

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

[10:09 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, we can begin. Notification was that even though we may be here all day, we decided not to order lunch today. We will adjourn at 12 o'clock for lunch, unless you've finished earlier or want to make some other arrangements if you think you're getting close to finishing. At the moment we'll work on the theory that we're going to adjourn at 12 o'clock.

There are a number of items left on the table from yesterday, some motions that arose later in the day, but we also had some other material to come back to with respect to the Legislative Assembly overall estimates. Then we have to go through the other budgets left in the estimates book which relate back to the caucuses.

What is the pleasure of the meeting? Are you prepared to concur that we finish off the Legislative Assembly main administration sections?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This takes us to the material with the black clip that was handed out to you this morning.

MR. SCARLETT: The first one is the summary sheet. The totals show the different scenarios, and the explanations are down at the bottom.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll come back to that one.

MR. SCARLETT: Yes, it's probably best to come back to that one.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm having a bit of trouble with my math, Mr. Chairman. I notice the first bracket shows a 4.1 increase. Oh, I'm sorry; I'm not having trouble with my math. As soon as I started saying it out loud, it came to me.

MR. HYLAND: I thought you were going to say that as soon as you put on your glasses, you started to see it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. We might go to page 3.

MR. SCARLETT: Page 3 is strictly with the

administration. Again, it's a summary of all the changes that were brought forward, and I suppose it's best to go into them. Page 6 shows the revised security contract.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Which is the reflection of yesterday, when we put the money back in because the contracts had been calculated at a year previous to what was the actual year. That now reflects that change which was approved yesterday.

Motion for approval of page 6? Thank you, Edmonton Highlands. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

MR. SCARLETT: Page 7 is the corresponding employer contributions. There is a \$181 increase as a result of that salary change for the security staff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion to adopt revised 7? Innisfail. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Page 8.

MR. SCARLETT: That's the bottom-line total for the employee salaries. The total manpower has gone up as a result of those other two changes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Motion to adopt page 8? Member for Rocky Mountain House. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

MR. SCARLETT: Page 9. It's the MLA mileage program that was changed. I used a prorated basis. To what the members have been using on their mileage program I just added a percentage corresponding to the percentage of increase in the total miles available for rural members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Members understand that that's the calculation put in place by people working late last night and this morning to put into effect for budget purposes the order that was passed yesterday.

MR. HYLAND: That's probably the only way it can be budgeted, but I suspect, seeing the size of the constituencies and that, that the end figure won't be that. I don't know how else you're going to budget it, except as a

percentage.

MR. SCARLETT: In all likelihood you're correct.

MR. HYLAND: There are probably half a dozen of us that that affects, but how else do you do it? That's the only way you can do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: An educated guess.

MR. TAYLOR: I was just trying to ascertain two things. We passed a motion earlier to ask the airlines for a 10 percent reduction. That's not in the estimate at all?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, that isn't. I have a meeting tomorrow with one of the airline representatives to try to initiate that discussion, so we have to work on the theory that there are no reductions.

MR. TAYLOR: Leading out of that is something the Consumers' Association of Canada mentioned recently as being anti consumer interest, and that is the stickers you get, the most frequent flyer program, that goes onto the airline tickets. There's always been a little bit of a question in my mind that if an MLA has an incentive to have the government pay for as much airline travel as possible to have these frequent flyer tickets that help us get out of the bounds of Alberta occasionally -- I'm just wondering if that shouldn't be on the airline negotiating table too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll try to go through all the points with them, but I do need to remind members that members cannot use those coupons, points for flying and all that. We've had that practice for the last number of years.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify that. There is a position of the government in dealing with the public service. Of course, the government can't tell the Members' Services Committee or the Legislative Assembly what to do, but it's been our tradition that that's a no-no. One may get all the coupons they want, but no hon. member may use them. They should in fact be returned to the Speaker for shredding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, not for use.

MR. TAYLOR: The third thing is: is something on the motion now? I forget; sometimes we make so many and shelve them and back and forth. Is anything hanging fire now? We have discussed 52 trips. In other words, if you go by car, you're limited to 52 trips a year to your constituency. If you go by air, you can go as often as you want, anywhere you want. Was there a motion that we were looking into the ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion was passed yesterday and then amended. Remember that originally there was going to be a reduction in ..

MR. TAYLOR: But that's for cars.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That motion relating to car travel will appear in the minutes of yesterday. The 52 return trips by car still are in effect because of the amendment that was passed. You recall that yesterday we had the breakdown by kilometre for urban members and rural members, so that now is in effect by virtue of yesterday's motion.

The other thing in terms of our agenda was that the Member for Taber-Warner was in all likelihood going to bring a motion dealing with airline travel to our next regular meeting of the committee.

MR. TAYLOR: I see. So it's tabled until the next meeting. I didn't want it to slip through as being approved, because I do feel it's an expense that's much greater than the car allowance. We're beating the hell out of the guy that drives a car, but the one that's flying is doing all right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Because of the budget process and the approval, we have to plug those figures, but rest assured that we're going to work at the business of all the economy we can.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton Highlands, then Taber-Warner.

MS BARRETT: Pass.

MR. BOGLE: Briefly, yesterday there was some discussion that we may be able to reduce the \$228,000 figure for air travel. On reflection, is that now deemed not to be possible at this time?

MR. SCARLETT: I think it's possible if we put a cap on return trips particularly . . .

MR. TAYLOR: I'd cap any Tory's return trip anytime.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, it applies to all the political parties.

MR. SCARLETT: . . . and just not designate whether it's travel by car or by plane. If we did that, I could take it all out.

MR. BOGLE: All right, thank you.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I can't let the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon away with what he said about beating hell out of the guys driving and not bothering the guys flying, because I think that when we're driving, most of us are probably into the flying category anyway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see. All righty. Do I have someone who is prepared to move approval of page 9? One of you highfliers. Okay, the Member for Cypress-Redcliff moves approval of page 9. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Page 12.

MR. SCARLETT: The bottom-line total is a reflection of the motion you just passed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Approval? Member for Rocky Mountain House. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Page 15.

MR. SCARLETT: Page 15 is reflection of the motion passed by the Member for Edmonton Highlands as it relates to the communication allowance and the corresponding increase for the Leg. Assembly Office.

MS BARRETT: I have a question. I thought the motion on the communication allowance was a 3 percent increase. Or was the previous notice .7 percent? I've got my notes from yesterday.

MR. HYLAND: Your motion said 3 percent.

MS BARRETT: We passed a motion, I think, calling for a flat 3 percent increase on the MLA communication allowance, not 3.7. You see,

your exact figure, \$307,274, is what I calculated to be a 3 percent increase on the figure \$295,412. The figures show right; I think it's just the percentage change that looks different.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, why don't we restate the principle we believe we've agreed to and proceed and come back to this side of it later in the meeting?

MS BARRETT: Why don't we just approve the numbers? The numbers are correct; it's the percentage that's . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, then we'll approve the numbers. May I take that as a motion from Edmonton Highlands?

MS BARRETT: Yes, I so move.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Page 22 is the next one, to reflect the will of the meeting yesterday.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, it is not quite accurate the way it's worded. There should appear under the 1986-87 forecast \$8,665 for the CPA dinner. Then for the current estimates there would be nothing, because we're eliminating that. The 75th Legislative Assembly anniversary celebration is indeed a one-time expenditure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. So it's adding that other line . . .

MS BARRETT: Showing a 100 percent decrease.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. With that correction, are there any other comments or a motion to approve?

MR. HYLAND: I think the anniversary celebration could be the same thing. It would be something new.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can only be 75 once. Maybe it's like 39.

On the motion of the Member for Innisfail to give approval to page 22 with one correction,

all those in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

Page 24-1. Mr. Scarlett.

MR. SCARLETT: This reflects the bulk requests as per the motion passed on the 12th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is it? Stationery?

MR. SCARLETT: That's the bulk pins.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. A motion to give approval to 24-1? Edmonton Highlands. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Page 24-2.

MR. SCARLETT: The top part is the new item as per the motion passed yesterday. The Supplies and Services total is the reflection of all those changes passed so far.

MS BARRETT: Fast calculating.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rocky Mountain House. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

The last page you have there should be page 67, with regard to Alberta Hansard.

MR. SCARLETT: Unfortunately, the Editor of Hansard was sick yesterday and wasn't able to give you a detailed breakdown of the added increase as a result of the request to increase their budget to correspond to a 90-day sitting period, but he was able to provide almost an estimated increase as a result of adding one-eighth onto those items he felt would increase as a result of the 10 extra days. The increases under the '87-88 estimate and those numbers in brackets are the old estimates based on 80 days.

MS BARRETT: Given that that's the best we're going to get and it still represents a minus 12.6 percent funding requirement, I move that we approve it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of giving approval? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

That then will take us back to pages 1 and ...

MR. SCARLETT: You may want to do the library first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In your estimates books then, if you would like to come back to the matter of the library, yesterday when we adjourned you will recall that there was a motion that was tabled for the second time. It was originally proposed by Mrs. Mirosh, and then with the consent of the House, knowing that Mrs. Mirosh from Calgary Glenmore wouldn't be here today, the committee agreed that the motion could be brought back to the table and sponsored by someone else. I think that at this stage we should do that. The motion by Mr. Taylor was that discussion of the Legislature Library '87-88 budget estimates be deferred till today. That was carried. The original motion was proposed in terms of white sheets and pink sheets in the library section of your estimates binder, which should be the last section, number 12.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, just on a point of procedure, a great deal of the debate that centres on the library budget is based on research, and seeing that we already have on the order of business the question of caucus allowances, I think it would be better to debate that first, because what we do on caucus allowances, cutting research, certainly has great bearing then on the Legislature. I would like to move, if it's okay with the rest of the committee, that we go over the caucus allowance first, because that will have a bearing on library research.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the will of the committee then on this procedural thing that we go on with caucus discussions first and then come back to the library?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I see heads bobbing in the affirmative. All right. Then do you want to move directly to caucus budgets, which takes us from 12 back over to ... Which one do you want to start with, folks? Mr. Taylor, do you want to start with yours, or Ms Barrett?

MR. TAYLOR: Okay.

MS BARRETT: Yes, I'd like to start with the Official Opposition budget, if that's okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Official Opposition budget, section 6, under the yellow tabs. That reminds us to go back to a previous meeting where we had a motion. The motion that was passed was to reduce by 20 percent the per member base figure, followed by three subsections which were not dealt with at the time, which then gave funding with regard to the Leader of the Official Opposition, the leader of the Liberal Party, and the leader of the Representative Party. Does the meeting want to go through all these budgets first and then come back to deal with those three subsections?

MS BARRETT: Are we allowed to deal with the part that refers to 20 percent as well?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The minutes of Thursday, January 8, which in the code is 87.15:

MOVED by Mr. Bogle that the 1987-88 caucus budgets for Government Members, Official Opposition, Liberal Opposition and Representative Opposition be established as follows:

- a) the reduction of 20% in the per member allocation of \$40,000, resulting in a decrease of \$8,000 per non-executive Member;
- b) the establishment of a budget amount for the Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition, using the average budget total for all ministers' offices based on existing figures;
- c) the establishment of a budget amount for the Office of Leader of the Liberal Party, based on a portion of that established for the Office of Official Opposition;
- d) the establishment of a budget amount for the Office of the Leader of the Representative Party, based on a portion of that established for the Office of the Liberal Party.

Then it was moved to table to the next day and carried. That was the original on January 8. Now we go to January 9. We went through a series of motions.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I remember its being voted on because it was me who called the question.

MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, it was voted on.

MR. HYLAND: If we have a procedural problem, perhaps the easiest way out is just for Ms Barrett to make a motion of another percentage or that the percentage be removed, and then we could get in to a general discussion of all three.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You see, our procedural difficulty is that we passed the first section and then we didn't deal with the next three.

MS BARRETT: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Technically, if we passed the first section, we may well not be able to bring it back to the table without the unanimous consent of the House to deal with all aspects.

MR. HYLAND: Well, that can be done.

MS BARRETT: Can we call for the unanimous consent of the members to bring back all aspects of the motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there unanimous consent?

MR. HYLAND: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there anyone opposed?

MR. BOGLE: Let me make sure I understand the intent. We've passed a motion, and the motion had four parts. What was left undone in that motion is to set the exact amounts for the leaders of the Liberal and Representative parties. That has been passed. We now have a request on the table to bring the entire motion back. What does that do to the motion, if unanimous consent is granted?

MS BARRETT: Good question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would assume then that you could comment about everything, whether you want to talk about 100 percent reduction, 99, 20, 5, 3, whatever, and at any time. With unanimous consent you can bring back a motion; you can rescind a motion. To me, to be

procedurally absolutely correct, that section has already been determined, and the room to manoeuvre for the committee, I assume, deals with the other three sections. But if unanimous consent is given or the Chair doesn't hear dissenting voices, then we can come right back and present a whole brand-new motion.

MR. HYLAND: That's why I agreed to give unanimous consent. Even if it does come back, you can talk about it, but if another motion isn't put and won by a majority, it doesn't change the vote on that motion. Isn't that correct?

MS BARRETT: I would assume that to be correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, that is correct.

MR. BOGLE: I would respectfully suggest that to follow the intent of the motion, we proceed on the other sections. If at some point in those discussions there is a need to go back and re-examine the concept we've given approval to, we can consider it at that time. But I think it would be counterproductive to do it before we've had any discussion here.

MS BARRETT: I can live with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you. We are now dealing in terms of the sections that deal with Leader of the Opposition. When we've come through that discussion, we'll go to the Liberal Party and then we'll deal with the Representative Party. Then, if needs be, we'll deal with the total package, if there's agreement of the House. Thank you.

We're now dealing with section (b), which is with respect to

the establishment of a budget amount for the Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition, using the average budget total for all ministers' offices based on existing figures.

MS BARRETT: Thank you. One more time I'm going to try to exercise my persuasive powers to the extent that they exist and encourage the members not to support any cutting to the Leader of the Official Opposition in his operating budget, similarly the leader of the Liberal opposition and the leader of the Representative opposition. I call to mind one

small fact, and that is that our overall budget — that is, the Official Opposition's overall budget — constitutes about one eight-thousandth of the entire annual budget of this province.

I'm going to try not to repeat arguments I've presented in the past. We do know that we have an increased number of members doing the same job that was done by fewer members in the past. That function is, I believe, an integral part of our democracy. That argument may not appeal to you, but let me put another argument out to you. I need now to refer to the previous motion, which has been passed, calling for a 20 percent cut in the per member formula. The fact of the matter is that the opposition ranks swelled after the last election and the number of government non Executive Council members shrank. Nonetheless, in the formula that we agreed to on July 29, the budgets established allowed for a substantial increase for government non Executive Council members and a smaller increase in fact, relative to the growth of numbers, for the opposition ranks.

I think what we're talking about here is an issue of playing fair. Our work relies upon our ability to have staff to provide information, answer phones, and deal with correspondence, not just in the Edmonton area but around the province. I don't contest that your work is similar in nature. Our work, though, has one distinction. That is that we are assigned, by virtue of being opposition members, as is the case with all parliamentary democracies around the world, to be critics for government departments. As far as I know, within government non Executive Council ranks that is not necessarily the case. Our work, in other words, goes beyond being an MLA. It actually involves being able to participate in a critical analysis of what government is doing. That is the role of opposition.

Believe me, there is nothing I'd like better than to be a non Executive Council member of government so that we could devote our resources to supporting our government decisions. I think that's an appropriate role for the non opposition members at this table. But when we're looking at an overall fiscal restraint package that calls for, for example, a 3 percent cut to the four major granting agencies of this province and when we look then at calling for a 20 percent cut to a very small budget to begin with that is in charge of being, let us say, a watchdog of the government, we're talking

about a very uneven playing field.

All the points I made in the previous debate still hold. I think it's incumbent upon all of us who have to work together at this table for the next four years to realize that we are not talking about an arbitrary axing that is going to be of no consequence. We are talking about a severe amputation process. It's not going to eliminate the opposition. We all know that; I'm not going to kid you. But it will hamper our ability to do our work, and I think we're as entitled to do our work as you are to do your work. That is not to say that you people, the government members at this table, should not do with your budgets as you will.

I think going after opposition budgets at this time is really unfair, and I would rather not have to leave this room saying that. Please don't support the motion.

MR. WRIGHT: I concur with my colleague the Member for Edmonton Highlands. I submit, Mr. Chairman, that there is a difference in principle between the expenses that a government MLA outside the cabinet performs simply in that watchdog role, and to assimilate them and cut them equally is not in fact equity. It is a case in which equality is not equity, because the roles involved are different. They're different in a way that is important to the democracy of this province. I support the remarks which have just been made by my colleague.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Maybe you had better let a pro talk for a while.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair recognizes the Member for Barrhead.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The discussion at hand is one that is very important. Each year over the past number of years the Members' Services Committee has had to look at this whole question. I don't think anybody on the government side of the Members' Services Committee is pleased or happy with the unfortunate decisions that from time to time have to be made. The reality is that if you look back over the last number of years, in better times significant adjustments were made. In terms of the fiscal restraint program we're all

under today, I guess we all have to show leadership in one form or another. The position we've basically taken is an advocacy position with respect to leadership.

In reviewing what has happened in previous years, I recall the meeting that was held several years ago when the then Whip, the representative of the opposition party, was a member of the Members' Services Committee. Of course, the gentleman is now the Leader of the Official Opposition. He made some very important comments that are contained in the Hansard of this committee's meeting. I refer members to Hansard of May 2, 1983. I'd like to quote some statements made then by Mr. Martin, because they made a lasting impression on me. I'd like to use these words.

Let's look at what the role of the opposition is ... I don't think the opposition would need that much more. It doesn't matter whether there are two or 32; the role of the Official Opposition and the opposition is the same ... I don't think there should be a corresponding — let's say there were 30 members in the opposition at some [time]. I don't think they should get 15 times as much as they got. Surely with more MLAs, you can begin to do a lot more research on your own.

Then to go to page 107 of that same meeting:

As I pointed out before — and I'll say it clearly here again — if the opposition were up to 30, I would not expect that we'd take the opposition budget and multiply it by 15.

And then Page 121, Mr. Martin once again:

If we're going to look at principles, let's look at an overall realistic budget then for the opposition and not [expect it] to go up each time there is another opposition member. Let's look at a global budget, rather than by numbers. The role is still the same.

Those are the words of Mr. Martin then.

The position taken by the Members' Services Committee in 1986 was really taken in the light — that approach was based on the economic situation at that time. As we look now to 1987, circumstances have changed. The reduction of 20 percent that's being advocated by government members for the government caucus is significant. I'm not sure that the numbers, when you look at them from a

percentage point of view, are the same for the opposition parties. In fact, I think the percentages are lower than 20 percent. There is not an equal reduction. It's one that we would view as difficult yet fair.

MR. TAYLOR: In speaking in support of the Official Opposition, it's difficult to decide where to start, but one of the first things I think should be clear is that when we've tried to cut this budget — and we've done it all through the many areas — we've been trying to cut what is in effect a perk or an extra privilege. That's what we've done, whether it's in numbers of people attending conventions or whether we're looking at air travel. But very rarely have we gone into an actual service. In this particular case, the caucus budget is not a perk; it's definitely a service. It's a use, whether you want to call it something similar to a car or to a shovel if you're digging a hole or whatever it is. A caucus budget is definitely a tool; it's not a perk. It's not some way that MLAs themselves are benefiting in any way, shape, or form from the amount of money that goes into research or to the use of the caucus.

The second thing is that there is some argument that — I notice you used some quotes to say that it's a per capita thing that is multiplied, that because the opposition is greater, the allowance shouldn't multiply on a per capita basis. I have two answers to that. One is that it didn't multiply on a per capita basis. If it had multiplied on a per capita basis as to what the old opposition had, we would have had figures 20 to 30 percent higher than we did. We realized when we set it that it didn't multiply on a per capita basis. Having said that, it takes more research to back up four or six people getting up in the House than it does one person, regardless of what anyone says. The MLAs may be able to do some of their own research, but the point is that we get more time. The whole democratic process in question period and everything else is based on the numbers you have in the House, not the amount of research that you've done back in the pen. So more MLAs can ask more questions, can examine more things closely, can be on more committees. It's very, very important that that be looked at.

Another point I'd like to get at is that the idea that somehow or another, in a fit of munificence or shock after the last election —

whatever way they want to call it — they overbudgeted the opposition and are now going out to cripple us doesn't fit. If we take the ratio of what Ontario spends on an opposition budget, if we take the fact that they have a \$33 billion budget versus our \$11 billion, we should run very close to a third of that. Taking the same ratios, Ontario for an opposition — their total opposition budget of \$11 billion would be \$1.76 million. Ours for the total opposition parties is \$1.5 million. We are using 8 percent less money before the cut for the total opposition in caucus research than Ontario, on the same amount of money that we have to [inaudible].

Let's go on a bit further. How much money are we talking about, examining an \$11 billion budget? If you rolled all the opposition together, it comes out to around one one-hundredth of 1 percent; not 1 percent, not a tenth of 1 percent, but one one-hundredth of 1 percent that we're talking about. Yet that one one-hundredth of 1 percent in this day and age when our economy is in a more fragile position — even the government will agree to that — when we have to have the most innovative of legislation, when all legislation should be looked at to make sure we're not making an irreversible mistake . . . It's not the days when we were spending money right and left. You could get by without an opposition because you could buy your way out of any mistake you did a few years ago. You can't buy your way out of a mistake today. Now I think, from a taxpayer's point of view, one one-hundredth of 1 percent to take one final look at what comes off the assembly line from this government is a small amount of money indeed.

Lastly, I think even the government caucus itself — I submit that you people should look at your own caucus. Have you become so jaded that you don't need your own money, that you can't use research to check and curb the executive powers, that you can't use it as a vetting mechanism to look at what your own cabinet has put in? Are you lying down to such an extent that anything they put by is going to be [inaudible]? It seems to me that that very thing should be — it's not only a case of cutting the opposition budget when we talk about our per capita budget; it's cutting the back-bench budget. You in the back bench are sitting there passively, standing by for your own castration, and you don't seem to be worried about it. It

seems to me that you could use those funds to an extent for the good of the people of Alberta, the same way this opposition budget that the Official Opposition has asked for could be used for the good of Alberta.

Lastly, I think that when you start talking about just trimming everywhere — somehow or another this concept has come in that we have to trim. We're talking about 3 percent, 5 percent. When I come into this Legislature and notice the huge staff that is still around working for Executive Council, nobody's talking about cuts in that area that I can see. Yet they have access to the whole civil service to work on. In the nature of around 18 or 20 percent is what we're talking here. This, I think, is just absolute bloody-mindedness. This is a sense of exercising power without any responsibility at all. It's a sort of vengeance kick at having lost a number of seats in the last election, so you're going to make damn sure that nobody's going to get to you. I don't think any thinking has gone into this. There's nothing constructive whatsoever in an 18 percent cut. There's nothing that you can compare out in the field and in other departments to this type of cut. If you came up with 5 percent, we could say that you were gentle souls, well-meaning but misdirected. If you came up with 10 percent, I could say, "Well, you're just being a little miserable." But when you come up with 18 percent, the only excuse for it is pure and outright trying to cripple the opposition.

MS BARRETT: I'd like to add to what Nick has just said. The fact of the matter is that under the current proposals, the cuts to the government non Executive Council member caucus budget would still render that budget about 30 percent higher than it was prior to the election, when in fact there were more members in that caucus. I think we need also to look at the fact that it's a very rare instance in a fiscal restraint policy period averaging, let's say, 3 percent that we isolate caucuses and single out our functions to the extent of a 20 percent cut. I can't see any basis upon which that kind of singling out can be defended.

Not only that; I realize we're all at the 11th hour, but I do — God forbid — agree with Nick again that at this point government members have got nothing to lose by defeating this motion and stand to gain a fair amount. We, of course, have an awful lot to lose if this motion

is passed. I think this is the last opportunity in which we can agree to be fair minded, consensus oriented in fact, by defeating this motion and going for an alternative which is much more in line with the current fiscal restraint policies of a government with which I don't agree, but nevertheless more in line with the broad targets enunciated as opposed to the singling out which this example demonstrates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The motion has referred to a motion being on the table to this effect, as moved by the Member for Taber-Warner:

The establishment of a budget amount for the Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition, using the average budget total for all ministers' offices based on existing figures.

Now, that leaves a certain amount of room, to say the least, as to the exact figures involved in terms of the motion that technically is before the committee at this time. I for one don't know what an average budget reduction would be, but if there's a magic formula, you know what you're dealing with.

Edmonton Highlands, \$273,411?

MS BARRETT: Yes. That was the average budget from the '86-87 estimates for ministerial offices. The range, of course, went from \$180,000 to \$500,000; I think over a million in one case. This then became the average.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very well. The question I just have to all members is: is that indeed the understanding? For purposes of the discussion, have you accepted that figure as indeed the one: \$273,411? Right. Other members?

MR. BOGLE: The answer is no to that question, Mr. Chairman, at least from a personal point of view.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. So then I don't know what a figure is.

MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Chairman, we're dealing with the three parts of this particular motion. I don't know the procedure on this, whether I'd make another a motion.

I move that the budgets for the leaders of the opposition parties be reduced as follows. Is this in order?

MS BARRETT: As an amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: May the House hear it, and then we'll rule. If we could hear the wording of the proposed, please.

MR. CAMPBELL: Number one, the ND Party leader's budget reduced by \$28,728, the Liberal leader's budget reduced by \$27,120, and the Representative Party leader's budget reduced by \$22,304. The total to the members and the caucus budget would be reduced by: government 20 percent, ND Party 18 percent, Liberal Party 18 percent, and the Representative Party 18 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So the figures again, Mr. Campbell: for the leader of the New Democratic Party, a reduction of \$28,728. So we've all got the figures. For the leader of the Liberal Party, a reduction of \$27,120, and for the leader of the Representative Party, a reduction of \$22,304. Everyone's got those figures? Because we're going to have to split a lot of this up.

MR. TAYLOR: The operative part of the motion is the dollars, not the percentage.

MR. CAMPBELL: It figures out to government 20 percent and all other parties 18 percent.

MR. TAYLOR: I just wanted it in dollars. The dollars are the operative part.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a minute, please. We've got two separate kinds of issues going here now. Actually, we have a third. The third, which is really the first in importance, is the procedural motion about what we do about what we've already passed. So we'll come back to that one in a minute. Then we need to hive off, if you will, once the committee agrees, if the committee does agree, to lift from the table the previous motion and to make it distinctly different from what the original motion was. I think that these percentages offered will indeed allow us procedurally to get the other one off the table, and then we would go on to what the per party reductions would be in terms of a discussion.

Procedurally, what we need to do first is listen to a little bit of Beauchesne to get us in shape for the House and then to act on lifting

that previous motion. Then the Chair will entertain the motion by the Member for Rocky Mountain House, either to do the percentages per party reduction, which is the per member, or whichever way you choose to do individual motions for the leader of the NDP, the leader of the Liberals, and the leader of the Representative Party. In the other case, where we're dealing with the reduction in funding base grant per member, that also probably should be done. I suppose in that case one could do one motion to deal with all four parties.

At the moment the Chair wishes to entertain advice about the procedures.

MR. WRIGHT: I move that in the discussion of the motions that the member has made, we agree that any necessary amendments that are entailed to yesterday's motions at the end of our deliberations be made.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Procedurally, I would refer back actually to the meetings of January 8 and 9.

MR. WRIGHT: Very well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour of the procedural motion? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

First, for a moment, with regard to the rescinding of resolutions. The resolution may be rescinded as . . . What it boils down to basically is that as long as the new motion — if the motion to rescind is carried, following that, that the motions that come after are sufficiently different than the original motion. The original motion, quickly, was to knock it all down by 20 percent per member. The Chair would then entertain a motion, if that does carry to be rescinded, that the next motion would be that government members go down by 20 percent and the other parties by 18 percent, and that would be significantly different.

MR. TAYLOR: The optimum words are the dollar amounts, not the percent there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, that's the leader of the party stuff. That's a separate issue. That comes later.

MR. BOGLE: On the procedural matter, Mr. Chairman. Our figures are further complicated

in that the forecasts that appear in our book do not include a full 12-month fiscal year. Indeed, I think the figures that were presented by the Member for Rocky Mountain House are based on a full 12-month year, which in fact would coincide with what's in the estimates books for '87-88. What I'm saying is that the original motion that we passed approximately a month ago, which reduced the per member allocation by 20 percent, was based on a full 12-month period of time or a \$40,000 per member figure. The forecast in our book, while it doesn't break the budget down to a per member basis, the calculation would not equal \$40,000 per member. It's only a portion thereof. That further complicates the matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it the intent, though, of the new motion, if we do have a new motion, that it will still read 20 percent for government members and 18 percent for the others?

MS BARRETT: No.

MR. BOGLE: No, it will not. In the estimates book . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, then, what is it going to be? Another 20 percent for everybody?

MS BARRETT: It would in the formula that's being proposed. What Jack had reduced that to, Mr. Chairman, was an overall calculation of percentage cuts. So in effect the motion as revised is identical to the previous motion.

MR. HYLAND: With the exception of the leaders. He's naming dollars.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, let's keep the discussion on the percentage per member. I'm not here to be the accountant for the committee. If the calculation is the same, if it will still result in the net effect of minus 20 percent for all four political parties, then the Chair will not entertain a motion to rescind.

MR. BOGLE: It does not.

MR. CAMPBELL: No, it doesn't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair needs further direction as to what the percentage figures will be.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, on a procedural point again. The percentage figures are not as important as the dollar figures. The percentage figures will flow through your accounting system once the dollar figures are put in place. The motion that we passed a month ago focused on reducing the budgets by 20 percent, using a \$40,000 per member calculation. I moved the motion, and it was certainly not my intent to see the reduction be higher or lower than that figure. But that was based on \$40,000 per member, which would be a full 12-month fiscal year.

MS BARRETT: I have a solution to this.

MR. WRIGHT: Please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton Strathcona and Edmonton Highlands.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, the motion we've just passed means that after we've finished doing what we're about to do, we then go back to the earlier motion and fix it up to conform to what we're about to do. So I think it's premature to decide what to do with those motions in detail now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I appreciate that, hon. member, except that the Chair cannot allow it to happen, because in the combined wisdom of the committee, we passed the previous motion. If the net result in the end is still 20 percent, then we can't come back to a new motion that says exactly the same thing.

MR. WRIGHT: In that case, it doesn't need amending, with respect, Mr. Chairman. Unanimously we did it, and we can do almost anything unanimously. It's not a rescission motion; it's an amendment motion to the previous one. Call it what you like, we are by unanimous agreement entitled to do what we will with our own motion earlier.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. I agree, so long as everybody [inaudible]. And then you're going to deal in dollar figures, not in percentages.

MR. CAMPBELL: Can I speak to this without concluding debate?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely. We're on

procedure, so it's okay.

MR. CAMPBELL: The motion that I made was the budgets for the leaders of the opposition parties, and the original one that Mr. Bogle made was to do with the 20 percent to do with the secretarial \$40,000 figure.

MS BARRETT: That's right.

MR. TAYLOR: Just a point for clarification here. I don't know if it's adjourned or not now. Is this the sum total of your kick at the caucus today? The leaders' cut. Was it so much dollars, or are you going to go after the per -- is that the total cut, the whole global cut for the opposition? In other words, you refer to the cut in the leaders', but my understanding of this, as a point of information, is that our caucus allowance is made up of a leader's allowance and a per member allowance. Are we then not touching the per member allowance? This is going to be the total?

MS BARRETT: The per member was already voted on.

MR. CAMPBELL: It's already voted on and passed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Then we don't need the last discussion part. You're only going to deal with the leader part. All right. We've passed the motion. The Chair is on the procedure. We're now back to square one. The Chair is ready to accept the motion. The Member for Rocky Mountain House. I gather you want to move dollar amounts.

MR. TAYLOR: Don't you want to wield the knife and go down in history?

MR. CAMPBELL: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would suggest that you do it one party at a time.

MR. TAYLOR: Use the axe.

MR. CAMPBELL: I move that the budget for the Leader of the Opposition, the ND Party, be \$28,728, which equates to 18 percent less.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We don't want to hear the

percentage, thank you very much. The Chair recognizes the fact that the motion reads: a reduction of \$28,728 for the office of the Leader of the Official Opposition. All right. Agreement as to that . . .

MR. BOGLE: May I ask for clarification, Mr. Chairman? The figure is based on a full month's operation of the leader. Is that the intent?

MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, that's the intent.

MR. HYLAND: A full year.

MR. BOGLE: A full, 12-month fiscal year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A 12-month fiscal year. All right. For a 12-month fiscal year, a reduction of \$28,728. Discussion?

MR. TAYLOR: I feel that it is highly retributive and vicious, because the Official Opposition has already been cut \$128,000 from their estimate of \$940,000.

MS BARRETT: No, \$640,000 updated.

MR. TAYLOR: No, I'm talking about your total. One hundred and twenty-eight thousand dollars is already a cut of around 12 or 15 percent overall, which -- although it's passed; there isn't much you can say about it -- I think is a very dirty deed indeed. Now to pursue the Official Opposition to the extent that you go after the leader's allowance too, for an additional 18 percent, or \$28,000, I think is fighting a war and taking no prisoners. This is complete annihilation or a complete effort at burning the countryside, you might say.

You've already taken a tremendous chunk. No other department of government, no cut that I know of anywhere, whether it is in the expense accounts given to the Executive Council or whether it's in pet programs . . . They've taken a cut like 15 percent, which is what -- if we just left it alone, 20 percent to the per member caucus means 15 percent overall. To come along now and hit the Official Opposition with another \$28,728 cut, I think is mercilessness. It's not fair. It's not reasonable. There's no common sense behind it at all.

It seems to me, as I said, that it's the type of warfare where you take no prisoners, but

unfortunately, gentlemen, you're not Alexander the Great. I don't think you're going to continue going without having your turn at the post. This is no way to treat numbers of people, a high percentage of whom voted against the government, voted for an opposition -- maybe not so much against the government but for an opposition -- that wanted to see things looked at, wanted to see a change, wanted to make sure there were counterviewpoints, if not necessarily opposing viewpoints, at least viewpoints that would sharpen and indeed help the legislation when it comes forward. So to pursue them, after taking \$128,000 out of their hide already, with your 6 to 3 majority is power gone wild. I think it's power feeding on power with the idea of not having any sense of fairness whatsoever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comments from members?

MR. KOWALSKI: Just a point of clarification. I think some figures have been bandied around here, and I think they're unfortunate figures. The best I can determine is that if we were to take a look at the '86-87 forecast that we're talking about, which is basically a funding level on 11 months out of 12, and we have the '87-88 estimate, as far as I can understand what we're talking about here -- and I go back to the minutes of Thursday, January 8, 1987, when Ms Barrett identified that the average ministerial office budget amounted to \$273,411 for the '86-87 year. It's my understanding that basically what we're talking about here by way of this motion is equating the dollar figure for the office of the Leader of the Opposition to essentially be that of the average ministerial office. We're talking of using the average ministerial office in the '86-87 budget. We don't know yet what it would be in the '87-88 budget. Just on quick reference, it would seem to me that the reduction, if it's \$28,728 as it is in the motion, would be based on a current figure for the Leader of the Official Opposition for his budget of approximately three hundred and some odd thousand dollars, and that would certainly be a reduction considerably below the 18 percent figure my colleague from Westlock-Sturgeon just talked about. In fact, it would seem to be in the 9 percent range, so I don't know where the figure of 18 percent would come from.

MS BARRETT: The Member for Barrhead is correct, inasmuch as we are talking now about a narrower focus; that is, the original allocation determined unanimously by this committee on July 29, 1986, that the Official Opposition Leader's budget, specifically for his office, would be \$300,000. A reduction of \$28,728 does come to about 9 percent. What Mr. Campbell has done is rolled the effect of the 20 percent per member per caucus budget cutback with the \$28,728 cutback on the \$300,000 for the opposition leader's office to achieve a combined cut of 18 percent. Nonetheless, I find the move entirely despicable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comments with respect to the motion?

MS BARRETT: Oh, call the question. You know, executioners are happy to move when the prisoner says, "Go for it," so call the question.

MR. BOGLE: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Other comments? Two calls for the question. All those in favour of the motion?

MR. TAYLOR: Robots.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? The motion is carried.

The next motion, please.

MS BARRETT: You must be very proud of yourselves.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next motion.

MS BARRETT: Why don't we go on and axe the Leg. Library research budget?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you making a motion? I don't see any other motions on the table.

MR. CAMPBELL: I make the motion, Mr. Chairman, that the budget for the leader of the Liberal Party be cut by \$27,120.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion by Rocky Mountain House. Further discussion?

MR. TAYLOR: I just want to thank the government members for all the co-operation

and common sense they've used. At least you're leading me to the same execution block you did the other parties. It's a peculiar government. When I was elected, I thought there was some sort of common sense or reason, Mr. Chairman, that would prevail no matter what party you were in. To continue this charade of using your six to three majority to beat down any possibility, or a lot of the possibility, that you can be questioned bothers me, because like bullies everywhere, if you get away with it this year, you're going to try doing a little bit more next year. What's going to happen to our budget next year is going to be a little difficult to ascertain.

I can only hope -- and I gather from the procedures that this is recommended to the House and that it can come up for debate in the House -- that what I see around this table is not representative of what I see on the government side of the House, that some sense will come through to them, possibly from their constituents, possibly from the fourth estate informing the public that indeed this is the way the government carries on when there is any danger or any fear that somebody might come up with any sort of constructive questioning or constructive opposition.

I think it's very negative indeed, but on with the motion. If this is the way our boys get their jollies, we'd better not stand in their way for a while.

MS BARRETT: Hear, hear. Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion, please signify.

MR. TAYLOR: Come on, fellows; make sure you're recorded.

MS BARRETT: They won't even look up, Nick.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed? The motion carries.

Further motion with respect to the Representative Party, I presume.

MR. CAMPBELL: I move that the budget for the leader of the Representative Party be cut by \$22,304.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comments with respect to the motion on the floor?

MS BARRETT: I speak against it, Mr. Chairman. I think that regardless of party all opposition leaders have the right to conduct their business. The same holds true for the man who is known as the dean of the Legislature. This is just as offensive as the previous motion.

MR. TAYLOR: I wouldn't want the Representative Party to think they went unheralded and unsung, you being a poet: full many a flower destined to bloom in the south wastes its fragrance on the desert air. If there has ever been a desert air, it's what I see around the table here. I'd want to support the House leader for the New Democrats and say that a further cut in the case of the Representatives really puts them down. He's the leader of an opposition party where he could be seriously affected because there comes a critical mass, if you want to call it, using the rule of physics, that you get down beneath and it gets difficult to do anything. I'd ask them to maybe make one last thought about him, the government members. After all, you have been wooing him. This is no way to get him to come back to the table, to give him a kick in the rump.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to remind the two members of the committee who spoke previously on this matter that on a per capita per member basis there is no party in the Assembly that is treated as richly as the Representative Party.

MR. TAYLOR: And it didn't do you any good either, did it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps I could recognize you after.

MR. BOGLE: I just wanted that on the record.

MR. CAMPBELL: I sit here with a great deal of interest. Certainly the constituency and the constituents I represent always felt there was a difference in these parties. It's kind of refreshing to hear that they're all together.

MS BARRETT: We have one common bond.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the proposer of the motion how the figures have

been arrived at?

MR. CAMPBELL: The first figure, of course, comes from the 20 percent of the . . .

MR. TAYLOR: From the deputy chairman, that's where you got the damn stuff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I'll recognize you next. There was a call for the question.

MR. WRIGHT: I think the answer to my question was in progress, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BOGLE: It's very subjective, Mr. Chairman. The motion that was passed nearly a month ago gave an opportunity for the opposition parties to do some work amongst themselves. To date no figures have come forward. Therefore, it's a matter that we've tried to put together ourselves in preparation for the motion.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I understand that. It was how the particular numbers were arrived at that I was interested in.

MR. BOGLE: Subjective.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any discussion?

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion, signify. Opposed? The motion is carried.

All hon. members may well be interested to know that I continued to keep the leader of the Representative Party informed as to when Members' Services Committee was meeting so that he would have opportunity to be present at our meetings as an observer, in that status.

All right. Those figures as now passed will have to be reflected in a revision with regard to those elements. Having the motions passed, we will have them automatically kick in.

MR. WRIGHT: We can deal with the earlier motions simply by saying "except as varied in motions so and so," and just leave anyone to work it out. It's an exercise of description only.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion to approve the caucus budgets? Is there one forthcoming,

taking into account the various calculations? A motion from Cypress-Redcliff. Discussion? Call for the question?

MR. CAMPBELL: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? The motion carries. Thank you.

For our agenda then, I take it now we return to the library, section 12. Westlock-Sturgeon earlier made the request to have the library estimates dealt with at this stage. Technically on the table then, we now bring forward the fact that there is a reduction of 5 percent, as previously moved by the Member for Calgary Glenmore. Who now would like to become the sponsor of that motion so that we can deal with that issue?

MR. BOGLE: I will, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, would you like to comment now? We'll be dealing basically with regard to the pink sheets.

MR. TAYLOR: I can now see one of the major reasons or logic in moving it back. I feel that the motion that was tabled could have a crippling effect on the research capacities of the Legislature Library. Indeed, if we are cutting the caucus budgets, which we have, it seems to me only logical that we keep the library budget up to at least their old capacity to operate. In effect, if this motion is defeated, I would move a 10 percent increase in the research capacity of the library to help both the government and opposition members make up for any shortage they experience because of the clip in the caucus budgets. However, I think a 5 percent cut makes no particular sense at all now that we know that the caucus research budgets have been effectively cut 15 to 20 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair understands that if this motion fails, you propose to bring forth one that would give a 10 percent increase.

MR. TAYLOR: That's just to the research portion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Other comments with respect to the library?

MR. TAYLOR: That could be subject to amendment too.

MS BARRETT: I think there is a particular mind-set that has developed here, which I would call paranoia of intellectual property and the results therefrom. I think the members who have spoken against cutting opposition budgets and Leg. Library research budgets are not the members I refer to. I would support defeating this motion and, in fact, pursuing an alternative motion which would result in an increase in Leg. Library research services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further discussion?

MR. TAYLOR: If I may close off. When I suggested another motion, I would certainly be open to something, maybe a compromise of some sort. I just mentioned 10. I think that just in reason and fairness we should defeat this motion so that we can propose a new one. Mine could certainly be amended. As far as the government members are concerned, they may want a different number. But I think that to pass this motion now and continue onward is really going to be counterproductive both as far as research being done and as far as what the public perceives to be almost a Luddite or book-burning philosophy in going after anything that's involved with research and cutting it.

MR. BOGLE: Could I suggest a brief coffee break?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Indeed. Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The committee recessed from 11:33 to 11:41 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're back to the matter of the motion on the table, a 5 percent reduction with respect to the library.

MR. BOGLE: An additional 5 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: An additional 5 percent, which is reflected, I gather, in the pink sheets here.

MR. BOGLE: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there an amendment? All right. Further discussion? Failing that, is there a call for the question?

MR. TAYLOR: Could I amend it, Mr. Chairman, that the cut be reduced from 5 percent to .0001 percent? Would you accept that one?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a technical amendment; yes. Moved by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon — how many zeros?

MR. TAYLOR: Three zeros: .0001 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Discussion?

MS BARRETT: I speak in favour of the amendment — not that it's any compensation in real terms for what's just been done to the opposition caucus budgets. It is, however, at least a measure which will preserve the existing integrity of expertise and quality of production in the Leg. Library research department.

MR. TAYLOR: If I may speak in favour of the motion, I know my friends — and I use the term loosely — on the government side may not realize that I am throwing them a lifesaver, a flotation device, to keep them from forever being branded the philistines of the late half of the 20th century. Here is an opportunity to look as if you're not a bunch of book-burners, not a bunch of people that are afraid of what will be found between those leather covers, and actually are people that would not be afraid to walk through a library in the middle of the day and get your picture taken. Here I'm giving you that opportunity to show that indeed you're one of [inaudible].

MR. BOGLE: Great speech, Nick.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further discussion?

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Call for the question on the amendment. Those in favour of the amendment?

MR. TAYLOR: Come on, fellows. Come on,

Campbell; it will be your only chance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed? The amendment fails.

MS BARRETT: Funny thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion before the table -- further discussion? Call for the question?

MR. CAMPBELL: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed? The motion carries.

Is the Chair able to make the interpretation that on the basis of that motion and since the pink sheets reflect that reduction, therefore the passage of the motion has effected a passage of this budget as proposed for the Legislative Assembly? The Chair would feel much more comfortable, though, for a formal motion to give approval to the pink sheets as presented.

MR. BOGLE: I'll so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Discussion?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour? Opposed? The motion carries. Thank you.

Since according to my understanding we have approved all of the elements within the budget, when we made the necessary corrections to reflect today's discussion, we therefore approved the budget in total, and the figures will indeed reflect that and be presented to the Assembly. Could we have one motion giving overall approval to the budget for presentation? Moved by the Member for Cypress-Redcliff. Discussion? Is there a call for the question?

MR. CAMPBELL: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? The motion carries. Thank you.

The Chair reflects that there is some unfinished business from yesterday, at least two items. One is with respect to an information memo to go around to all hon. members to reflect the new mileage things that are in

effect. Also, at that time the committee requested that the form to be distributed be seen by this committee. So there are two parts of one issue. That material is being distributed.

Perhaps we might deal with that in-house material.

MR. HYLAND: What I just handed you is the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We can come to that one next. Thank you.

MR. HYLAND: Everybody has their copy, I think, except Blake.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The memo that you have there should be interpreted as a draft, but you recall that because it put into place an action yesterday, we need to have it distributed fairly rapidly. So if you would read over that and see if there are any changes that ought to be made, I would appreciate it. Then we'd look at the form.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, I do apologize to the committee for not having discharged what I had undertaken to do in the way of drafting something to deal with the point that there is a certain amount of money that should be paid for members' vehicles that's independent of the mileage due to the obvious items of ongoing upkeep and the insurance and all those sorts of things. If this has been passed, then we can't alter anything, except the wording, to reflect what was passed, I daresay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The understanding of the Chair is that notwithstanding your comments and the passage of this, we are still carrying over an agenda item relating to what you were doing.

MR. WRIGHT: Very well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So that would be seen as a matter to be dealt with over and above what this action is.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I see. By way of explanation to the Chair, I have been occupied in my ordinary life, trying to get rid of certain matters, and also I did take my holiday, which is the reason I did not do as promised.

However, this item, on a casual reading, does not really deal with the point that I had made, because I think that notwithstanding that you don't have to produce receipts, you still have to say you've done that minimum amount of miles. It may be that one will do that minimum amount of miles anyway, but it seems to me that this is just a procedural amendment, not a substantive one. I've only very quickly tried to compare it with what's in our book. By the way, can someone enlighten me as to what the transportation and administration members' order is? Is it the thing we see in our book under Members' Allowances and so on?

MR. HYLAND: I think so.

MR. WRIGHT: Okay. It's under Travel Allowances in the book, I take it, and what I read under Travel Allowances, item (4), is:

An allowance of 21 cents per kilometre travelled, in respect of a Member's use of a private automobile, in addition to the operating costs specified in (3), which is the gasoline and oil, et cetera. So you'd still have to say you had traveled that amount of kilometres. You just wouldn't have to produce vouchers to prove it.

MR. HYLAND: This motion isn't all procedural. It's procedural in many ways, but I think what I wanted to say was the thing of the receipts. When we're talking receipts, most members — not totally all but most members — use gasoline credit cards, and the Clerk's office has a copy of that. You can claim X number of kilometres up to a certain point without looking at those receipts if you feel you've traveled it.

MR. WRIGHT: That's correct.

MR. HYLAND: If you feel you've traveled more, then the only thing that this was suggesting was that beyond a point, what we've said in that members' services order is that there are those that travel further and that can be quite easily determined, within a few miles, by taking the gas receipts and an average consumption rate. It's not a thing to say that for every receipt you have to say you went from here to here on this day.

MR. WRIGHT: I agree. My idea was not to require receipts for any of it but simply to

leave the members on their word, as at present, and to provide a certain amount — I had 14,000 kilometres in mind — of allowance equivalent thereto or whatever the number is. In fact, it's ...

MR. HYLAND: I think it would simplify matters if we didn't look at 1, if we just looked at 2.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, it's 10,000 suggested. Right. Say that that bottom amount will cover 10,000 kilometres, but it will be an allowance in respect of the ownership of the car and irrespective of the number of kilometres traveled up to that amount. We can multiply it out and come to an amount. An urban member is entitled to that; 18,000 similarly for a country member. Then above that, it's a matter of the actual kilometres traveled, and I don't even see we need vouchers for that. Does the committee see what I'm driving at?

MR. HYLAND: The member is suggesting that you would just say you had traveled X and wouldn't have to turn in receipts for it. Your word would be good enough to say that you'd traveled the additional mileage.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes. You see, the concept is here, but it invites people in effect to say they've traveled a certain number of miles irrespective of what they really did travel. If it's more than 10,000 kilometres, then receipts have to be produced, or more than 18,000 kilometres, receipts have to be produced, whereas really what we need is a fair sum for ownership of a vehicle, which everyone admits is necessary, and then for those that travel longer distances and whose cars receive extra depreciation because of that, an amount that's according to the extra traveled.

If there is some other business that can be got onto in the next 20 or 30 minutes, Mr. Chairman, with the committee's leave I can work on a rewording of this, keeping the dollar result the same, I believe, and bring it back.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the committee is willing. But you cannot factor in an amount to look after the depreciation of the vehicle, because that's a separate issue, whereas this draft memo was prepared in the light of yesterday's motion so that members looking at this need to be

certain that this reflects accurately what was passed yesterday, and again, you see, that relates back to our difficulty of putting it into effect yesterday. Nevertheless, that's where we are. So if you could look at the . . .

MR. WRIGHT: That was my initial comment. I was told that this is, in fact, still open. If it's not, then I won't speak further.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it could be open, but we get back in our procedural thing that we'll have to rescind yesterday or amend yesterday as to the effective date and then come back and have another meeting as to how to proceed.

MR. WRIGHT: It's hardly worth it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that as a separate issue we need to address that one at a future meeting.

MR. HYLAND: I think the issue of the airfare is still open, so this order will have to be opened up again. We fully realize that because we weren't able to deal with the other.

MR. WRIGHT: For people who do look at their 'milometers' and claim accordingly, under this whether you have receipts or not is immaterial. You still have to certify, and it makes no difference in fact. But if that's your ruling, Mr. Chairman, I'm governed by it, naturally.

MR. KOWALSKI: I'm just delighted to hear the arguments put forward by the Member for Edmonton Strathcona. It's really unfortunate that he could not be with us yesterday, because one of the concerns that I raised was the bureaucratization of a rather simplistic need of members. The reason the motion was passed yesterday to bring it back at the next meeting was to exactly ensure and clarify that we were not in fact going to all of a sudden be creating a new bureaucracy to deal with what is a rather simplistic thing.

MR. WRIGHT: Well, we have.

MR. KOWALSKI: I concur with the comments made by the Member for Edmonton Strathcona with respect to this. But we've now done this

and, I guess, put it in place. I wonder if the member would continue to do his research, and perhaps we would go through this period of February and March 1987 and get some understanding at the end of those two months' experience to see exactly how much paper there is being added to this whole process and then bring it back in April or May to review it. I'd be delighted to participate in that review.

MR. WRIGHT: If I can speak, Mr. Chairman, I just wonder what has been engraved and acted upon between yesterday and today in respect of this motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What has been acted upon is that our staff has responded with alacrity to try to get the memo and the form in place, because this committee wanted to do the form.

MR. WRIGHT: So that's all. So no actual changes in the rules have been made.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I assume that because yesterday the committee passed the members' services order, it could be brought back and we could change the effective date if you so desired.

MR. WRIGHT: When was the effective date? Yesterday?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yesterday.

MR. WRIGHT: Oh, yes, we can change that, but we don't even need to change that if we just change the wording of the motion. I honestly believe the attempt yesterday was to do what we had in mind earlier on; it just didn't work out that way.

Mr. Chairman, may I ask that this be put down on the agenda for half an hour and we work on something else? It won't take me . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we could probably have a . . . What's the will of the committee? The committee stands adjourned for a moment.

[The committee recessed from 12 p.m. to 12:01 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're now back in formal sitting, and the Member for Taber-Warner suggested that the travel item be dealt with

after dealing with the next item of business and then a short break for lunch. We would come back and finish the other item.

The Chairman sees agreement. We now move to the motion which is before us, which is a carry-on item from yesterday. You have the motion before you. The mover of the motion?

MR. BOGLE: The mover is not here, but we had unanimous consent to proceed with it. There were attempts made yesterday by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon to amend it. We needed more time. There has been further consultation with the Legislative Counsel. I think it may be appropriate just to remove that motion from the books and allow a new motion to be introduced. So if we had the unanimous consent ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the committee give unanimous consent to withdraw yesterday's motion with regard to this item?

MR. TAYLOR: This is the re-establishment grant?

MR. BOGLE: Yes.

MR. TAYLOR: That was my motion, wasn't it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Everybody agree?

MR. TAYLOR: I don't know if I should or not. How much trouble can I cause?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair recognizes, having received unanimous consent, that we are now open to a new motion. Is the same member prepared to move the motion, which we have in a copy in front of us? We've now cleared the decks and we have the motion.

MR. HYLAND: I think this was initially moved -- unless Nick wants to.

MR. CAMPBELL: Nick's the one that moved that.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm just debating, gentlemen. I'm in a bad mood, and there's not going to be a Liberal take advantage of this thing for quite a few years. On the other hand, in the interest of justice, I don't want to appear as small-minded as some of my opposition. I therefore will move

it. How's that for a [inaudible]?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Everyone has a copy of the motion before them, and the motion is moved. Discussion?

MR. CAMPBELL: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion as printed before you, please signify. Opposed? The Chair recognizes that the motion carries unanimously. Thank you.

Do you care to stand adjourned until half past 12? All right; we'll be back here at 12:30 p.m.

[The committee recessed from 12:03 p.m. to 12:38 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, (4) is what?

MR. WRIGHT: I'm taking it from the items under Travel Allowances in our book, so the preamble will be the same as in the existing motion. It's a transportation and administration members' order to be amended to put this into effect. If I can speak to this, Mr. Chairman?

The beginning of (4) is exactly the same as at present. The only difference is at the end here. That incorporates what we passed yesterday, except that the bottom allowance, equivalent to a distance of 10,000 kilometres for urban members and 18,000 kilometres for rural members, is payable irrespective of the mileage actually traveled to reflect the costs of an automobile that are not dependent on travel at all. So I've just written it down in that manner.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So parts (a) and (b) reflect what was indeed passed yesterday?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, except that you don't have to travel the distance. Yesterday we made what was in effect a procedural amendment plus a substantive amendment making a distinction between rural and urban members, but it still left it necessary to travel the distance you were claiming.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You also envision that the effective date then becomes today?

MR. WRIGHT: We'd still have to have an

interim measure, and that has been provided for. My colleague the hon. Member for Taber-Warner has pointed out that this difference may make the thing taxable as to the part that is the use of the automobile for pleasure. Therefore, it should not go into effect, Mr. Chairman, until that has been checked out. It's a good point.

So my suggestion would be to leave item 1, which was passed yesterday, as is, although if I had my druthers, we would take out the words "without receipts" where they occur. This proposal would be in substitution for 2, subject to that being confirmed at the next meeting. In the meantime we could check out the tax implications. It may be that this matter, which isn't a big deal anyway, raises complications of a tax nature that make it not worth while bothering about, in which case what we have already passed would stand. As I say, if I had my druthers, there would be the removal of the receipting requirement; just leave it to members' honesty in reporting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the pleasure of the committee? To deal with this as we have it here or to leave yesterday's motion stand and then come back to this one at the next meeting, inviting the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona to check into the tax implications?

MR. WRIGHT: So the object of this exercise, Mr. Chairman, would be to get an idea from the committee whether this is okay subject to the tax query.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, just without having a lot of time to think about it and discuss it, at first glance I don't have any problem with the proposal as long as we're not into those tax concessions. I think what we're saying here is that we agree that to be a member of the Assembly, whether it's a city or a rural area, because of moving back and forth you need a car or a portion of a car. Rather than saying you should have to travel 10,000 kilometres and get paid per mile, we're saying that there's a basic allowance that we're going to say you need for that car plus any mileage over a certain mileage you get paid for. It isn't that much different than what we proposed, with the exception that you will get a certain amount once you apply for it. We assume that it takes that many kilometres to pay for a car.

MR. BOGLE: I support the initiatives taken by our colleague at the table, subject to, as he has said, the check re tax implications. It does not alter the intent of the motion we passed yesterday, because an urban member would not claim for the additional kilometres unless he or she, in fact, had used 10,000 kilometres. A rural member would not be able to claim the additional kilometres unless he or she, in fact, had used the base 18,000 kilometres. So it is within the intent of yesterday's motion; it merely needs the checking of the tax people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then it's moved by Edmonton Strathcona what we have before us. We're now discussing this, and it sounds like we're ready for the question.

MR. CAMPBELL: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Moved by the Member for Edmonton Strathcona the handwritten copy that is before you. All those in favour, please say aye — or signify; sorry. Opposed? Carried unanimously.

MR. TAYLOR: You caught me on that the first day in the House.

MR. HYLAND: The only thing with it that's not written here is that we assume there are no tax implications.

MR. TAYLOR: There is no such thing as no tax implications. Those rascals are always lurking around.

MR. WRIGHT: So we're going to say yea or nay, in fact, at the next meeting?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. What was in effect yesterday is now in effect today, which is the yellow sheet memo in front of you plus the other form for you. If you have any problems with that, would you please get back to my office by tomorrow.

MR. WRIGHT: Just a minute. Is 2 in effect, too, or do we confirm that? I mean, we don't need to put that into effect at all until the next meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right. We can take that off the memo. Good. Thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: And 1 is in effect with the receipting business?

MR. CHAIRMAN: For the time being. All righty. Now in that regard, hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona, would you also be of some assistance with the tax implications?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps consult with Parliamentary Counsel.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I have to leave very shortly. May I briefly report on something that I suppose was passed over yesterday, which is the subcommittee on computerization? In view of the fact that I was hors de combat for a while, I had asked one of my colleagues in my caucus who knows about computers, which I don't, to get in touch with someone that the other member on the committee from the opposition side, the leader of the Liberal Party, had in his caucus employed that knew about computers and also to speak to the third member of the committee, Mr. Stevens. He did do that in order to ask the government side to produce somebody that's knowledgeable so they could get together and make a preliminary survey. Mr. Stevens said to Mr. Gibeault that it was up to us to have a meeting of the committee to deal with it. I will be arranging that.

That's my report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In addition to that, the departmental audit for Legislative Assembly should be in within the next two weeks. Flowing from that, I know there was some concern about the automation. I would hope that your committee would meet with whomever we set up on that task force.

MR. WRIGHT: I hope to do it within a week, as soon as the third member is around.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In that regard, I had one meeting with the representative from NBI so that we could indeed do that interface. But if we could make it a slightly larger group, please.

MR. WRIGHT: You said NBI? It stands for?

MRS. MIROSH: Nothing but initials.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just NBI. But in that one, Rod will contact . . . One of the other things we need to ask is that in time past each caucus has supplied a representative to the selection committee for the interns. Each caucus might bear in mind that we're going to be interviewing potential interns in Calgary on March 20 and 21. That's a late Friday afternoon; it's actually Friday evening and Saturday morning. So if you're able to supply someone, we'd appreciate that, but we'll have Rod make contact with each of your caucuses.

In addition, I would suggest if I could get concurrence from members formally in the meeting -- we had an informal discussion at the break -- that when the House goes back in, I would hope there might be agreement that I declare the five telephone booths and the washrooms as being no-smoking areas. That would still leave the members' lounge as being a smoking area and the side hallways plus the Chamber for smoking and coffee when we're in Committee of Supply and Committee of the Whole, the reasoning being that we're now supplying three extra new telephone booths and that the areas are so confined and so airtight that it causes one problem. The other one is that if the doors are closed and someone leaves a cigarette smouldering in there, it's less likely to be detected.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, isn't that the best place to keep a smoker, though -- locked up in a phone booth? I think you've got it reversed here. Allowing them to run loose and contaminate everybody -- I would think that the phone booth would be the best place for them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The other thing is -- make I take concurrence?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The House is ahead of schedule and we expect to have it handed back over to Public Works, Supply and Services a week Monday. That will allow us more than two weeks' time for a workup in terms of the PA system and all the rest of it. With regard to the painting of the rotunda, that will be finished by the weekend. So the whole thing is on target and ahead of schedule.

MR. WRIGHT: Can I ask -- I'm sure everyone

else on the committee knows; I just don't -- how the arrangements concerning television are going to be worked out for the next session?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have the new sound control position in place, slung in front of the Speaker's gallery. That's where all the sound and activation of microphones will take place. It will be more efficient than it was before. With respect to television coverage, it's just going to be question period again, covered by QCTV, but the ports have been cut into the walls and now re-covered so that it's in place for any kind of a future development. But it's nothing at this stage, and I have yet to deal with the priorities committee. The other thing is we've just finished arrangements this morning as to -- all of the camera positions will be temporary. At the end of question period each day QCTV will pull its two cameras completely out of the Chamber, so the lines are going to be much cleaner. That's where we are at the moment. Okay?

MR. BOGLE: I was just going to ask if it's appropriate when we adjourn for members to stop in and look at the Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely. I'll invite Rod to -- we could go there right away.

MR. BOGLE: Did we set the next meeting date?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a Tuesday.

MR. HYLAND: March 3.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll have Rod take you down there now. I've got another meeting at 1. If anyone else wants to come back later, 4 o'clock would be a good time. Thank you all. A motion to adjourn? Thank you, Cypress-Redcliff. All those in favour, please vacate the room as fast as possible.

[The committee adjourned at 12:52 p.m.]

