

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

[5:47 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time for beginning has passed, so we'll start. Hon. Minister of the Environment, perhaps you might help us by shutting the door. Members, please feel free to move back and forth and get extra food or whatnot while we're going along the way. All hon. members will refrain from smoking until everyone is finished eating, won't they? Thank you very much for the consent of the House.

Call to order, approval of minutes of meeting of July 15. Moved by the Member for Cypress-Redcliff. Any other discussion with regard to the minutes as circulated? Is there a call for the question with regard to the minutes?

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the minutes as circulated, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously.

Item 3(a). If you work through your book under section (a), there are comments from the Clerk with respect to the ranking of legislative budgets.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, we were requested to simply update the budgets. We did so in a telephone survey, and the information appears on the chart that is contained in each committee member's book.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any additional comments with respect to that new documentation, members? We might then go to item 3(b).

MR. STEVENS: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. I just want to ask if there is any knowledge as to the rapid change in Ontario. Has there been a change, or is it just simply a reflection of an election? Do we have any idea? I just wonder if there is a change in their organization that we could know about. Are they doing things in a different way in Ontario in the last two years which has led to the nearly doubling of the budget?

MR. TAYLOR: They are the same changes as are happening here with an increase in the opposition -- such an increase the old government won.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, the question was directed to the Clerk. If you'd like to raise an issue after that, the Chair will certainly recognize you.

MR. STEFANIUK: Mr. Chairman, we don't have detailed breakdowns of the budgets in these other provinces, but my impression of the Ontario Legislature is that there has been a reorganization on an ongoing basis in Ontario in acceptance of greater responsibility by the Legislative Assembly office in Ontario virtually as each year progresses. That may to some extent account for the significant increases which appear over a three-year period.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. WRIGHT: I'm just trying to find page 54 that this is an updating of. Is it 54 in this thing?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's with respect to your minutes that occur under item 2.

MR. STEFANIUK: We have copied onto this single sheet, Mr. Chairman, the information that was contained for a two-year period in the publication Comparative Study and added thereto the third column, which reflects the current year's budget.

MR. WRIGHT: I'm sorry; I just can't . . .

MR. HYLAND: It's on page 54.

MS BARRETT: I think that what Gordon is looking for is no longer in our book. I believe that section was removed. You have a photocopy of some other photocopies, quite frankly.

MR. WRIGHT: Okay. I'll find it, I'm sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: May we proceed to item 3(b)? It was with respect to whether or not six transferrable trips from 52 could be moved.

MR. STEFANIUK: The response to that question, Mr. Chairman, is no. There was confusion with the policy of the House of Commons. In Alberta there are four trips for spouses, which are specified.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry about that, gang.

Item 3(c). We should probably get through this in about 20 seconds.

MS BARRETT: The motion we dealt with last Tuesday asked us to put in writing what we were in the process of providing verbally to this meeting. It was never our intention to try to go for the kind of categories that are indicated in formulas A and B, according to whether support within the Legislative Assembly would be \$30,000 or \$40,000 per member. While we still preferred our original submissions — and I speak on behalf of all three opposition parties — because we ourselves understood for what purposes the required funding would be used, we have provided an alternate scheme which would satisfy the intention of the motion, which was to look at a basis for funding all members of the Legislative Assembly who are not members of Executive Council and then provide for caucus allowances on top of that.

I can read into the record that if formula B were approved, that would allow for \$30,000 for each nonexecutive Member of the Legislative Assembly. The budgets would thereby come to \$1,050,000 for the government members, \$930,000 for the Official Opposition, \$420,000 for the Liberal opposition, and \$260,000 for the Representative opposition. The same figures would apply for the A formula, except that one would have to add \$10,000 per Member of the Legislative Assembly. I won't bother reading those figures into the record.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For purposes of the motion that was moved at the last meeting, this then satisfies the requests of the motion, (a) and (b), as to the fact that information would be brought forward. Agreed? Now we'll go on to dealing with it. Is there a motion that is to be presented for the meeting's consideration and discussion?

MS BARRETT: I'll move adoption of formula B, as proposed by the three opposition parties, which is located under section 3(c) of our books today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's formula B, page 2. Is that correct? That includes caucus allowances.

MS BARRETT: Shall I read into the record the caucus allowance stipulations then? Does that

make sense? It does to me too. What we were proposing for the caucus allowances, which was independent of an assessment of the needs of each Member of the Legislative Assembly, would be a figure of \$200,000 for a base caucus figure for the Representative opposition, \$300,000 for the Liberal opposition, and \$450,000 for the Official Opposition, each of the increments representing a 50 percent increase over the previous figure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there discussion with respect to the motion?

MR. WRIGHT: What makes sense to us is the idea that you can look at an individual figure per MLA and have that for all parties if you wish. But it should be recognized that in respect of the amount that is necessary for each caucus, it's quite a different figure than the average figure, let us say, for the just the ministers' offices.

If you want to compare the Leader of the Opposition to a minister in point of allowances, the bulk of the expenditure the Official Opposition must make, and to a lesser extent each other opposition party, consists of research. This is a very essential feature to the effective functioning of parliamentary democracy, because the safeguards are in the opposition. That function is not exercised in the minister's office; it's exercised throughout each department. So it's quite misleading to look at the minister's office support by itself. That certainly provides a basis, but there must be a considerable figure on top of that. Bearing that in mind, it's my respectful submission, Mr. Chairman, that our submissions are very reasonable.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, the committee representing the three opposition caucuses was kind enough to forward to government members last week a copy of the proposal which we are now debating. That gave various members an opportunity to examine the proposal. I then communicated back to the leaders of the three caucuses with some comments on behalf of government members.

While the figures contained under formulas A and B at \$40,000 per member and \$30,000 per member are certainly figures that fall well under those contained in some Legislatures in the country and are above the amounts

allocated for members in other jurisdictions, they would not in any way be a trendsetter. I did express concern with the amounts being proposed for the various caucus allocations. In going back to the motion as adopted by the committee, we were not looking at allocations for caucuses, but rather the amount of dollars that should be allocated to the office of the Leader of the Official Opposition, the office of the leader of the Liberal Party, and the office of the Leader of the Representative Party of Alberta.

One of our members did some calculations on the average costs of operating a minister's office. I believe the earlier comments made by the Member for Edmonton Strathcona may be attributed to the remarks I made last week in response to the suggestion. We found quite a range in the support contained in the estimates of the various ministerial offices but an average cost of about \$250,000 per office. Therefore, if we were using that as a benchmark for the Leader of the Official Opposition, and recognizing the roles of the other two opposition parties, we were looking at somewhat less than that for the Liberal Party. The thought was \$125,000, or half the amount allocated to the NDP, and a figure a quarter of the NDP's total, or \$62,500, for the leader of the Representative Party.

I make those comments as part of a contribution to the debate on the motion that's currently before the committee. As the motion has been put forward not in parts but as a total motion, I must vote against the total motion due to the second part in particular.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I too had some reservations. I made some notes. I appreciate hearing my colleague's excellent summary.

I thought that our motion said very clearly that there would be a leader presentation for the three parties of the opposition and then there would be an additional allocation. I guess my question, in addition to comments that have been made by my colleague — in the presentation that we have before us, formula B, page 1, has government members, 35 MLAs, and Official Opposition, 16 MLAs. I would have thought there would have been 15 MLAs in the NDP Official Opposition and one leader. Similarly, for the Liberal opposition there would be three MLAs and one leader, and for the Representative opposition, one MLA and one

leader. I want to raise that. I don't understand the presentation.

MR. TAYLOR: Speaking for the motion, first of all, I think all opposition parties have a duty to police and watch all ministerial departments and budgets. I'll be the very first to admit that if you have only one MLA, it's impossible to cover all departments. Nonetheless, it shouldn't be a question of being one MLA; it should be a question of having the research information behind him. I think you can argue in theory that every opposition party should have the same research and support service. However, reason would tell you that the number of MLAs out there on the firing line will make a difference in how well that research is utilized.

Nevertheless, I think the basic argument of Athenian democracy, where the government proposes, the opposition opposes, and the House disposes, calls for a very intrinsic part of government being the opposition. The opposition has to analyze and go through everything. I agree that if you have a huge research department, much more than you have MLAs to use it, that could be a limiting factor, but that should be the limiting factor rather than whether or not you need research. Consequently, the comparison that Mr. Bogle uses with a minister's office is completely out, in my opinion, because no minister that I know of has his research staff in his estimates. The research staff is in the department itself. In other words, the whole civil service in that department ranks as his backup. That hundred thousand or so that he talks about that the minister is spending is strictly salaries and EAs; it might even be car allowance, if you'll pardon the expression, but it's certainly not research. Research is done way back in the department, and it's not there.

If I may close with anything else, let's take Ontario, which everybody likes to close. The funding in the '86-87 estimates: the PCs, which would be the number two party there, got \$3.2 million versus \$2.4 million the year before; the NDP, the third party, comparable to the Liberals here, gets \$2.1 million versus \$2.4 million. So the NDP caucus, the third party caucus, ranks at a little over \$2 million. All the Liberals are asking for here, which fits into the same range, is around \$400,000, which comes in at roughly one-quarter of Ontario's. I would think that Alberta, the third largest province in

the country, surely doesn't have to fund its opposition at one-fourth or one-fifth the measure Ontario is using.

Finally, Mr. Stevens' rather peculiar thought. I appreciate the royal prerogative that he has given the leaders of the opposition parties, that we are not to be counted with the rest of the rabble in our caucuses. Nevertheless, I think there are four Liberal MLAs, not three, and I think there are 16 NDP MLAs. There is a leader amongst the group, but to try to fund him differently makes no sense at all to me. I think you fund a whole caucus for research. The leader is someone selected by the party and the caucus, not by the Legislature. You shouldn't in any way, shape, or form be interfering with who is the leader of an opposition or party group. That's done strictly by the party itself or by the caucus.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's no hint of any interference going on here, hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: When you start putting the budget together on the fact that there is a budget for the MLAs and a budget for the leader, I think you're in effect tampering with the inner workings of the party.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry; as chairman I can't agree with that, but the rest of the comments are quite germane.

MR. TAYLOR: I beg to differ with you. That was my last argument anyway.

MS BARRETT: I'd like to carry on with what Mr. Taylor has been saying. With respect to Mr. Stevens' observing about the inclusion or exclusion of a leader from the per capita formulation with respect to all non-Executive Council members, on page 81 of the transcript of the last meeting, this subject came up twice. In the column on the left it was Mr. Bogle saying:

So we are not speaking of members of Executive Council; we are speaking of all private members: non-Executive Council. That observation apparently went unchallenged. I happen to recall that everybody said, "Yes, yes." Then a few minutes later Mr. Hyland specifically asked this question:

When we talk private members, we exclude Executive Council, but we include

the Leader of the Official Opposition?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

Then Mr. Hyland goes on to explain why he wanted that clarification. Again that item went unchallenged, and we have since that point operated on that assumption. In terms of a reasoned argument to support that, I think it would be very difficult to come up with a reason to exclude several government MLAs who are not members of Executive Council, even though one might be the chairperson of the Edmonton caucus and one might be something else and so on, on that basis.

The other thing Mr. Taylor was just talking about was with respect to the Ontario budget. I took a minute today to type out what we had formulated with respect to the Ontario budget, and I will pass it around for the members at the table. I think I have enough copies to go around. They are dealing with an overall government budget of \$31 billion, and their opposition budget comes to \$5.3 million. Unless I'm really mistaken — I've done just a basic calculation on the basis that we have an overall government budget of about \$10 billion, which is about one-third of the Ontario budget. If I divide the opposition budget of Ontario by three, roughly the same formula, I end up with a combined opposition budget of about \$1.76 million, which would in fact constitute more than we requested in our initial presentation, which was in your books last week. That presentation was asking for \$937,000 for the Official Opposition, \$414,000 for the Liberal opposition, and \$214,000 for the Representative opposition, the total of which came to \$1.565 million, so it would still leave us at relatively less.

It occurs to me that another item for thought prior to coming to a vote on this would be consideration of the Ombudsman's office, which has the responsibility, as we all know, of being an advocate and watchdog for people with respect to all government departments where they have the legislative and regulatory authority. The budget they deal with is a little over \$800,000, I believe. It seems to us that as MLAs conducting ourselves in a similar fashion, it's very reasonable to ask for funding that represents not quite twice that amount, given the wide knowledge of the public with respect to a substantial opposition after May 8. There are 22 opposition MLAs who are also present in

their constituencies. No matter how effective an Ombudsman is, he or she is at no time going to be constantly in or out of 22 constituencies generating interest and that sort of thing. So I make the reasoned bid that relative to overall government budget estimates, relative to other proposals, and relative to our role as elected Ombudsmen, our proposal is quite reasonable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair recognizes, because I've invited him to be present, the leader of the Representative Party to make a few comments. Then it goes on to Milk River and Banff-Cochrane.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Thank you very much for this opportunity, Mr. Chairman and committee members. It would be nice to be a full-time member of the committee and have voting privilege as well, but that's another issue.

We have put our support behind the basic formula or presentation that has been made by the hon. House leader of the NDP. Dr. Buck and I, first of all -- and this position was made known to you at the last meeting -- have said that our current budget and facilities are satisfactory. That's satisfactory to us, and we're willing to accept that. Certainly the adjustment that has occurred in the formula is something that can be discussed. I think the principles behind the presentation that was made are sound. There certainly should be a differentiation between the three parties in the opposition.

In order to meet the public demand along with their constituency demands, the opposition members in the House need adequate funds; there's no question about it. As a leader of the party since the election -- we had 30,000 supporters during the campaign. Many of those people now are making contact with me as their official contact in the Legislature. My workload has increased. I've even found that my own constituency workload has increased because they see me on a more provincial plane rather than just on a local plane. I could give you the details of that, the number of additional cases that I've dealt with since the campaign was over.

The third thing that I think is significant to look at is that there could be just a bit to this formula that's been presented here. There are three components, as I see it, that have to be recognized. The first one is definition and

recognition of opposition parties. I guess I say this partly with the argument in mind of strengthening our position as the Representative Party and also the positions of the other two components of the opposition. We as the Representative Party along with the Liberal Party and the NDP are officially recognized parties for the purposes of that Legislature. We ran in the election as official parties, recognized under the Election Act and the contributions Act. To me that's the best definition that holds. On that basis we have to be recognized accordingly through the budget procedure.

Some of the debate that I hear talks about the Legislative Assembly Act, which defines a recognized opposition party, and there are certain requirements that you're all aware of. But when you read that Act carefully -- I've asked Mr. Clegg to clarify that definition for me, and I'd like to pass it around -- the definition of a recognized opposition party in that Act has one purpose, and that's to give remuneration to a party. Nick's party has four members, and it says that if you have four members and a certain -- I forget what -- percentage of vote, you qualify to get a remuneration of so much as a recognized leader. But in terms of that being the definition for other purposes, being a recognized opposition party, it doesn't apply. It's just for that one purpose, and that's clearly defined here in a memo from Mr. Clegg to myself today. So in the deliberations and gyrations that I assume will yet occur in our discussions here, that should certainly be recognized.

The other comment I made, and I want to comment on it further, is that I see three components in this discussion. It's the recognized political party, which I've indicated. There are four in the Legislature at the present time, defined under the Election Act, the contribution Act, that allowed us to run candidates in the last election. That's the first component. The second component is recognition of individual member responsibility, and we've already talked about that in terms of either a \$30,000 or \$40,000 remuneration. The third component, and a very important one, is the recognition of one of the parties as the Official Opposition. So I would see those three components recognized in a formula for remuneration. The presentation made by Pam

earlier does recognize those three components.

As an aside, one of the things I would recommend to the committee, and I do have some suggestions for it as well, is that a more flexible, long-term formula should be fixed at this time that will apply to this Legislature and future Legislatures. I believe there is a formula that can do that and, as well, remunerate each one of the groups adequately. The presentation by Pam is not out of order in terms of remuneration and responsibilities in the next three and a half or four years.

To me, if there is any argument in debate, maybe that's where the argument is, but we should build into the formula those three components that I talked about a little earlier.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I apologize to the Member for Taber-Warner for giving the wrong name of his constituency. I know he has bought some ground out there.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I wanted make a further comment on a remark made by the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands relative to our last meeting and a reference page 81, but I don't want to detract from the import of the motion that's before us now, and I think it might do that. I'll pass so that we can get on with this motion.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to indicate that Ms Barrett was very selective in commenting on the transcript. I, too, could be selective and indicate that on each of the occasions I spoke, in asking whether or not you were including members of the caucus as well as leader, I was very clear on that. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that led to a very clear and adopted resolution, which was put forward by the Member for Barrhead.

With respect to Mr. Taylor's comments, I appreciate them. It's clear in the transcript that I did not say those things, but in fact suggested that whatever the formula was for any party, the leader, with or without caucus, could determine how those funds were spent.

I appreciated the invitation to the leader of the Representative Party and his comments today, because I, too, have had to ask questions about the Assembly Act and understood that it was intended for recognition of that Act only.

My question, though, was whether this committee might take a different course of

action with respect to the Representative Party. Its historic budget and so on, or its current budget, is a matter that I think we could discuss. I still feel in my own mind that I will vote against the motion. We have asked for an amount for the leader, and that would be related to activities of a leader, however that leader chose to use those funds with his or her caucus. We also suggested an amount per member, and I thought we would have a package with members and not counting the leader. That's all I wanted to say.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, just some comments about the arguments the Member for Edmonton Highlands and the Member for Edmonton Strathcona used supporting their motion. To equate the opposition with the Ombudsman, as if it's the only place to go and complain about how we've been treated by government, i.e., civil servants or whatever — that's just a bunch of baloney. There are 83 MLAs. If anybody's an Ombudsman or 'ombudswoman' or 'ombudspersons' or whatever the right name or term is, we all are.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The term is still "Ombudsman."

MR. HYLAND: Personally, to say that one has a heavier load than the other is just — my telephone hasn't rung any less than it ever has, my correspondence isn't any less than it ever was, and I lost 100 or 200 constituents, whatever it was. So I don't think that argument of the Ombudsman holds water.

We remember Mr. Kowalski quoting last week from the words that your leader made in 1983, that because you have more members, the research doesn't have to be duplicated in numbers. Each member begins to do a certain amount of their own research because of the numbers. I think tagging the argument to the Ombudsman, at least in my mind, and we all have our own opinion, is not the way to support it. I believe in the motion that we made last week, where it's tagged to the leader and an amount to the caucus. As you noted, Pam, last week I asked the question: do we include the leader as part of that allotment or don't we? I must admit that I'm still undecided on that aspect of it.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the motion

we're basically dealing with arises out of the motion that was advanced by myself last week, and in hearing some of the debate and discussion in the last few minutes, I'd like to just make a couple of clarification points with respect to the intent of the motion that the committee accepted.

First of all, there was no intention in my mind whatsoever to clearly divide a leader from the many members of his caucus. Members will recall that I basically said that we need to arrive at decision-making in this committee on the basis of certain principles that could be defensible and could serve us well into the future in terms of arriving at certain decisions. I basically indicated that it would seem to me that each party has a leader. So first of all, a request was made for identification of what the amount would be for the office of the leader. The second question basically was: what would be the per capita allocation that might be provided to members of a particular caucus? There was no intent in my mind whatsoever, whatever decisions we make in here, that there would be anything in the motion that would preclude, as an example, the Leader of the Official Opposition. Whatever figure it is that is provided to the office of the Leader of the Opposition, whatever figure would be provided to the members of that particular caucus, there would be nothing to say that the two had to be kept separate. We've always gone along under the assumption and the agreement that this would be a global figure that would be arrived at.

So if a particular caucus leader determined, in consultation with the other members of his caucus — I don't know how the other three caucuses operate; I'm only a member of one — that they would use the dollars for executive assistants, so be it. If they chose to use the dollars for research facilities, so be it. There's nothing in here that says that it has to be allocated for a particular purpose.

Having said that, I want to go to the next point I'd like to make. That is the question that one hon. member raised on the question of research. If we have agreed that, in essence, we would not be looking internally as to how those dollars are allocated or spent for any particular caucus, then if an hon. member chooses to come to this meeting and basically argue one component of that which might be used within a caucus budget, that's a choice

that I don't think committee members would really want to have debated at the table. I would like to point out that if a particular caucus were to choose, on the basis of these global dollars, to spend all of its money on research facilities, so be it. But I think all hon. members should recognize and realize that under the estimates of the Members' Services Committee, the Legislative Assembly Act, there is very significant provision — and perhaps Mr. Clerk might be able to give us that figure — for the amount of dollars allocated to the research component of the library, which is a nonpartisan, completely independent, research facility. That figure is upwards of \$600,000, if I'm not mistaken. Mr. Clerk, I don't know if you have that figure in front of you or not. But it's there. It's available for all Members of the Legislative Assembly, it deals on a completely nonpartisan basis, and it is a facility that is available.

If the argument is being made in here by the various caucuses that they need more money for research, then I think we seriously would have to question whether or not we have made the right decision in the past to separately identify and expend some half a million dollars, \$600,000, for that research facility. Members who have participated in the committee in the past and those officials from various caucuses will recognize that we did spend a great deal of time talking about the need for and the merit of that particular research facility. I think that's very important for us to really understand what the position of the various caucuses is with respect to that, because some of us are really questioning whether or not that \$600,000 provided for independent research is an appropriate expenditure and mechanism.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make one other additional comment, and that is with respect to ministers' offices and a comparative. I guess one might argue that various offices are quite different. But a number of years ago, in an attempt to upgrade the status of the Leader of the Official Opposition in this province, the Members' Services Committee basically had consistent arguments made, that are recorded in the Hansard of this committee, and it was advanced by various Leaders of the Opposition that their status, their position, in this whole game plan was equivalent to that of a member of Executive Council. As the Member for Taber-Warner indicated a little earlier, a

review was made of the estimates of the various ministers' offices allocated in this year's budget. An average was arrived at and it came to \$250,000. Leaders of the Opposition in the past have come to this committee and made it very, very clear that that's the position they view themselves at, and for the sake of the information before committee members tonight, I would just like to add that.

Mr. Speaker made one comment that I would just like to make a little comment with respect to. Mr. Speaker indicated that he was the leader of the Representative Party that had received 37,000 votes in the last election...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the record show that it's Mr. Ray Speaker.

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. KOWALSKI: ...and that he was now being contacted by a number of those 37,000 voters around the province. It has always been my understanding that this committee is a committee of members who function in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. We are a nonpartisan committee, and we've always viewed the expenditures that receive funding under the Members' Services Committee as a completely nonpartisan expenditure level. I know that Mr. Ray Speaker was not suggesting for a moment that there was anything partisan about it. But having heard what he said, I would like to say that I hope nobody will take the interpretation that I had with respect to what I heard from Mr. Speaker. Because if that certainly is the case, then I wonder how the MLA for Barrhead would deal with people who I obviously know didn't vote for me and are not representatives or participants of the same political movement that I'm of. Do I then suggest that they go and talk to somebody else?

My responsibility as a Member of the Legislative Assembly has always been to serve all of my constituents, and it has never been a question in my mind to ask them who they voted for in the last election or anything else. My responsibility is to all of them, as it is to any individual in Alberta, as a matter of fact, because I am a Member of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta. That's a heck of a lot more than simply being the MLA

for the constituency of Barrhead.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Westlock-Sturgeon, Edmonton Highlands, Edmonton Strathcona. That will be the end of discussion on the motion that we have before us. Then as a committee we'll have to adopt a strategy as to whether we're going to deal with the motion as presented or if you wish to break it into component parts.

MR. TAYLOR: Speaking for the motion again, Mr. Chairman, I think it's quite fair. We can approach it from a number of angles. All the points made by government members around the table are, I think, quite valid, although I question the fact that because you have one library and it costs you \$600,000, you shouldn't spend any more money doing research, that there's enough there. It sounds a little bit like the fellow that says, "I've got 100 books in the library; what do you want to put another 100 books in there for?" I don't think you can limit the amount of research done to just what the library does. We use them extensively; I think all caucuses use them extensively. I would hope the backbenchers use them extensively. I find that they are busy; they're thoroughly used. That's a discussion for another time and another day. The research we need is over and above the library research. We've been here only a short time, but I can tell the Member for Barrhead that we've been smart enough to learn that the research is there and we utilize it to the utmost extent. Still, we need other work above that.

You mentioned leader versus caucus. I don't know that it matters much, but when you get down to two or three members, what does matter is that if you take the leader out of the caucus, you're cutting the caucus representation by half. It maybe doesn't matter, but it may well be that after the next election you'll see what the difference is. The point is that if you take the leader out of a small caucus, it means quite a cut in budget: a cut of 20 percent for the Liberals, a cut of 50 percent on a per member basis. But let's let it go and talk about envelope figures.

Something that nobody has touched on here yet is that in the last House the per MLA for the NDP was around \$176,000; for the Rep Party it was around \$107,000. The budget as presented here has kept within that limit. As a

matter of fact, the Liberal budget put forward came in around the \$100,000 mark. As I mentioned, the NDP budget is a third of what it is in Ontario as the second party. It seems to me the global amount we're talking about is quite right, and if there is a problem on the back-bench government side of not enough money there, possibly we could amend the motion to move the per member back up from \$30,000 to \$35,000 or \$38,000, and that would accomplish the thing.

If you're going to bring in a new system like Mr. Bogle, the member for Milk River, and the Member for Banff-Cochrane have suggested, the new system should not encompass less money and it should not encompass penalizing. It should be as good as the old system and maybe add to it. I don't think we've been doing that when we talk about cutting what was originally proposed by the member for Milk River. I think if we've made any mistake at all in what we put forward . . .

MR. BOGLE: The Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. TAYLOR: Taber-Warner. I'm sorry. I forgot where he put an airport in last time.

What I wanted to close with is that if we made one mistake at all, it's that we came in not with an idea that would be negotiated but, having met with the other members of the opposition, with a minimum budget. We could not see how any House would have the gall to cut the amount of money that was going to be given to the Representative Party, and we built on that base. To me it was a very logical thing, out of a sense of fairness, to go on that. Now we're talking about cutting them, cutting their basic allotment. We could have come in with a large budget and asked to be cut back, but we didn't.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to address a number of comments that arose, and I'll try to do it very briefly. With your permission, I'm going to refer to members by their last names, as we did in the last meeting, because I can't remember, for example, the exact name of Mr. Pengelly's riding.

Here we go. A point was raised with respect to baloney and the Ombudsman which I just have to address. I need to point out, not directly to Mr. Hyland but to all members here, that since the first Parliament was founded,

opposition was understood to be an integral part of a Parliament. This is recognized throughout all parliamentary-governed countries. One of the important things is that opposition is understood to keep government on its toes. If I were sitting here as a government member, I might not like listening to that, but I happen to know that it's a fact. My colleagues in Manitoba, for example, have to hear that.

We function much as members of executive councils do, in that we have opposition or critic areas that we follow, that we become expert on, and that sort of thing. I think what Mr. Kowalski had to say about our having argued previously -- and I'm sure other opposition members having argued previously -- with respect to an opposition leader being equivalent to a member of Executive Council still holds. I remind all members that we are talking about -- I can't believe the amount of debate that goes with talking about an overall consideration which has to do with .00015 percent of the entire annual budget for the government of Alberta.

Mr. Kowalski also said that he thought we had agreed in essence that we wouldn't look internally at how dollars are spent by caucus or what have you. It was never my intention to agree to that assumption. All three opposition parties submitted their original budgets to Mr. Stefaniuk, the Clerk, itemizing what we wanted to do or just indicating the global figure with which we wanted to deal, because we believe that that format is in fact superior to what we're dealing with right now.

It occurs to me to mention that when we did come back with our verbal formula and provided it to the members the next day in the House, the formulas we were looking at one way or the other ended up giving government member caucuses a greater funding than that which would go to the Official Opposition. It seems to us that at that point one is not taking into account the specific roles, unless I have it wrong and unless the government non-Executive Council members are also assigned to critic areas and that sort of thing. I don't think I'm wrong and I, quite frankly, don't think that's baloney.

Finally, with respect to Mr. Stevens, I honestly didn't believe that I was interpreting anything; I thought I was just reading from the record. But if you ever want to quote what you were getting at, I wouldn't mind hearing.

MR. STEVENS: I said you were selective.

MS BARRETT: Was I selective on that matter? I would like to ask for the quotes that would show that I was at any time being selective.

MR. CHAIRMAN: May we get on with the matter before us, please, rather than that?

MS BARRETT: He mentioned the comment that I was selective. I was just making the invitation, Mr. Chairman.

That concludes my remarks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In the course of most of the last hour, we've had 13 interventions. Perhaps the committee might like to give some consideration as to dealing with the motion that is before us, or if there is any request to split the motion. Not hearing any request to split the motion, is there a call for the question?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, just before we quit or you move into your decision, a comment to Mr. Kowalski just for the matter of the record. The point I was making is that the workload amount has increased just because of contact with the number of people, and I'm sure that it has with the other parties as well. I'm sure Mr. Kowalski understood that in his mind as well.

MR. KOWALSKI: That was helpful. Thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, listening to the Minister of the Environment, I still think he's mainly trying to lead us onto an unduly narrow path; namely, a figure that's the same for all Members of the Legislative Assembly, plus just a figure applicable to the work of a minister. That surely cannot be the case, because that would argue that all MLAs had an equal amount of research to do, entirely neglecting the point that all the basic research on the government side is done in the departments. I want to make it clear to Mr. Kowalski that this was the basis that we adjourned on and certainly the basis on which I signed my signature to that proposal that we are now considering a motion on. I would just refer to page 77 of the record from last time, where I said:

It must make sense in its elements, on the one hand; on the other hand, in saying that

the extras come from the leader's allowance, we agree with that, if by leader's allowance you mean all the extra research that has to go and does in fact go to other places than the leader. There are critics in each shadow portfolio, for example, who need the benefit of that research. So I'm not convinced that we are really talking about different things.

MR. BOGLE: I agree, and I think I made that comment early on, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Chairman, I've listened with a great deal of interest to how busy the opposition is. I'd like to relate to you that today I think you started off at 8:30 this morning, and if I'm correct, this is probably about the fifth meeting today, including the House. I would suggest that probably you as an opposition have access to the department as anybody else would have. You can ask a minister for information, whether it be in the question period or whether you want to go to the department. I just want to clear this up.

MR. WRIGHT: You had the answer this afternoon in that motion, didn't you?

MR. CAMPBELL: Well, no. Just let me finish this, please. I didn't interrupt you when you were speaking.

MR. WRIGHT: I didn't talk [inaudible]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. You're doing it now.

MR. CAMPBELL: Fine. Very good. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is not the House, folks. Common courtesy should prevail. Mr. Campbell, would you like to continue?

MR. CAMPBELL: No, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Other members wishing to speak to this motion?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I would like to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is your final representation, I think, Mr. Speaker, because you're really not at the table. But if you'd like, if the committee agrees.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Just so I understand what Mr. Bogle's position is relative to his presentation, is that the government's position at the present time? If so, there are a couple of things I think the government should think about. Even in this proposal of the \$30,000 there is a significant increase for government members, and there are fewer backbenchers at the present time. I think Ms Barrett made that point.

All other budgets through the government haven't been cut back significantly. There are very few; most have a percentage increase. As the Representative Party, we would like to keep on the record that if Mr. Bogle's proposal, which is a drastic cutback, goes through, that is not representative of other actions in the government.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, could just I make a comment? This is not a committee of government or opposition. This is a committee of members' services. The people who have been elected to this particular committee, of which I am a member, have been elected by the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta and are here not as representatives of the government — well, they may very well be here — but of the Legislative Assembly. I want to make that very clear.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The only reason I made the comment was that Mr. Bogle introduced his comments as from his caucus members, so that meant a partisan proposal was being laid on the table. If I misinterpreted, Mr. Chairman, I regret that.

MR. BOGLE: The reason I put my hand up, Mr. Chairman, was to suggest that we have a brief five-minute coffee break. But before I do that, I've got to respond to the remarks that were just made. A formal document was prepared by representatives of the three opposition parties. As there was no elected member of your party present at the time, an official signed on your behalf, Mr. Speaker. There was a proposal put forward. It was a proposal put to the other members of the Members' Services

Committee, all of whom happen to be government members. So we obviously did discuss it, and I responded back to Ms Barrett, Mr. Taylor, and yourself. I suggest we have that brief coffee break, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee agreed?

MR. TAYLOR: I'll agree. That's the only thing I've heard him say that I agree with.

MR. BOGLE: I'm still waiting for the first thing I can agree with you on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, we'll see you at 7 o'clock.

[The committee recessed from 6:49 p.m. to 7 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair awaits the pleasure of the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a call for the question on the motion before us, which is with respect to both previous items. Would you be good enough to read the motion, please, Louise?

MRS. EMPSON: The motion is by Ms Barrett to accept formula B as presented in her memorandum to the Members' Services Committee dated July 15.

MR. TAYLOR: Can I move an amendment, Mr. Chairman, before the vote? I would move that we go to formula A.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's contrary, actually.

MR. TAYLOR: No, it's just additional. Instead of \$30,000 per member, it's \$40,000 per member.

MR. STEVENS: But that's contrary.

MR. TAYLOR: All right. Instead of the formula, I'll amend the motion that instead of \$30,000 per caucus member we go to \$40,000 per caucus member. That gives...

MR. CHAIRMAN: With respect, Nick, I think it might be better to vote down the first one and

then try the second one at \$40,000, if that's the way it does turn out.

MR. TAYLOR: I don't understand.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, can I ask a question? The secretary has correctly read the motion, but I thought, and I may be wrong, that Ms Barrett had added to her formula B motion by adding in the caucus allowances.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is correct.

MR. STEVENS: I don't know if the secretary read that.

MS BARRETT: That is part of . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: If I remember, we clarified it.

MS BARRETT: Yes, that is part of the . . .

MR. STEVENS: So perhaps you could clarify that, and the secretary would have the right motion for us.

MS BARRETT: I thought I had read it out. All right, may I just go ahead? I would move that according to the formula presented under B on the memo dated July 15, signed by myself, Mr. Wright, Mr. Taylor, and on behalf of Mr. Speaker, we approve a formula which allows \$30,000 legislative support funding for all non-Executive Council members of the Legislative Assembly, which further allows caucus allowances of \$200,000 for the Representative Opposition; 50 percent more, being \$300,000, for the Liberal opposition; and 50 percent more, being \$450,000, for the Official Opposition, for a total of government members coming to \$1,050,000, Official Opposition \$930,000, Liberal opposition \$420,000, and Representative opposition \$260,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the Chair's understanding as to what was indeed moved. That is the question before us.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, with respect, I think my amendment that instead of going to \$30,000 per member we go to \$40,000 per member is quite within order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then I assume you wish to take the formulae all the way through, including the global budget totals?

MR. TAYLOR: That's right. That would be the only change it would make. If the global totals were changed, as you've seen, it would raise the government members by a substantial amount of about 30 percent. It would raise the Official Opposition by about 18 percent. It would raise the Liberals by a negligible amount of 5 percent. The Representatives would be about 5 percent. It is a gradational increase that recognizes that the government members work hard, as they've said here. I think it would also give them the chance to fund and look after their constituencies better, according to what I've heard.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, you'd rather have A than B?

MR. TAYLOR: I have an amendment, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will sit corrected. We will now vote on the amendment, which is going for formula A. All those in favour of the amendment, which is formula A, please signify. Opposed? Formula A falls by the wayside as the amendment.

MR. TAYLOR: You bit the hand that tried to feed you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The original motion, which is formula B. All those in favour of that motion, please signify. Opposed? Formula B is defeated.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I believe I had a motion on the floor at the last meeting. I don't know what the heck happened here.

AN HON. MEMBER: I know what happened.

MS BARRETT: Well, I do, too. I think Mr. Kowalski made another motion on top of it. Implicitly we dealt with Mr. Kowalski's motion at that time. We've dealt with the consequential motion, now having been defeated, and opposed, I will note for the record, by Mr. Taylor, Mr. Wright, and Ms Barrett.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The usual form is to request your names be recorded . . .

MS BARRETT: I'm sorry. May I request our names be recorded?

MR. CHAIRMAN: . . . at the time of the vote, rather than to do it this way. The other way is a little more parliamentary. Thank you.

MS BARRETT: It will stand?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is recorded.

MS BARRETT: My motion, noted on page 69 of the Hansard, was that we were on item 2(b), Official Opposition. I moved adoption, at which point all kinds of questions came up. I believe we should now go back to that motion. I don't think it was ever dealt with.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a correct interpretation. However, it was dealt with.

MS BARRETT: It was?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was dealt with because this other motion was, in a sense, a tabling motion to the next meeting. That has now been concurred with. Yourself and others dealt with the matter of preparing the information. We've now gone through all that. Both formula A and formula B apparently have been dealt with. So now it is indeed appropriate to go back to your previous motion. That takes us back to code 900.

MS BARRETT: No, that's the one that was carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that the one? Sorry. Further down?

MS BARRETT: No, it was right after that that we were on item 2(b), which is no longer 2(b) in these books. May I assist?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can, if we can have the documentation on what was indeed code 900. We could first pass these around, and then we'll take comments. This was for the Official Opposition, so that would be one portion of it. Correct? The only thing that would be missing would be for the Liberal Party and the

Representative Party. What's being distributed now is the previous budget estimate from the opposition Liberal Party, and the one you had just moments before was for the New Democratic Party, bearing mind that the Representative Party at this stage had said they wished to remain the same.

MS BARRETT: I would like to make a motion. I'm not sure if this requires a friendly amendment or not; you'll have to correct me, Mr. Chairman. But the motion that was in front of us at that time included — my memory says, anyway, with respect to the Official Opposition and the Liberal opposition — a vote to approve \$937,000 for a budget for the Official Opposition and \$414,000 for the Liberal opposition. I would like to amend that motion — seeing as it's my own motion, I think it's the friendly amendment I'm allowed — to also include adoption of \$214,000 for the Representative opposition, each of these three figures representing the initial budget requests that each caucus sent to the Clerk.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For information, the figure that you read off the New Democratic Party was what again?

MS BARRETT: \$937,000. I beg your pardon. I'm reading it wrong. It is \$935,237.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is now concerned. I think we should be dealing with the one from the New Democratic Party first. It's \$935,000.

MS BARRETT: Am I not allowed to amend my own motion, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is a point of order, I gather.

MR. WRIGHT: A point of order, yes. That motion was predicated on the assumption common to all members at that point that the amount for the Representative Party continued as before.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I said that about two minutes ago, I believe. Thank you. Predicated or not, that would have to be voted upon, but we entered that in as one of the understandings in the discussion, but it would still have to be

approved.

MR. TAYLOR: On a point of information, Mr. Chairman. Are we talking about a motion that approves the three caucus budgets at one time, as they were presented under that motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We were having some discussion with regard to that. Because of the last hour, the Chair is somewhat loath to entertain a motion that is an umbrella motion. But it's the wishes of the . . .

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'd recommend that as the motion has been put forward as an umbrella motion, it should be dealt with as such.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For all three parties or for two?

MR. BOGLE: For all three.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we are then saying that with respect to this motion it will be approval of \$935,237 for the New Democratic Party, the Official Opposition; secondly, \$414,638 for the Liberal opposition; and thirdly, \$214,538 for the Representative Party. At some future date there will be some motion coming forth with respect to government member funding. Discussion on the tripartite motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a call for the question. All those in favour of the so-understood three-party motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair awaits a further motion.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I would like to put forward a motion that the 1986-87 revised estimates would be as follows: a member allotment be based on an amount of \$35,000 per member, recognizing two members for the Representative Party, four members for the

Liberal Party, 16 members for the New Democratic Party, and 35 government members; and that the allocations per leader be \$62,500 for the Representative leader, \$125,000 for the leader of the Liberal Party, and \$250,000 for the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that done in printout form, where everyone has those figures? Once again, just for further clarification.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, it would work out to \$70,000 for the Representative Party for its two members, plus \$62,500 for the office of the leader; for the Liberal Party, it would be \$140,000 for the four members and \$125,000 for the office of the leader; for the New Democratic Party, \$560,000 for its 16 members, plus \$250,000 for its leader; and for the 35 government members it would be \$1,225,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As the mover of the motion, is this to be seen as a complete motion or two separate motions?

MR. BOGLE: We're flexible in that sense, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's your motion.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make an amendment to that motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With all due respect to hon. members, I think another five-minute break would be a fairly useful thing, because at the moment I'm still awaiting an answer as to whether it's two motions or one.

MR. BOGLE: As the mover, I said I was prepared to see it as two motions if that's requested by members. So we could vote in two parts.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Two parts. Is there some general acceptance, nodding of heads, and so forth? Not over there? Rather have global?

MR. WRIGHT: We go back to our belief, Mr. Chairman, that the proper way of dealing with this is as a line-by-line budget in which everyone can see what we are talking about. Because the majority seemed to want it

differently, we were prepared — I think we've been talking about it for the last hour — to do it differently. Basically, our position is that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The motion, then, is going to be two parts: \$35,000 per member, and then with the additional figures as put forth by the mover of the motion with regard to leaders of the respective opposition political parties.

Mr. Kowalski, you want to deal with respect to an amendment.

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would like to amend the motion put forward by the Member for Taber-Warner. My amendment would be to one aspect of the motion. The mover had indicated a figure of \$62,500 for the office of the leader of the Representative Party. My amendment would change that figure to \$100,000 for the office of the leader of the Representative Party.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the narrow focus of your amendment?

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Discussion with respect to the amendment, which is increasing the additional funding for the leader of the Representative Party, from \$62,500 to \$100,000?

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a call for the question. All those in favour of the amendment, please signify by saying aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Further on, with the comment made earlier by Ms Barrett, do we need recording of that? Okay. With respect to the amendment it's my understanding that the amendment has passed: six in favour, one opposed, and three not casting a ballot. Did I miss looking around the room? That's correct. So the amendment carries.

With respect to the motion as amended, please.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, while I certainly approve of Mr. Kowalski's motion and am glad that it passed, it occurs to me that this knocks out the sort of formulation that we were trying to achieve. I am an advocate of providing sufficient funding for the Representative opposition office so that it may continue to operate in the way it has done as an opposition office. It is not a government office, and I think it warrants funding that would make it distinct. However, what would then happen is that one would find that under the current motion the Liberals would have a mere \$25,000 more in recognition of their office status. As I say, this puts a certain formulation out of whack. I don't think that we're too far from agreeing at a certain point if we can then look at small raises towards the allocations going to the opposition party leaders' offices. However, I merely want to make the remark that things would go seriously askew if we saw that the funding in support of each Member of the Legislative Assembly who is not a member of the Executive Council, which is a nice way of saying backbencher ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm not a backbencher, that I'm aware of.

MS BARRETT: That's true.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MS BARRETT: I was trying to get at the other part. It would still come to more than all the opposition combined. I think this speaks ill of this committee, not inasmuch as partisan interests may have come into play but inasmuch as the recognition of the role of an opposition may not have come into play sufficiently under the circumstances and given the relatively few dollars over which we apparently are prepared to spend endless hours in debate. In conclusion, I just say that while Mr. Kowalski's amendment was wonderful and I'm glad it passed, I wish that we could deal with two more little items, and I think we'd have a consensus.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, if there was ever any doubt that this was a political committee and not a group of angels put together, as Mr.

Kowalski would think . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. From a theological point of view, I learned most of my politics in the church, so I assume the angels may well have a certain political convention. Sorry to interrupt.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, this is a question of how many angels can dance in a washroom.

It seems ridiculous. When we get to analyzing it, two items come out. There's a four-person Liberal opposition, and together we would come up with \$265,000 versus the Reps' \$200,000 last year and \$170,000 this year. I think it's one thing to be relegated to washrooms; it's another to have our budget cut down to a per capita figure that's around \$66,000. If the hon. members want to go on record of being so afraid of us that they're going to cut us down that far, I suppose that's it. But it becomes a point of ridiculousness to — I know; maybe we're a new boy on the block and maybe we're not that welcome, but the point is that as a four-man caucus . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Betty, what are you saying?

MR. TAYLOR: Four-man? We've gone past that chauvinistic thing. We say things like "Madam Chairman," you know.

With the four-man caucus — I have her permission — we're talking about a \$66,000 average. Ms Barrett has already mentioned that it's saying that all the people who are not cabinet ministers on the government side of the House will have a budget equal to all the opposition together, the whole works. I know I'm fairly new in this House, but I haven't heard many people who are noncabinet ministers get up and thoroughly dissect and criticize a budget. They have their purpose, they can serve their constituencies, but we have a job and a duty to do, and that is to represent the people of Alberta — not only the people we represent but all the people of Alberta, just as you represent all the people of Alberta. You propose an idea; we oppose it constructively. If our idea is good enough, you will vote if we take in the amendment; if it isn't, you go on. The point is that it's very much a part of the government process.

To come out here and try to castrate the third party seems to me absolutely ridiculous

when you consider what they get as a third party in Ontario: in the vicinity of \$2 million. Even if you take a third of that, it comes in around \$600,000, and you're telling us that as a third party we have got to get by at \$165,000. All I can say is that it's going to rank as a day of shame if this goes out and goes through. I don't think that you may feel that cocky that you can wander back there and giggle about putting Liberals in the washroom and putting them down to \$165,000. I submit that that sense of humour isn't going to be as widespread as you think it is around the province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. Your comments are quite appropriate except that this committee has nothing to do with respect to the allocation of space. So your comments with regard to the washrooms really should be discussed in another forum.

MR. TAYLOR: I don't agree. There are members of the government that has consigned us to the washrooms.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. This committee is not for that at this time.

MR. TAYLOR: Okay. I'll take it back as far as the committee is concerned, if you want.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, with the greatest respect, the error in principle seems to lie in the \$250,000 starting figure, because we've already heard from Mr. Kowalski that this is the average of ministers' offices. I don't know how often you have to make the point that there are research responsibilities per member, which have been allocated how members would like, for an opposition member over and above that of the government members. There is no space whatever for that in this proposed budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Other members? Any additional amendments? The Chair's understanding is that the motion that is before us, which seems to be about to come to a question, is that the basic formula is the motion as amended.

MR. TAYLOR: Could I . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I want to make sure we're all clear.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, can we have a couple of minutes just to talk about this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely. It's always a good time to wash one's hands. And the cutoff time of the meeting with respect to hon. members is quarter to eight. It's just about 7:30.

[The committee recessed from 7:26 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we come back to order? Further developments?

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, we see that this negotiation process takes a long while. However, I wonder if the committee would consider an amendment which would not constitute the original formula we advanced. We seem to have agreement amongst the three opposition parties that we amend — I'm sorry; I can't even remember whose motion it is. Is it yours originally?

MR. BOGLE: Yes.

MS BARRETT: Thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: As amended.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Bogle's motion as amended, so that we would have under the caucus allowance or leader allowance, whichever way the members care to view it, \$150,000 for the Representatives, \$225,000 for the Liberals, and \$400,000 for the Official Opposition. I wonder if this negotiation might meet with acceptance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton Highlands has moved an amendment which deals with three parts: the Representative Party, \$150,000; the Liberal Party, \$225,000; the New Democratic Party, \$400,000; all this in addition to the basic formula of \$35,000 per member for the Representatives, the Liberals, the NDP, and the government. Question? Does the member wish to close debate on her amendment?

MS BARRETT: Only inasmuch as noting that I am advised that some of the money we would be

requesting would be going to pensions which we are now required to pay to our staff by virtue of a directive from Alberta Treasury.

MR. TAYLOR: A point of clarification. Is this annualized back to May 8?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If we can get all-party consent to getting the process approved.

MR. TAYLOR: Is there a certain date?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would assume.

MR. TAYLOR: Would you say May 8?

MR. BOGLE: If we're able to move with this amendment to our budget and get it before the Assembly this spring, yes.

MR. TAYLOR: Would it be annualized from May 8 on?

MR. WRIGHT: Or even on May 1.

MR. BOGLE: Would it be May 1, the beginning of the fiscal year?

MR. STEFANIUK: The date of the election.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The date of the election.

MR. BOGLE: The date of the election, May 8.

MR. TAYLOR: May 8. In other words, we could back up to fill in. Are we talking about a year envelope? In other words we can hire a lot of people for nine months and go with a three-month holiday, or we can hire very few people in that three months?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's not get into that detail, thank you very much.

MR. STEVENS: We don't want to know what you're doing.

MR. TAYLOR: Don't forget; he's got the angels. He and I have an argument about where the angels dance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is also another issue as to whether we can get it into the House or whether it has to go to special warrant. We

haven't got all that nailed down. This is indeed wrapping up the amendment to the motion, and then we will have the call for the question.

MS BARRETT: That would be fair. I don't think we would object. Mr. Chairman, I just want to point out that the motion, if amended and carried, would still leave the non-opposition, non-Executive Council members with a substantial increase in overall funding despite the reduced number of members on the government side. We would feel very happy with this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You would feel very happy with that. Thank you. That was a summation with respect to the amendment. All those in favour of the amendment, which is \$150,000, \$225,000, and \$400,000, please signify. Those opposed?

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, would you entertain a motion to table?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It must indeed happen without discussion. All those in favour of the motion to table to the next meeting? Those opposed. The matter is not tabled; the Chair awaits further directions.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question on the motion as amended which takes us back to the formula of \$35,000 per member: Representatives, two members plus \$100,000; Liberals, four members plus \$125,000; New Democratic Party, Official Opposition, with 16 plus \$250,000; and government members 35.

MS BARRETT: Sorry; what was the last thing you said, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That it recognizes 35 government members as being part of the formula at \$35,000 per member.

MS BARRETT: To a total of \$1,225,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But by the same token I would have to go back then and supply the additional total figures for the Representatives,

the Liberals, and the New Democratic Party. We're talking the same thing. To reiterate, \$35,000 per member: Representatives, two plus \$100,000 for their leader; Liberal Party, four members times \$35,000 plus \$125,000 for their leader; and the case of the New Democratic Party, 16 members plus \$250,000. There is a call for the question.

MS BARRETT: Is it still open to discussion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If I were to hear an amendment.

MS BARRETT: If you were to hear an amendment? There is no other discussion, only on the amendment?

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, I would move that the motion be amended to include a research component that will be determined after reference to some research that should be brought back to us at the earliest possible occasion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Others wishing to speak to the amendment?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MS BARRETT: I guess I would like to speak to the amendment, Mr. Chairman. It occurs to me that while members present tonight clearly showed in a majority fashion that the committee did not see fit to deal with a line-by-line assessment of budgets which were originally submitted on behalf of opposition caucuses, and given that we do not deal with government estimates in a way that says there's a certain formula for doing this and a certain formula for doing that, government programs are announced. They do come into play in the estimates. We're required to look at, for example, overall staff requirements, program directions, what we want accomplished, and how it fits into the overall scheme of the budget, the department, the division, and that sort of thing. It seems to me that passing this amendment would give us the option of bringing back what we have considered right from the start to be the most reasonable approach over what we have already recognized is a very, very tiny sum compared to the overall Alberta government budget. I think we have to look at

that in a way that's not hasty. We are talking about the thorough ability of three opposition offices to function. It would be wonderful if we were all in one office, but the Liberals and the Reps won't take us up on it. It does take some time.

What we're basically asking for is the opportunity to provide the kind of background information that may help us negotiate to a consensus position. We all agree that we're not very far apart, but we think we've got more information that would help make a difference. Passing this motion would let us do that and would let us come back in a week, if so stipulated, with that kind of information.

MR. TAYLOR: I think one of the things the majority of government appointees to the committee, in their hurry, understand is that they have cut per capita allowance for all three opposition parties by substantial amounts. Of course, you can't say the Liberals because we didn't have one, but there was a third party before. The third party was the Reps, and the per capita allowance in those days was \$100,000. We're the third party now, and we've been cut to \$66,000 per capita, whereas the per capita of the noncabinet government members has been increased 25 percent.

I hope they're willing to live with this and go out and explain why all the opposition members per capita had to be cut and why the government members' had to be increased. It's going to be an intriguing set of reasoning. I think the least we could have accomplished, if they would only take a minute, is to sit down -- we only asked for the same percentage increase per capita as the government members did. Maybe we should take a moment and figure out that formula. Then at least you can go out to the public and say in justice that on a per capita basis we may have cut the opposition or whatever but we're doing it on a per capita basis exactly the same for our own. But to go out and use your advantage as a hammer to get the three opposition parties down per capita as number one, two, and three and raise your own per capita smacks of something that I never dreamed, in the sense of the talk about fair play and level field, would ever occur.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, when the last Members' Services Committee made the allotment for the previous Legislature, we had a

lot of discussion and we heard many of the same arguments. At that time, I guess it was because of the size of the opposition, the amounts were set at \$50,000 plus the offices. Ours then were what? If you want to talk numbers, we had to go back and answer to people why the opposition got about four or five times as much as we did, Nick.

MR. TAYLOR: Last time.

MR. HYLAND: Last time.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes, but this is this time.

MR. HYLAND: Okay. It's all right to say it. When we're talking NDP, we're talking a budget that was there before. When we're talking Reps, there was a budget there before, Nick. The Liberals never had a budget before because they weren't in the House. So let's not talk about cutting budgets. If you want to say "cut" in what you ask for, fine. That's fair ball.

MR. TAYLOR: We're talking about number one, two, and three parties, Al.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One at a time, please. Okay, the end of that. The question is now being called with respect to the amendment. Those in favour of the amendment, which relates to the research component?

MR. WRIGHT: May I...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you may indeed.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, it is true that there is a large element in the Official Opposition budget which is there irrespective of the actual numbers. Mr. Kowalski was quite correct in reading from the record of the committee in the previous Legislature in which the leader of the New Democrats made the point that when numbers increase with the Official Opposition, you don't simply multiply the allowance by the number of the increasing members. That certainly has been the plan that we have followed. We have increased by eight times but increased our suggestion by less than three times.

This proposal, though, is simply unfair in that it does not even double the allowance in that way. Once there is an eightfold increase in the

membership, there certainly is something like an eightfold increase in the capacity to make use of research. The limit, when there is just a small number, is in the capacity of the members to absorb and make use of the public money spent on research.

I suppose there is a limit in the other direction, too, that there is only so much research that can be done. But certainly there is plenty of research that can be done and should be done in the public interest to make the opposition function correctly, Mr. Chairman. It is certainly not anywhere near reached by a sum of zero, really, or even by \$250,000 if you allocate the allowance for a minister's type of office completely to research. So with the greatest respect, Mr. Chairman, I have to say that this suggestion that there be no funds at all allocated for the role of opposition members in research is an insult to our role as the Official Opposition.

It came as something of a revelation to me to hear the former chairman of the Department of Political Science make this point: when you talk about, or hear about, the safeguards of parliamentary government, you're really talking about the role of the opposition. It isn't government members in general, at all really, who day after day challenge the government to justify its actions; it is opposition members who put down the motions and the searching questions that expose, if there are any to be exposed, malfeasance in the government or obscurities and so on. Without that extra money, our role is hobbled and we are not fulfilling our duty as Members of the Legislative Assembly as a whole to the people of Alberta. To deny any extra money -- I'm taking the figures that Mr. Kowalski gives -- for that research role of the Official Opposition will do just that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was summing up on the amendment. All those in favour of the amendment with regard to the research component, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The amendment is defeated.

That's all the business for this evening. We have a motion as amended on the order paper to be dealt with at the next meeting. The Chair will entertain some quick advice as to when the next meeting will indeed take place.

MR. TAYLOR: Same time, same place.

MS BARRETT: May I suggest the same time.

MR. TAYLOR: Compliments to the chef, Mr. Chairman. Could we return to the thing?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next Tuesday evening. Is there general agreement of all members?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee will meet next Tuesday at the same place, and we'll try for the same thing. A motion to adjourn will now be entertained. Moved by Cypress-Redcliff. All those in favour, please signify by going down to the Assembly.

Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 7:47 p.m.]