might want to take a look at the list. But holy mackerel, we could have a great deal of time.

DR. REID: Perhaps we should address it in general terms. Anything that could be regarded as a leasehold improvement for sure has to come out of the constituency office allowance. If somebody gets a lower rent by leasing triple-net space, bare walls, that's a lower rent for a period of perhaps four years. But surely the improvements to that leasehold space should come out of the constituency office allowance, as part of that space, rather than the person who decides to lease completed space and pays a higher square-footage rent. So I think leasehold improvements should not be included.

Then you have what could be called equipment, whether it's a coffeepot, the wall clock, the rug on the floor, or whatever. Again,

that should not be regarded as stationery. If we look at it from categories like that, then that would be a guideline to the administration as to when they could say: "Whoa, the Members' Services Committee doesn't regard that as being office supplies or stationery."

MR. STEFANIUK: Let me ask a specific question at this juncture, Mr. Chairman. Are coffee supplies an office supply? It's a question you raised earlier.

MRS. CRIPPS: I want to speak against that.

ACTING CHAIRMAN: Against what?

MRS. CRIPPS: Against coffee in the office being office supplies. I don't believe we're being consistent. If the member has an office — I'll use my constituency as an example. I have a constituency office in Drayton Valley. If those people come into my office, I can serve them coffee if that is passed, and that's a legitimate expense. But if the constituency office is a service to the constituents and it happens to be 80 miles away from one of the towns in the constituency, those members can drive to the constituency office and have coffee served, and it's no expense to me. But if I choose to have a meeting in, say, Devon for their convenience, so they don't have to drive the 80 miles, then the coffee and doughnuts that we talked about in item (c) or (d) are not part of the constituency office supplies. I really think we're splitting hairs. Either we do it one way or the other.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: The reason I raised that again today is that I look on the constituency office as an extension to what we have here. Here, there's no doubt about it. If somebody comes in, you can serve them coffee. Why shouldn't you be able to do it in your office in the constituency?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I agree with you. Perhaps what we could really accomplish this morning is just have a general discussion and ask the Clerk to come back with a fuller listing in this regard at a future meeting. I honestly believe that coffee and related supplies are an example that would fall under stationery and office supplies. I'd hate to think we'd have to come back and have a discussion

and have somebody say, "Well, is tea included under coffee and related supplies?" I think there's an inherent identification of what it really means.

I have an additional one that I think is part of the definition. We have certain things associated with xerox — xerox labels and what have you. It's my understanding that for the xerox machine that currently exists in the constituency office I have, provided for under the Legislative Assembly, there is a charge accrued to me under one of my allowances if more than 500 pages per month, I think . . .

MR. ELIUK: In excess of 500 photocopies per month.

MR. KOWALSKI: Then I'm charged for it. Yet I can take that same piece of paper, waste a day of my time bringing it to Edmonton, have it xeroxed here in Edmonton, and there's no charge against me. For the sake of efficiency and effectiveness, there somehow is a theory that if Mr. Gurnett has his machine and there's no limit on it, he's going to be xeroxing 84,000 pieces of paper in wherever the heck his office is. Yet he could do it here. I think that charge has to be accepted under this same definition as office supplies.

MR. ELIUK: Probably the reason that came about was the fact that something like that could be very directly related to communication. Depending upon an individual member, his activity in the community and so forth, he could use 10 times what some other member could use, and we therefore couldn't anticipate how much money we'd need in our budget.

MR. KOWALSKI: I appreciate that, and if members of the committee believe that we need to have a ceiling on this, maybe we're going to have to get down to identifying whether you're only allowed to have 56 xerox labels per month, so many refills per month, and so many typewriter elements per month. I accept the point you're making, that on the one hand you can always have the choice.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Ken, you've made a suggestion that the committee members might like to review this sort of thing, give it some consideration, and bring it back.

MR. STEFANIUK: Is it being suggested, Mr. Chairman, or are we being directed to bring back a list of items?

MR. KOWALSKI: That was my thought. Then we would have another discussion on it.

MR. STEFANIUK: That's going to alter from meeting to meeting, Ken, because those new items will be coming up.

MRS. EMBURY: I find it interesting. I was taken to task a little while ago for creating more work for the staff. Can we not actually say now that the shoe is on the other foot? I'm quite prepared to make a motion that the costs of excess xeroxing be included as an office supply. I'll make that motion right now.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any discussion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

MR. KOWALSKI: Do we need a motion for coffee supplies too, Mr. Chairman?

MR. HYLAND: That's what I was going to ask, but the motion is already done.

MRS. EMBURY: The reason we might deal with that item is because it has been brought to us before and voted on. If we want to change . . . I think there will always be these items. I thought Dr. Reid was trying to get at general criteria, which Bohdan stated, and I thought it was acceptable that they will make the decisions. If there's a question, it comes to the committee. Is that difficult?

DR. REID: That's exactly what I was suggesting, to give the administration the discretion to make the decision. If they themselves are doubtful within those parameters we've given them, they can bring it back here on an ad hoc basis, meeting by meeting. That's satisfactory to me. I don't know about the rest of the committee.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

DR. REID: Within those parameters I have no problem with coffee, tea, or hot chocolate. I do have difficulty with the vodka martini.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: 5(g), Stockpiling of Office Equipment.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, it's a problem in that some members who acquired computers, particularly, out of various allowances which have been available to them have indicated to us that they now want to dispose of those computers. We could accept those computers from the members' constituency offices, where most of them are located. We could turn them over to the government's disposal facility, and any income that's realized from such disposal will go into the government's General Revenue Fund. That is one alternative.

The other is for the Legislative Assembly, which is not bound by the government's disposal policy, to get into the disposal business on its own. If that alternative is selected, then the question arises as to who might benefit from those funds during that particular fiscal year, or should those funds be turned over to the General Revenue Fund? In any event, any funds which remain within the Legislative Assembly at the end of a fiscal year revert to the General Revenue Fund. So if they were not used, they would revert in any event.

The other concern which has arisen comes from the auditors, and that is for the eligibility of transfer of equipment. We had a situation in this past year where one member decided he wanted to get rid of his existing equipment. He agreed with another member to transfer that equipment to him for a price. So the first member then had the benefit of the allowance from his current year and the income from the disposal by virtue of transfer and, in fact, then enjoyed a larger allowance than all other members for that particular year. The auditors said, "You have no right to do that." We thought it was logical.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I read this one with some interest and discomfort. First of all, these pieces of equipment are originally bought out of a specific allowance to a given

constituency, but they are specifically the property of the Legislative Assembly as such. They are not the property of that individual constituency once they have been purchased. When we have items coming up like sometime in the next — well, by November 2, 1987, there will be an election held on new constituency boundaries. In some cases constituencies have been split. To which of the constituencies do the funds revert? — that type of item. We're going to get into such a mess if we try to allocate the receipts from potential sales this way.

My feeling is that in the event that any equipment purchased with constituency allowances becomes surplus or outdated, it reverts to the general account of the Legislative Assembly. Then the Legislative Assembly should dispose of it in whatever way they feel is suitable. It may be used as trade-in for additional equipment. That additional equipment would be charged to a constituency office, but the benefit would revert to the Legislative Assembly, not that office. If it wasn't required on a trade-in basis, if it was sold, then those funds would remain in the account of the Legislative Assembly as an entity. If they weren't used by the end of the year, I think they automatically go to the GRF.

MR. STEFANIUK: Yes, that's right.

DR. REID: To do it that way I think is a fairly simple way of handling the matter. But to get into the business of who gets the benefit from the potential disposal — it may well be that the Legislative Assembly might trade in the machine that comes from constituency X to purchase equipment for constituency F. That's an internal matter of the Legislative Assembly's bookkeeping. You can't be transferring back and forth from one constituency to the other.

MR. PURDY: I've got to agree with Dr. Reid. I think the consensus around this table right now is — and I'm in the same position right now, because I had a computer in my office until the new equipment came in, and it's sitting here in storage until such time as the Legislative Assembly and government supply decides what to do with it. As far as I'm concerned, I was always of the opinion that that money would revert to the general revenues of the province. It's the same as my not having a constituency

allowance. Last year something in the neighbourhood of \$16,500 or \$17,000 out of my allowance that was available to me reverted to the general revenues of the province on April 1, 1985, because I hadn't expended it in '84-85.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Any other comments?

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, if the proposal outlined by Dr. Reid is acceptable to the committee, we would propose to draw up an order on that basis for the committee's consideration, so we may be enabled to follow that practice notwithstanding any provisions which may exist in the current legislation or regulations.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is Dr. Reid's proposal agreed to, then?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Budget Estimates.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, we have for presentation to members of the committee this morning the administration's draft of the estimates of expenditure for the Legislative Assembly for 1986-87. There is a single question for consideration by the committee in connection with those estimates, that being when the committee wishes to meet to consider those estimates and the form of meeting the committee prefers. In the past the estimates have required more than a single sitting's consideration. Would the committee wish to appoint today, on the one hand, a single date on which to begin consideration of the estimates, would it wish to appoint several dates at varying times for consideration of the estimates, or would it prefer to appoint a series of consecutive dates for the consideration of the estimates?

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Perhaps a meeting for preliminary consideration would be the first thing. When the chairman is back, you could then take it from there.

MRS. EMBURY: I'd like to propose that the first meeting for the estimates be October 2 at 1:30 p.m.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, to Mrs. Embury. Is that a suggestion for a meeting? Having gone through this several times now in this committee, perhaps what we need is a meeting to have a preliminary review of the estimates and see if we need subsequent meetings. It may be that we can deal with it in one meeting. Perhaps the suggestion for October 2 is a reasonable one as a preliminary meeting. But if we find it goes well, we can continue on.

MRS. EMBURY: I just suggested the first meeting, so I'm willing to accept what Dr. Reid said too.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: That would be a preliminary discussion, but you might conclude the business at the same time.

DR. REID: That's the point I was making. It might be the first and only or it might be first of several.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. KOWALSKI: That was at what time?

MRS. EMBURY: At 1:30 p.m., Wednesday afternoon.

MR. PURDY: Can we make a suggestion that we book this room again? I'm a lot more comfortable here than in that little, dingy thing the Speaker has.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is that agreed too?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: 5(i), Management Review.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, may we go off the record for this item, with the committee's concurrence?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---

MR. ACTING CHAIRMAN: So the date of the next meeting has been set for October 2 at 1:30

p.m.

We have a motion for adjournment, which was agreed to already. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 11:31 a.m.]

