

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

[1:04 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Welcome to 1988. You've got your agendas before you. What is your wish with regard to item 2(a), approval of December 11 committee minutes? Moved by the Member for Cypress-Redcliff for approval. Those in favour?

MR. BOGLE: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question.

MR. BOGLE: On page 109.87, the second paragraph makes reference to 79 members being covered by the extended health care plan under Mutual Life Insurance Company. Why does the figure 79 appear, rather than 83?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good question.

DR. McNEIL: There were four members who elected not to take that coverage.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okeydoke. Any other questions? On the motion by Cypress-Redcliff for approval of the December 11 minutes, those in favour please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Item 2(b), the December 16 committee meeting minutes. Any questions arising there? Motion to approve?

MS BARRETT: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Highlands. All those in favour please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Business Arising from the Minutes. One of the issues that had come up prior to Christmas was handicapped access to the building, and I received a memo from the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services which I would like to read into the record, and then we'll circulate it so that you know what has happened with regard to that issue.

In your memorandum of November 20, 1987, you brought to my attention the Members' Services Committee's request for information about handicapped access to the Legislature Building.

I'm pleased to advise that, following consideration of access at all the extremities of the building i.e. north portico, east, south and west gables, barrier-free access is being provided through the east main floor entry. A new sidewalk extends North from a gate under the existing steps to the main area of pavement at the front of the building. This provides easy access for users arriving in buses and other vehicles which park on the adjacent roadway.

Modifications to the existing doorway including the installation of an automatic opening device and the installation of an interior ramp will provide access to the corridor floor. Operation of the entrance doorway will be controlled from the central security desk which will also maintain camera surveillance of the entry.

Construction of the sidewalk is complete. Completion of the balance of the work is scheduled for February 1988. The total cost of the project is approximately \$60,000. A sketch plan showing the location of the access is enclosed. Please let me know if you require any additional information on this subject.

That's in reply to a matter that came up in November.

We're on item 3(a).

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, I wish to propose a motion that we table items 3(a), (b), and (c), in view of the time and the na-

ture of the discussion and in view of the fact that the notice of the meetings for today and tomorrow was specifically directed to holding budget meetings in the times allotted. That would be my motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion to table items 3(a), (b), and (c). Those in favour of the motion please signify. Opposed? Carried.

Item 4. Sorry.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, could I have clarification on a matter? When we moved our meetings from the Carillon Room to the Assembly, I do recall a previous discussion about who should be on the floor, and it was certainly agreed that chiefs of staff should be on the floor. Was there any suggestion that additional staff would be on the floor in addition to the chiefs of staff?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was my understanding that it was indeed just the chiefs of staff, but I assume that's up to the committee members to determine themselves. But that was my understanding, yes.

MR. BOGLE: That was certainly my feeling.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I don't seem to be having any other challenges in that regard, so I guess it looks like it's going to be dealt with.

MR. BOGLE: Do any previous minutes reflect a decision on that matter?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would take us back to, what, September? Okay, we'll have a pause for the minutes' search.

[The committee recessed from 1:10 p.m. to 1:12 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Scarlett has gone to retrieve the minutes for 1986, because the secretary believes it occurs in that year, so we'll do a search on that. Thank you.

Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to treasure this moment: the first point of order of 1988. Okay, good.

MR. WRIGHT: It couldn't come from a nicer objector, could it? Or querier.

It's just on tabling. My understanding is that the reason why a motion to table is not debatable is because it's going to come up at the next meeting automatically. If it's a motion that won't come up at the next -- I mean, if it's intended that it just be shelved, so to speak, then that's equivalent to a motion indefinitely to postpone, and that is debatable. Therefore, I take it that since what we've been voting on and calling tabling is of the former class, all things tabled come up automatically at the next meeting. So does that mean that what was tabled just now comes up tomorrow?

MR. BOGLE: On the point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the point of order, Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: It certainly seems to me that at the next regular meeting we would deal with those matters which have been tabled, but when we're dealing with special meetings, meetings dealing with the budget in this case, they are not regular, and therefore tabled matters would not be dealt with.

I draw the hon. member's attention to the motions passed allowing the chairman of this committee to call special meetings of the committee while the House is in session, and that discretion was to deal with extraordinary matters. There were items on the agenda which remained in a tabled state of suspension until the proceedings of the House were over and we were back into our regular [inaudible] of this committee. Therefore, it's my interpretation, Mr. Chairman, that the matters tabled would not come back until we're into a regularly scheduled meeting where we're dealing with items other than the budget itself. This meeting and the meeting tomorrow were called specifically to deal with the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, let's make reference to the last minute. The official notice of the meeting which was posted and distributed for this committee meeting was:

The above Special Standing Committee consisting of the following Members will be holding budget meetings at the time, date and location shown.

The minute is of Friday, December 11, item 4, Schedule of Budget Meetings:

Discussion followed an agreement reached to hold the first set of budget meetings on the afternoon of January 18, the morning of January 19, 1988, with Members keeping open the dates of February 8 and 9 should the need arise.

Well, in light of that minute of December 11 and the notice that was appropriately circulated, the Chair has to take the interpretation that the tabling motion which just passed is then held till the next regular meeting unless the committee itself determines otherwise, either later today or tomorrow.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, on a point of order. It is a little awkward since on December 16 we did say that we would be discussing these contracts at the next meeting of the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services, which is contrary to the interpretation put on what happened. It's happened now, I agree, but I would earnestly ask that we do discuss it before we finish business on this occasion, because it's the beginning of the year, and it's going to mess things up if we're going to go into this contract at sometime other than the beginning of the calendar year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we have to leave it this way: that in light of the notice the matters are held until the next regular meeting. However, the Chair has said -- and hopefully some negotiation can take place with committee members at the coffee break later as to maybe there's some other way to deal with it, because it would have to be a resolution of the committee.

Item 4 on the agenda. The documentation is there in your binders and really was given and circulated as information to all the members dealing with the matter of bookings and arrivals of groups coming from schools or other groups within your constituency. It's there for your information. If it causes any problems, perhaps you could contact our office or myself or Mr. Scarlett later in the day.

Item 5 then takes us to the order of the day. The orders of the day indeed deal with the matter of estimates, so the Chair asks the direction of the members as to what process you wish to undertake this year. Which group do you want to start with

first? Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I would hope that we could begin by having a general overview conducted by yourself and by Dr. McNeil as to what is being put forward, the rationale for the same -- in other words, a general overview of all of the items contained within the budget estimates -- and once that has been completed, then come back to a more detailed process. Unless specifically approved by the committee to deviate from the standard practice, we would follow the estimates book in the order in which it is presented.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that generally agreed? It makes a lot of sense. Thank you.

Before we have Dr. McNeil take us through the overview, because of the issue raised earlier about support staff, the minute dates from July 15, 1986:

On a matter of procedure, [the Member for Taber-Warner] remarked he was of the opinion that only Committee Members and those elected Members wishing to sit in on Committee meetings, as well as support staff as might be required by the Chairman, should be seated at the meeting table.

Discussion followed and agreement reached that only Committee members, elected Members wishing to sit in on Members' Services meetings and support staff designated by the Chairman, sit at the meeting table.

That's the only minute that we've been able to come up with with regard to -- that was the operation within the Carillon Room.

With regard to this Chamber, Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I do recall the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon raising an issue at one of our past meetings since we moved our meetings from the Carillon Room to the Leg. Assembly, and the result of that discussion was that his chief of staff and other chiefs of staff were invited to join us in this room. Now, we may not have minuted it; we did not, apparently. But it was certainly my understanding that we wanted to have the most senior administrative people with us, or if in a circumstance the chief of staff is not able to attend, then someone else could do so in their place. That was my understanding of the process that we would follow.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, it's one thing when we are sitting round a single table; it's another thing when we're in a much roomier place like this. And certainly no one should be inconvenienced by any people other than committee members that are here. But it seems to me if there are two or three people, possibly, for something that is as important to all of us as the money to run all of this, that are around and not getting in anyone's way in such an ample Chamber as this, what can be the objection?

MR. CHAIRMAN: From the point of view of the Chair with regard to the support staff of the Legislative Assembly office, my feeling has been that we have indeed the Clerk with us and that from time to time when issues arise that need to be dealt with that we need, say, the Editor of *Hansard* or the chief Librarian, I would then call them in at those particular times. That's so the committee understands the movement of our support staff. But as for this other issue, it's up to the committee to determine; it's not up to the Chair. Perhaps that's another coffee break item.

Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Well, Mr. Chairman, for the sake of going on, I would move that we accept the same premise as what was suggested to sit at the table in the Carillon Room; that way we'll get discussion going on it. It can be either accepted or defeated, one way or another, instead of sitting around thinking about it.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I believe that what Cypress-Redcliff has just said is just a little bit faulty, given that the minute indicates that the decision was that elected members of the Assembly and the Table officers of the Assembly would be those sitting at the table in the Carillon Room.

MR. HYLAND: I guess I was referring back to what the Member for Taber-Warner said as well, rather than . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: This was held in room 312.

Discussion followed and agreement reached that only Committee members, elected Members wishing to sit in on Members' Services meetings and support staff designated by the Chairman, sit at the meeting table.

MR. WRIGHT: I have a feeling this is a storm in a teacup. If we were sitting at a table, yes, because we've got four kinds of -- if someone's getting in someone else's way, that's fine. But that's not the case now. I don't quite know what the problem is. I suggest we just move on to other business.

MS BARRETT: Hear, hear.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Without having a specific motion . . .

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure by that last statement what the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona means, because if we were following the practice in this Assembly of other committees which deal with budgetary matters, there'd be no officials on the floor, regardless of how many seats are occupied or vacant. There'd be none. We've made a concession, and I think it was a very worthwhile and logical move in the case of this committee, to allow our chiefs of staff in.

If we're looking for a motion, then I suppose I'll reluctantly comply with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona and move: that in addition to the members of the committee, other elected members of the Assembly who wish to attend, the Table officers who are present, and the officials deemed necessary by the Speaker of the House, each of the parties represented in the Legislative Assembly be permitted to have one staff member, preferably the chief of staff, with the caucus members present.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. There's a motion. Discussion?

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I just have to wonder what on earth would motivate a member of a board of internal economy to make such a motion. I speak against it and call the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Other discussion of the motion? Call for the question. All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed, please signify. Motion carries.

Dr. McNeil, would you like to give us the overview of the estimates book, please?

DR. McNEIL: Certainly. The estimates book that you have before you reflects a proposal developed by the Legislative As-

sembly managers, input from the individual caucuses as to their budget, the committee chairmen as to their budgets, and this proposal presents what would be required to maintain existing services as well as continue with certain new initiatives that have already been identified, primarily in the area of EDP systems. So from an overall perspective, the budget reflects a 2.93 percent increase.

In terms of the way the budget has been structured this year, there's a slight change from last year in that the General Administration budget has been broken down into three categories to more clearly reflect the allocation of funds: the General Administration category is the cost of those activities in the administrative area which support all areas of the Legislative Assembly, MLA Administration are the costs of the administrative activities supporting the MLAs in all areas except the operation of the House, and House Services is the costs of activities supporting the operations of the House, including this, the Table officers, and so on. So that one general category of General Administration last year has been broken down into three this year to more clearly reflect the different nature of allocation of those funds.

In terms of the general categories of the budget, the General Administration budget is forecast to increase 3 percent. I've identified in the overview, under the tab Legislative Assembly Estimates Summary, that that increase is primarily due to a number of factors: the transfer of the Sergeant-at-Arms to the Legislative Assembly office staff from the Department of the Solicitor General, the addition of a Parliamentary Counsel, increased CPA travel costs due to changes in venues of some conferences, and costs associated with the implementation of the EDP pilot project and development of an EDP strategic plan which this committee has already made some decisions on.

The next category, Members' Indemnity, is forecast to increase 2 percent. That is due to the 5 percent increase in members' indemnity and expense allowance, following from the Legislative Assembly Act.

The Speaker's Office budget: expected projected increase 1.7 percent, again as a result of the increases in salary as a result of the Legislative Assembly Act requirements. The various caucuses have submitted their budgets, and those numbers there reflect the budgets submitted.

Legislative Committees increase 6 percent. That's an apparent increase rather than a real increase. That is due to allocation of the dollars for advertising for Private Bills; \$15,400 to this committee as opposed to allocating it to General Administration.

Alberta Hansard and Legislature Library budgets are projected at no increase.

The budget was developed in light of a set of priorities which are listed on page 2 of that overview. I don't think I need to read those; they're there to be read. But that would be the major focus of this budget.

As the final point, in developing a budget we have looked at various ideas and alternatives for reducing expenditures, and we're in a position to discuss and respond to questions or suggestions from the members as to areas in which those might take place. We felt it was important to start from the base of maintaining existing services and go from there in terms of this budget presentation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Clerk, as we're going through the budget, can remind us of those places where

-- I notice, going through it myself, we seem to be moving from one area into the other; it comes as an increase in one, and you can't always find a decrease in the other. I wonder if he can just keep in mind, as we're going through this, to remind us of where these occur, so that we can pick them out, and then an explanation of why he's done it. Because I think one just gets to understand it -- and you often wonder if there aren't people in the back room trying to slide this here and slide that there to make it so we don't understand it again.

DR. McNEIL: Would you like to proceed now section by section?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll keep [inaudible] section by section so we've got a better understanding of what's in them and see about the questions.

DR. McNEIL: Do we start then with General Administration? Okay.

General admin functions are the sort of financial administrative and personnel support services to the Legislative Assembly. We've attached an organization chart so that you can understand just what people we're talking about. Overall this General Admin budget is, excluding the B budget item related to the EDP pilot project, projected to decrease by .9 percent. In terms of the Salaries and Wage budget, in December of '87 we were advised by the Public Service Commissioner that there were salary increases for management and nonmanagement, and these increases are reflected in this budget. The wage increase is primarily due to the fact that regular full-time employees' positions were previously funded through PEP, and when that funding was terminated on May 1, '87, a decision was made that three positions be put into wages.

I haven't gone through this before with the committee. Would it be useful to go through the specific categories?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I think we'll go into the summary of each section, as you are, and then we can come back for questions.

DR. McNEIL: A significant reduction in the Supplies and Services budget, 59.2 percent, due to reductions in "advertising, hosting, travel, and repair and maintenance of equipment."

Under Fixed Assets, because of problems we're having with the existing computer hardware and software which no longer meets the present requirements -- those have also been identified as problem areas by the Auditor General's staff -- we've allocated additional funds to deal with that issue as well as the B budget item of \$31,634, which is the second half of the \$62,000-plus that this committee decided upon the meeting before last with respect to the EDP pilot project. So this is a maintenance budget for General Administration.

MR. WRIGHT: May we ask questions section by section?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. I'll take notes on it, if you want to wave at me, and we'll try to come back, because the request is to do the overview and then come. Thank you.

Section 1B.

DR. McNEIL: MLA Administration. This budget projects a slight increase of .7 percent, primarily due to price increases "for printed material and the allocation of funds for an EDP co-

ordinator to administer the constituency project" and develop an EDP strategic plan.

Fixed Assets:

The increase in Fixed Assets is due to the expenditure transfer of the MLA Caucus Office Automation System costs from rentals to fixed assets and an upgrade of the MLA accounting software and hardware in the General Administration Office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: House Services overview.

DR. McNEIL: This new category we termed House Services. The purpose of this area is "to provide support to the Speaker and to Members in the day-to-day operation of the House and its committees." The primary areas of increase here relate to the transfer of the Sergeant-at-Arms from the Solicitor General's department to the Legislative Assembly, the addition of a Parliamentary Counsel, and increased CPA travel costs due to changes in venues of the various conferences that members and Table officers attend. The projected increase here is 17.5 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, I'm sure we can have discussion on each area when we do come back and work through section by section. So again, with section 3, Members' Indemnities and Allowances.

DR. McNEIL: The Members' Indemnities' projected budget is a 2 percent increase due to the 5 percent increase required under the Legislative Assembly Act for members' indemnities and expense allowances. [interjection] Yes, an automatic increase.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item 4, Speaker's Office.

DR. McNEIL: Because of the adjustment in the public service there's a slight increase in the Salaries and Wages budget in the Speaker's office. The Supplies and Services budget is reduced somewhat due to a cutback in hosting, and Other Expenditures is payments to the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, and Chairman of Committees as a result of the statutory 5 percent increase in indemnities and salaries.

In terms of the government members and so on, we'll just go by those.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll pass by 5, 6, 7, and 8, representing the four caucuses. Next is item 9, Legislative Committees.

DR. McNEIL: From an overall perspective the Legislative Committees budget is projected to increase 6 percent. As I indicated earlier, that's primarily due to the transfer of the costs of advertising for the Private Bills Committee and allocating the advertising costs directly to that committee as opposed to leaving it under general administration. So that's an apparent increase. In terms of the overall budget, as I said, there's a slight decrease.

Legislative Interns. A projected decrease in this budget due to a reduction in the salary paid to interns of 3 percent in order to bring those payments in line with salaries paid in other jurisdictions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: *Hansard*.

DR. McNEIL: *Alberta Hansard*. Again, this budget reflects no projected increase, results also in one vacant full-time position being abolished, and maintains the present level of service. It

will also provide, I guess, a pilot or trial basis for computer text searching capability, which members of this committee had identified previously as wanting to see if that was possible. So this budget allows for a small allocation of funds to test that out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The important point there is the last line of that second paragraph.

One vacant full-time position would be abolished, reducing the number of full-time positions to five, compared to eight 18 months ago.

Number 12, the library.

DR. McNEIL: The library budget projects no increase in expenditures. This level of expenditure will provide for the resumption of microfilming of Alberta weekly newspapers at approximately 20 percent of the former rate. This was something that was discontinued last year, and this budget will enable us to resurrect that program but not at the same rate as it was done previously.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to point out to committee members that there is a change of format, which I'm sure you've noted, from last year. This time at the beginning of most sections we have a statement of purpose of the key responsibility areas that are being carried out in each section under Legislative Assembly Office. Then for what I think is about the first time we have these organizational diagrams that occur not only for library and *Hansard* and for the office as a whole, which reflect some of the reorganization that has taken place, so that now we have this kind of a diagrammatical approach as to how the personnel are deployed within each section of the department as a whole. Then after that, giving the overview which has been carried through, that's where you find out whether it's down or up in terms of the overall percentage with regard to that particular section.

So I hope those additions have been of some use for committee members while they've been studying the documents prior to today as well as today -- and in the future -- to have a better handle of what's really been going on with the department, especially in the last year.

Okay. Is it all right for the Chair to assume that we don't at this moment want to do an overview of 5 and 6 and 7 and 8; that we would rather now go back in detail and work our way through from the beginning? I'm sure that from time to time you'll want to refer to your introduction section there as to some of the other definitions and some of the other codes.

All right. Legislative Assembly, the first section. Any comments with regard to the overview, and then we'll go into General Administration, 1A. Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move that we move to tab 3, Members' Indemnity and Allowances, and deal with that first and then revert to 1, 2, 3, and so on. My rationale for that is that as there are some matters that we've been dealing with recently in the committee dealing with the health care premiums and extended health benefits and other matters, we might want to deal with that particular item first. So I'd move that we move to tab 3 and deal with Members' Indemnity and Allowances first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Call for the question. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Item 3. Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you. I see that under Extended Health Care Premiums the increase shown is 64.6 percent. I recall that we talked about this issue two meetings ago, I believe, but I don't recall it being that sort of a premium increase. I wonder if the Clerk can maybe refresh us on this.

DR. McNEIL: That number, \$9,759, I believe is the cost of the plan last year before the decision was made on switching to the Mutual Life plan. So we're paying right now about -- I think it's around \$12,000, \$13,000 for our plan. That was more than was budgeted for here last year. So the 30 percent that we used at the last committee was 30 percent above what... That \$16,061 reflects 30 percent above what we had been paying. That \$9,759 was what was allocated last December or January under the old plan, is my understanding.

MS BARRETT: Could I request that that actually be pursued, because I believe we approved the extended health program -- I thought it was in November of '86, and we dealt with Leg. Assembly budget at this time last year. I think something's wrong here. I remember we talked about it two meetings ago in terms of, you know -- had a debate, in fact, about the premium increases and all the rest of it. We went through it pretty thoroughly. But I'm quite sure that the budget we dealt with last year included the budget for this program with Mutual. I feel quite certain about that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, we'll take it as a note. Any other questions with regard to this page, having taken that down in a note for follow-up -- one of the advantages about being able to meet on two separate days.

Edmonton-Highlands again.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, one more with respect to the life insurance. Is that a premium increase, that 57.5 percent? Is that what that is?

DR. McNEIL: I believe so, but I'll have to check on that too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Isn't that because of the age? Rod, do you want to comment on that one?

MR. SCARLETT: My understanding of the life insurance is that it's based on age. If I recollect correctly, there are two members that turn 65 this upcoming term, so that would increase the premiums for those two particular members substantially.

MS BARRETT: One more question if I could then, Mr. Chairman. With whom do we have that insurance contract? Are we self-insuring in that respect, do you know?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We've made note of this. We'll catch hold of our director of administration, personnel manager, and I'll have that person here PDQ.

Any other questions with regard to this page? Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a motion relating to temporary residence allowance. Copies are being passed around. I should say that the reason for wanting to make the motion is that MLAs are traveling throughout this province on various Legislative Assembly business, and I think we're not

being able to have our living allowance paid. The intent of this motion would be to take five of the days that were allowed in our total amount for temporary residence allowance, and they could be used for five days anywhere in the province rather than just in the capital city. I should stress that it is not an addition. It is taking, if the member wants, five of the days that he's entitled to in Edmonton but not adding to those days that he's entitled to in Edmonton when he's here on business.

MS BARRETT: This is actually embarrassing, but would somebody explain to me the difference between subsistence allowance and temporary residence allowance? It's easy for those of us who live in town to forget the distinction between the two.

MR. HYLAND: Subsistence allowance is generally taken as the allowance paid when the Legislature is sitting. Temporary residence allowance is -- I can't remember the Members' Services order that's under -- for allowance paid to members when they are in the capital on business. It's really up to the maximum of 10 days a month. It's the same amount of money; it's a different way of putting it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: For clarification, what date would this be effective: the beginning of the new fiscal year or when the motion is passed? If it is passed.

MR. HYLAND: I would suggest either effective immediately or use January 1 as a time frame. It's an easy cutoff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the Chair has a couple of queries. The first one is that this would then mean that members who are resident in Edmonton as normal place of residence could indeed then travel to, say, Lethbridge and then make claim for five days in a month?

MR. HYLAND: In a year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, in a year; sorry. Okay. Then the second part is, with that clarification, that really that -- well, that will indeed have some effect upon not only next year's budget projection but on our current fiscal year's expenditures, because on this bottom line here we have \$75 a day times 80 days times 65 MLAs. There would be a variation of how many additional MLAs would now be making use of this program throughout the year, so that does mean then that there would be a change in this budget projection. The Chair had to go through that because of the fact as to whether this really was just an ordinary committee motion without budget implications. But obviously, it has budget implications for next year, and therefore it's in order.

Okay. Further discussion with regard to the motion before us? Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: Well, really I'm just repeating what you just said there, Mr. Chairman. But it does mean it would have to apply to all members unless there were a distinction made, which you couldn't really justify, I think. Therefore, it would increase the budget.

MR. BOGLE: Well, my understanding of the present formula is that we're looking at \$75 a day times 80 days, and the 80 days is the . . . How did we arrive at 80 days? Is that the maximum?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Eighty days would be reflecting what was the norm for projecting the number of sitting days per year.

MR. BOGLE: So the assumption is that all non-Edmonton members are able to claim the maximum number of days, which is either 10 per month or 30 for a three-month period when the House is not sitting. I'm not sure how close to that maximum figure we are for this fiscal year. That's the first query.

The second one is the assumption that if there was some event taking place in the city of Calgary and Edmonton members were attending it, then clearly Edmonton members could claim for that on a per diem basis but Calgary members could not because Calgary is their normal residence.

MR. HYLAND: That's only if you're out of the two major cities.

MR. BOGLE: Well, that's for the majority of members, so I think we need to know how much of the \$390,000 budget for '87-88 we expect to utilize this year, recognizing there may be a very slight increase in it. But I think that, all things being equal, the way the member has worded his motion we're not adding days to the total, 80, but we are giving some further flexibility for Edmonton members who now cannot claim and for members who find that in the course of their duties they're in parts of the province other than Edmonton.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Further discussion, or call for the question? Or in light of the further information request that has been made, do you want this motion to hold on until later this afternoon? We can pull the figure on that perhaps. Do you wish to hold it until we get the information?

MR. HYLAND: Fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: General agreement from the committee? Thank you. Okay, other questions with regard to page 1 of this section, Members' Indemnities and Allowances? In the opinion of the Chair that's where you have to leave that section for the time being, pending further additional information, and the request will be made right now.

The director of personnel is coming over to supply the information about the insurance and the health care. Now we have the figures with regard to the percentage as expended, with regard to subsistence allowance and temporary residence. We have to bear in mind that a number of members don't apply until about the last minute. It's sort of like what happens with some other accounts. All right, have we got those?

DR. McNEIL: As of December 31 -- and there is likely to be a lag built into the system -- they utilized 40 percent of the temporary residence allowance . . . [interjection] . . . that percent of the way through the year.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Seventy-five percent.

DR. McNEIL: And up to that point in time, we'd used 40 percent of the \$390,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you got the other figure?

DR. McNEIL: I don't have it on this particular printout.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Why don't we take a brief coffee break while we wait for the arrival of the personnel individual. Also, in the meantime the phone call can be made about subsistence.

[The committee recessed from 2:01 p.m. until 2:14 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, ladies and gentlemen. Some of the answers to some of the questions are here. So which question are we going to answer first, Dr. McNeil?

DR. McNEIL: The question on subsistence allowance. As of December 31, 71 percent of the subsistence allowance had been expended. As I had indicated earlier, 40 percent of the temporary residence allowance had been expended.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, we all have that.
The other matter, with regard to the insurance then.

DR. McNEIL: [Inaudible] Mrs. Coppens can answer the question with respect to the increase in the life insurance premiums.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question again, Edmonton-Highlands?

MS BARRETT: Are we on extended health care at this point?

MR. WRIGHT: No, we're on life insurance.

MS BARRETT: Oh, we're on life insurance. I wondered with whom we have that contract and if there's . . . I'm hoping I'm not rereading ground that we covered a few meetings ago, but where the 57 percent increase comes, is that part of that whole deal with Mutual Life? Is that what that is? No?

MRS. COPPENS: No, the life insurance is with Great-West Life Assurance, and the reason for the increase is that in January members were given an option to up their coverage from one times to three times coverage, and there were 11 members that chose that option. That results in an approximate increase from \$4 a month to \$7 a month for each of those members. As well, there is one member who is over 65 who took the three times insurance coverage, and that's quite a high premium per month for that.

MS BARRETT: Is that a shared premium: part MLA, part Leg. Assembly?

MRS. COPPENS: Yes. And the figures I gave you represent the Leg. Assembly amount, the \$4 to \$7.

MR. HYLAND: When did that option happen? Is that January of this year or January of last year?

MRS. COPPENS: January of last year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Remember that time when we were going through all of the upgrading of coverages for members and that was the onetime opening of that plan?

Okay. Another question with regard to extended health care, I believe, Edmonton-Highlands?

MS BARRETT: Yes. I wonder if you can tell us . . . In 1986, I think, we approved the package that eventually went in contract

to Mutual Life, and I believe that then a few months later, about this time last year when we were doing budget estimates, we had built into our estimates the cost of that. So now I'm at a loss to understand why it is, given that we were told a few months ago that their premiums were going to increase modestly -- or certainly modestly compared to this -- that we are looking at a 64 percent increase in this. I'd sure like to know why so much. That's not what we were told a few weeks ago.

DR. McNEIL: I'm just reading the material that Ruth brought over. The premium we were paying Mutual Life prior to this 30 percent increase was \$1,482 a month, so that's significantly higher than the \$9,759 that's in the budget there. My suspicion is -- and we don't have that confirmed yet -- that that is the allocation for the Blue Cross premium. I noticed in the '86-87 budget book that that number, \$9,759, was in there in December.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'm having a little difficulty over on this side hearing Dr. McNeil, and I don't know if . . .

MR. TAYLOR: A point of order. I think that's the speaker that the Speaker fixed. It belongs to Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's the speaker that if the Chair had half a chance he might blow up some days, but no, not guilty. We'll look after turning the volume up.

Let's try for the explanation again then, or did you catch any of it, Taber-Warner?

MR. BOGLE: We caught part of it, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So what the figure of \$9,759 would have been in the budget that was prepared in early '87, before we got into what the actual was, and then what the actual was was a figure of \$14,000 . . .

DR. McNEIL: It was around \$14,000, and that's gone up now by 30 percent to \$16,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we've gone through the double jumps and for those reasons. All righty.

DR. McNEIL: One of the problems we have here is that most of us weren't around at that time, so we can't necessarily go back and tell you, you know, on what basis the previous years' budget figures were there. But that would be my hypothesis as to why the big increase, that it reflects the Blue Cross premiums at the time and that it wasn't changed to reflect the Mutual Life contract.

MS BARRETT: Either that or these comparisons are being made on last year's estimates and, you know, what we started off with in our book and not what we worked through. Well anyway, I mean, I'm satisfied if you can be confident that it really doesn't constitute a 64 percent premium increase.

DR. McNEIL: No. I have the quote from the consultants right here with the old rates and the new rates, and they do not reflect a 60 percent increase. They reflect a 30 percent increase.

MS BARRETT: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional questions on this section? Is it the will of the committee to give approval one section at a time and to do it as we're going? Is there a motion to approve this section 3? Mover?

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, do we not need to deal with the Cypress-Redcliff motion first, or no?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is indeed correct; right. Thank you. I thought we passed that. We didn't pass that? That's right; we adjourned. Good.

All right, here we go. Now that we have the figures back to us -- that's what we were waiting for, agreed? Thank you. The expended on the subsistence allowance of 71 percent as of December 31 and temporary residence allowance of 40 percent as of the same time. Therefore, now are you willing proceed on the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question, as moved by Cypress-Redcliff. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed, please signify. Carried. Thank you.

Now, with respect to the motion . . . All right, before we do go to a motion to approve that sheet, perhaps analysis has to be made as to what those figures now will reflect overnight.

Edmonton-Highlands, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to interrupt you here. First of all -- I should have mentioned this -- when we passed Al's motion, we didn't talk about the date for which it becomes effective, and I think that we need to do that. And on your question, I calculated that if all of the other MLAs could possibly use that temporary residence allowance for five days times a maximum of \$75, the maximum would come to \$6,750. I suspect that even that would never occur. I don't know that we would need to change the budget estimate, quite frankly. That's my guess.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, thank you.

Cypress-Redcliff, with a motion or information about the effective time.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, my first comment was the same as the Member for Edmonton-Highlands made regarding the amount. The second one was that I thought when I made the motion, I clarified it when speaking after the main motion was made and suggested either "effective immediately," or maybe a better date would be January 1, because it's a more distinct cutoff than "effective immediately."

MR. CHAIRMAN: I took it that it was raised, but we didn't really incorporate it into the motion, so perhaps we could have a separate motion as to what is the effective date.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I would move that the effective date on the motion that I made would be January 1, 1988.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Discussion? Call for the question.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

On the strength of that, with implications for the current fiscal year as well as for this budget item, the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is still prepared to move approval of this section 3. Thank you. Call for the question? Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

In accordance with an earlier motion we will now return to section 1A in the estimates book, General Administration. Any question with regard to page 1, Statement of Purpose, Key Responsibility Areas? They're not necessarily listed in order of importance. General Administration chart, then we had the overview, which we were taken through, reflecting a minus .9 percent. So we're now on page 1 of the section of 1A, General Administration. The Chair recognizes that Edmonton-Strathcona wishes to raise some questions in this area. Would it be on this page or some other?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's all one question really, concerning the computer pilot scheme. The proposed budget for that is spread through a number of sections, I see. Is that correct?

DR. McNEIL: No. For the pilot project specifically, it's only in this section.

MR. WRIGHT: Oh. Well, okay. Then I didn't really understand that the pilot project would involve the purchasing of anything. If you're saying that part of it is a data processing group purchase for fixed assets . . .

DR. McNEIL: That's another aspect of this budget. The pilot project itself is the \$31,634.

MR. WRIGHT: Okay. Well yes, but there was to be a manager, which was, I think, a suggested \$50,000 or something for that.

DR. McNEIL: That's under MLA Administration.

MR. WRIGHT: That's what I say. It's spread in . . . [interjection] Okay. So there's this \$31,000 on the B Budget there, and then there's that \$50,000. Is that the length and breadth of it, or . . .

DR. McNEIL: Related to the pilot project and the development of a strategic plan, yes.

MR. WRIGHT: So the total is somewhere around \$80,000.

DR. McNEIL: \$81,634.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Additional questions with page 1 on . . . [interjection] Yes?

MR. WRIGHT: All right. Continuing that, what is the data processing of \$20,000 up here then?

DR. McNEIL: That is an allocation to purchase new equipment, both hardware and software, to upgrade the accounting system in the administration area. We've had a number of difficulties with that system. This is an allocation to get new equipment and have some new software developed so that we can resolve

some of the problems that have been identified by the Auditor General's office, for one.

MR. WRIGHT: But is it going to be the same machinery?

DR. McNEIL: It would be compatible; not necessarily the same machinery, but it would be compatible with . . .

MR. WRIGHT: It wouldn't pre-empt any options that the pilot project might show up?

DR. McNEIL: No, not at all.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I notice in the estimates there is a 242 percent increase in wage positions or wages. I'm wondering, in accordance with the study that was done last year into the operation of the Assembly and the hiring of a new Clerk whose long shot or expertise is in people management and organization and the working of systems, systems management, if this is a result of that study, and is this why the new people have been hired? Because I don't know what would be the increase over the last five years in Legislative Assembly staff. I know the workload has increased, but I also know that the Assembly staff has increased. I wonder if this increase is as a result of the study and the organization, or is the organization being streamlined in a different way, or just what's going on?

DR. McNEIL: This, I think, reflects the fact that for a number of years ongoing work in the Assembly was being -- people were there 12 months of the year but were being funded through PEP and STEP funds. My understanding is that in May of '87, when these funds were no longer available for these particular tasks, a decision was made to put these people on wages, in that they were, and had been for a number of years, sort of continuing staff. And so if you look on I think page 3 of this, there's an accounts clerk, a receptionist, and a messenger. The increase there is primarily due to that transfer from funding these people through PEP and STEP, and then the decision in May to put them on wages. This would be a continuation of these people on wages. My understanding is that these roles have existed for a number of years from PEP and STEP funds.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So the actual dollars there are indeed as printed out on the page, but that picks up where those three positions were taken on and made more stable.

MR. HYLAND: My second question is -- it's related to the first one -- is the reorganization now complete, at least temporarily, because of the study and because of your way of doing things?

DR. McNEIL: I would say it is. I think, you know, in the future there may be efficiencies to be gained through automation, but until we have a strategic plan in place, until we have a number of aspects of that plan developed, I don't think we can realize those gains.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In my opinion, the reorganization due to the two studies of the management audit is complete. In terms of the reallocation of people from one building to another building or being allocated part of the time over here and part of the time in the other building, all the physical transfers have been made. The reallocation of space has been done in such a way that again in my opinion, there's a far better working relationship that's

allowed to develop because a number of walls, mental as well as physical, have been taken down. And from an administrative side, the Clerk, the Clerk Assistant, and Parliamentary Counsel's having been relocated to the other building when we're out of session has been very constructive in terms of what has happened in the efficiency of the organization and the fact that people can relate better to each other.

In terms of a -- as we go through this, you see that there's been a reduction in personnel in *Hansard*, a reduction in personnel with regard to the library, a reduction in personnel, if you will, with regard to the internship program as effected by this committee last year. I believe that a lot of efficiencies have come into play. By the same token, we will also see as we go through this in terms of support services -- and for example, one of the areas that was of great concern to us and as identified in the management audit process was with regard to personnel administration. Ruth Coppens, who was here earlier, is the one new position that was created to try to get through this morass of programs in personnel development. In addition, of course, we have the other position that was brought into place because of support to the House with Parliamentary Counsel, and then as mentioned earlier, by the security aspect, services for the Assembly as a whole, and the transfer from the Solicitor General's department to this department. So that does reflect what's happened in terms of -- so there have been some additions, but there have been some deletions as well. And that 242.2 percent is indeed a function of the salaries rather than of the numbers of persons.

Minister of the Environment.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The Clerk has now indicated on several occasions in the last few minutes something about a strategic plan. This phraseology has been used once, twice, or thrice with respect to this particular estimate. Can somebody please tell me what we are talking about here with respect to a strategic plan? My understanding is that all of 1986 and '87 was basically a strategic plan for the Legislative Assembly and new directions and what have you. What are we talking about now when we're talking about the time frame April 1, 1988? What dollars are being allocated to it and why, please?

DR. McNEIL: Specifically, we're talking about a strategic plan for the development of EDP systems. From what I can see, the EDP systems in the Legislative Assembly Office have sort of evolved as the need arose, and in my view and the view of the Auditor General, there needs to be the opportunity to look at the longer term needs of the Assembly for EDP systems and the development of a five-year plan to lay out what those various elements of the system should be and then, over time, allocation of funds to those various components of an overall system. So that \$50,000 we're talking about under MLA Administration is to hire a person on a contract basis to both work on developing a strategic plan as well as assisting with the implementation of the constituency office pilot project over the next fiscal year. So that strategic plan relates specifically to the development of EDP systems.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I thought we were talking about Legislative Assembly General Administration. You've flipped now to MLA Administration. Which one are we talking about here?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The problem arose because of the figure on page 1 where you have the B Budget item that was . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: Is it under General Administration?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. That's where the questioning then came in from Edmonton-Strathcona that related to this item on this page, which then necessitated also referring back to the other section.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, being a relatively new member of the committee, I have some hesitation here in how to proceed with this. I hope you appreciate that I'm not trying to be obstreperous, and it's without malice that I offer this suggestion. I would like to think this is an opportunity to do something very brave in this budget, and I think it would be a challenge to the administration as well as a challenge to this committee to see something brave happen. I would like to have an opportunity to take a look at a proposal that would reflect a good piece of money, like upwards of \$50,000 or something, less than what we had last year even. Where would that hit? What would be the impact of that kind of action on the operation of this Legislature? I offer that as a challenge to this committee too, to review that kind of an impact and satisfy ourselves that what we are doing is in the best interests of the Legislature and in serving the people of this province.

Now, that's a long way to put a motion. Mr. Chairman, but I would offer that as a motion, that I'd like to see a draft come back to us with a considerable reduction and where administration would see that they would be able to make some very brave and bold cuts. Then I'd be interested in seeing how the committee would react to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For clarification, the Chair would assume that this means General Administration; MLA Administration; House Services; Members' -- no, not Members' Indemnity; Speaker's Office.

DR. ELLIOTT: I was confining it to the General Administration, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Other discussion?
Minister of the Environment.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, for clarification, to my colleague from Grande Prairie, the hon. member has indicated that he had a motion. He used the word "considerable" on one occasion, and he used the word "\$50,000" on another occasion. I would like clarification, if we're talking about his motion, with respect to a \$50,000 reduction in General Administration, or a considerable reduction. And secondly, would he be so kind as to inform other committee members which figure he is talking about: the 1987-88 forecast which is listed in the book at \$480,582, or the 1988-89 estimate which is listed at \$507,781?

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I admit my motion was rather a long and wordy one. I heard myself say up to or approximately up to \$50,000 to give guidance to the administration. I also said that we would refer to the figures of last year's budget; \$480,000 as the starting point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So what you're talking about is a \$77,000 reduction over this proposed estimate for '88-89.

DR. ELLIOTT: Well, the proposed estimate; that'd be correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further discussion or comments?
Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Chairman, I guess there's nothing the matter with exploring any sort of a notion. I guess the Clerk has been put on the spot in terms of well, how would that affect the operation, and in the same motion has been instructed to come back with a different sheet of paper showing a very substantial cut. I think the Clerk should be able to at least indicate initially what his assessment of a \$50,000 or \$70,000 cut to this budget would mean in real terms, not just how many positions do we have to axe, but what will that mean in terms of all of the work that gets done by the admin staff, which in my assessment is voluminous. Maybe he would want to comment on that.

DR. McNEIL: In terms of the analysis that we've done, I would suggest that a cut of that nature might have some impact on our ability to handle some of the accounting in the administration area, and I'd want to do more research and be more specific in terms of coming back with what those specific implications are. But I think we might have difficulty in making that kind of a cut without impacting the personnel in the area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you. I wonder if the mover of the motion would indicate whether or not it's his intention to have this alternative budget presented to him excluding the automation pilot project which has been approved by this committee.

DR. ELLIOTT: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to repeat that this suggestion I've thrown out and this motion is as much a challenge to this committee as it is to the administration that might start to put something together for us to look at, and if we have to reconsider decisions that have already been made, then I'm prepared to accept that challenge too.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to speak in support of the motion, and I do so for the following reasons. With the exception of those areas where there are automatic increases built into our costs, whether it be through a wage increase that's been automatically passed on or a postal increase or something that's beyond the control of this committee, I think it's incumbent upon us to look at all the options that face us in the budget. If I had had my druthers, I would have liked to have seen scenarios that would look at everything from a slight increase to a zero increase, to a slight reduction to a more drastic reduction, and then allow Dr. McNeil to give the committee the rationale as to what the results of all those would be. Then we would be making our decisions and standing answerable for the decisions which have been made, because we've asked the questions and we know the consequences.

Therefore, I support the Member for Grande Prairie who has made this motion. He has not in any way tied his hands or the committee's hands to the maximum figure he mentioned in his motion. He merely wants to see the scenario, as I understand it. I think the member was also correct in saying that even though we may look at the automation pilot project, the \$31,600 item, which is something the committee previously has agreed to and I'm still committed to support, it's not written in stone, however. Clearly, if after weighing all the evidence we find that

it's something we don't believe we can afford, then that's clearly part of the mandate of the committee, to re-examine it.

But in brief, I think we should approve the motion so that the administration can go back, and I would hope that the administration would look at, in addition to the maximum figure mentioned, other alternatives between the 5.7 percent increase, which is proposed here, and the reduction that has been asked for in the motion.

MS BARRETT: Something tells me that when I vote against this motion, I'm going to be on the losing side one more time. When we get the information brought back to us, the alternative schedule, I am concerned about one item in particular. I'm going to raise it now, because I think we deserve an explanation.

On page 2 we have under Management, at the top of the list, Manager III. Now, I take it that that person is the person who is now in charge of Leg. Admin, Kathy Bruce-Kavanagh. Is that correct?

DR. McNEIL: Correct.

MS BARRETT: All right. I make a certain observation. I now need to leap to another section, but in order to demonstrate the validity of the observation, go to page 2 under section 2 of House Services. Now, the reason I need to ask this is so that I can make my case. If someone can just answer this question: under Management, Manager III, is that position the Clerk Assistant? I am correct. Thank you.

Well, I think what we need a whole lot more than a repeat of the chain-saw massacre is an explanation as to why it is that positions being filled by women in jobs that were previously held by men for some reason qualify for a reduction in pay, but positions that have been replaced by other men don't. I'm prepared to seek a lot more than what this motion is talking about.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With respect to the question as it pertains to the Clerk Assistant, the figure that occurs there is part of the rationalization of the pay package overall in the department but, at the same time, is substantially higher than what the said qualified person was making before all of what the member referred to as the chain-saw massacre.

MS BARRETT: Oh, Mr. Chairman, pardon me. May I make myself clear? The chain-saw massacre refers to what this committee did to budgets last year. Sorry. Really, that is what I was getting at. I can see the same pattern emerging, and if I've got to sit here and put up with it, I want at least an explanation as to why it is that women are being discriminated against, in terms of pay packets, when they take over a position that was previously occupied by a man and previously had a better income. Yet, the same is not true when a new incumbent who is of the male persuasion takes over a particular job. I think that deserves an explanation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm sure that part of it comes from classifications, but perhaps the Clerk would like to speak to it.

MR. SCARLETT: Actually, if you don't mind, I can supplement that. In the case of the Clerk Assistant, it was a substantial reclassification downward for that position, taking into account a change in the job description in which financial portions of the job were taken away from the Clerk Assistant position and given to our director of administration, Blake McDougall. So in that

particular instance, it was a changed job description.

With regards to the Manager III at the general administration level, the difference there is basically incumbency now. The one person who was there before was here for three years; the present one has only been there now for eight months. So the salary would adjust up.

MS BARRETT: Well, you know that doesn't make sense, obviously, if the same law isn't applying to new male employees. That so-called law -- or what I believe to be an invented law -- obviously isn't applying across the board. That's what I worry about. Thanks for your explanation, but I just don't think it's adequate.

DR. McNEIL: The two individuals in question have received substantial increases in the past year reflecting the concern about equity within the organization. Both individuals were started low in the range, and they were there because of the application of the normal regulations on promotions within the public service. At the discretion of the deputy minister, both of those individuals have been given special increases to try to ensure a more equitable treatment across the board among all the staff in the Assembly. It's hoped that with continuing good performance their salaries will reach the maximum of the ranges as time progresses.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Highlands, I appreciate the comments, and I've asked Mr. Scarlett to go get a sheet which I keep under my desk blotter which lets me know the exact salary figures for my management group.

MS BARRETT: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In terms of the management review that was carried out, I, like you, was very cognizant of the fact that the majority of the personnel within the Legislative Assembly Office are indeed female and carry out an incredible amount of the work and do it well.

As part of the management audit thing, with regard to replacement of positions and the creation of the new position of personnel director, I did direct that I wanted most of those positions to be filled by ladies. With respect to their salaries, again in the last 10 days I've been pushing to make sure that they are indeed being compensated.

Now, the point that you raise is a bit different. In one respect -- and I gather from information I learned on the weekend that the average best salary for women managers across the country is in the neighbourhood of about \$41,000. So I look down here, and I see one that will be adjusted to \$44,000, and that's Karen South. I see Karen Powell at \$43,500, and I see Ruth Coppens at \$41,000, and I see Kathy Bruce-Kavanagh at \$40,000 as of the figures that I have, effective last week. Two years ago there was only one female manager in the department and now there are four. So I just offer that as information.

MS BARRETT: Certainly, I'd be the first to offer congratulations, and will, at any effort for employment equity policies, whether formal or informal, as conducted by yourself or anybody else in this Assembly. High time. No problem. My point is that the explanation that was offered to me was, "Well, you know, if you've got a new incumbent, then you lower the pay package and you start all over again." And I don't want to put our Clerk on the spot, but I see that that rule didn't apply to a

male, but it did apply to females. That's the explanation that I'm in pursuit of. I applaud every effort you as a Speaker make to ensure that women are promoted up through the ranks faster so that they can attain equality with their male counterparts. Heaven knows, it's long overdue, and it's appreciated. But I don't think what's appreciated is that the rule changes when it comes to pay packets for new incumbents based upon gender. I think we deserve an explanation.

DR. McNEIL: It might be useful for me to sit down with the member and just go over the salary histories in these specific cases. That may clarify the situation, if you would think that appropriate.

MS BARRETT: I'd be glad to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would be a more appropriate way to go rather than putting figures into the record. Okay.

We have a motion before us. As chairman and as head of the department, I want to make the comment that while the motion reads a \$50,000 reduction, it does read "in comparison to the figures as last year." So that just to note the variance with regard to what we have brought forward for an '88-89 estimate, having to take into account certain fixed things which were thrust upon the department, whether we -- well, that says it: thrust upon the department, over which we had no control. To then have to look at a reduction of \$77,000 just simply in the area of General Administration, indeed makes for us having to go back with sharpened tools and may indeed result in people going to look at a \$77,000 cut overall, taking into mind MLA Administration, House Services, Speaker's Office. That might be a more achievable project, but nevertheless we'll try to deal with the motion if the motion does indeed pass. Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: I think perhaps I missed something. Is it 50 off 480 or off 476 or off 507?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is the understanding of the Chair that it's 50 off 480. Is that correct? It's \$50,000 off \$480,582.

Okay. Is there a call for the question? All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Any abstentions? Motion carries.

DR. McNEIL: In terms of process with respect to this proposal, we've done a little bit of thinking about this and would suggest that rather than sort of putting together a whole new package, we come to you with the proposed items that we might cut in priority order, the potential savings related to cutting that item, and then the implications of that item. And that would, I think, enable a discussion to focus on those things without having to reproduce reams of material, only some of which might be affected. So that would be how I would propose to deal with the question in the process of identifying these potential savings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. The motion has been carried.

DR. ELLIOTT: Just to comment on the previous speaker, Mr. Chairman, that would do exactly what I have in mind. I'd just like to have a little more exposure as to the implications of reductions in areas. I feel a little bit incomplete in my information as to how some processes would be impacted if there were reductions. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Well, we'll bear in mind that last year overall we took the department down a couple of double digits, so we'll go out and look at it. With regard to the committee, when does the committee want to hear back on this -- February? -- or you'll have us do a little burning of the midnight oil tonight. With respect to this whole section in this motion having passed, when do you wish us to come back to you? Tomorrow? Do some initial thinking on it, or wait till the February meeting.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hear a couple of "tomorrows."

MR. KOWALSKI: The sooner that you come back to it the better off it would be. It would be rather remorseful if the estimates for the Legislative Assembly were tabled in the Assembly and didn't have anything for General Administration included in it, but that's obviously a subjective decision that administration might want to make.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have a couple of meetings in February as well.

MR. WRIGHT: Well, if we came back in February next time, then there might be a similar request made on some of the other sections. You wouldn't want another adjournment, so why don't we continue with the other sections, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll see what we can bring back to you for tomorrow.

All right, moving to section 1B, MLA Administration.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a motion that section 1(1)(a) of Members' Services Order 4/83, Transportation and Administrative Services, read that

regularly scheduled air travel service

(i) between the member's constituency and Edmonton or between other points in or outside Alberta if it is more reasonable and convenient to use air travel services between such points when traveling between the member's constituency and Edmonton, and

(ii) between any points in Alberta for travel on business for no more than five return trips in a fiscal year

and that this amendment be effective for the new fiscal year, April 1, 1988,

and that the administration office prepare a cost savings estimate for reduced air travel and report to the next meeting

which is tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The motion has been distributed. This does not affect members having to come here to Edmonton in order to attend session. Is that right?

MRS. MIROSH: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Discussion of the motion. Just to go back a moment, the wording of Members' Services Order 1(1)(a)(i) that points inside or outside of Alberta specifically relates, actually, to the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, that sometimes it's just as easy for him to come up via B.C. as it is through Alberta. That's the one case that I've known about. It's not referring to travel across the country.

Discussion of the motion.

Discussion of the motion.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Chairman, I need some clarification here with respect to (1)(a)(ii), I guess it is. As I understand the first one, it doesn't affect the current situation, but 1(a)(2) would say that basically MLAs, Members of this Legislative Assembly, would be restricted from traveling within the province of Alberta other than from the provincial capital to their residences to no more than five return trips in a fiscal year.

The current situation -- and this has been the policy of this Assembly, initiated, by the way, by the government I'm a member of -- is that basically Members of the Legislative Assembly should have open access to travel within the province of Alberta. It's always been recognized that this travel would be for purposes associated with their functioning as a Member of this Legislative Assembly. Why, at this point in time in January 1988, a member of this particular committee would want to come forward with a proposal that would now restrict Members of the Legislative Assembly to five trips within the province of Alberta other than those between the capital and their home residence is something that would trouble me. I believe very strongly that members of the Assembly have a responsibility to all the people of Alberta to understand Alberta and to know Alberta. That means they should get out of this place, and they should get out of this place a heck of a lot more than they're currently doing right now.

The purpose of it, of course, is to understand and know Alberta and to understand the concerns of the people of Alberta. It is to be used for responsibilities associated with this Legislative Assembly. It is not to be used for other purposes. Now, if there's some suggestion that perhaps some hon. members may be doing things that are not appropriate to functioning as Members of the Legislative Assembly, then I think it's important that we deal with that. I wonder if the mover of the motion could explain why there would be a need to reverse a policy that's been in existence for a great number of years now.

I also would wonder, Mr. Chairman, if we have access to any information that might indicate what the travel is by hon. members of this Assembly to points within the province of Alberta other than simply between the provincial capital and their home residence that might cause someone to say there's some abuse going on in this. I have no evidence whatsoever that anything like that is happening. This is a policy that's been in existence now for at least three independent sessions of this Legislative Assembly, and it's one that I, without further information being provided to it, would certainly oppose.

MR. CHAIRMAN: From the point of view of the department, computer printouts are available for each member as to the number of trips, but that's done, so we've got them. There would be a printout for all 83 members, but we certainly don't have that here.

Mover of the motion?

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, I agree with the hon. minister that we should travel throughout the province and get to know Alberta. I have no dispute with that. However, we are still under fiscal restraint, and I think we have to exercise that fiscal restraint and we as legislators have to cut back as well. When we're asking other people to do so, I think we have to show some restraint too, and I think five trips a year is not that difficult.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Cypress-Redcliff, then Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Speaking in support of the motion, I note that under tab 3, Members' Indemnities and Allowances, that section shows approximately 100 days per session and approximately 80 days for Temporary Residence Allowance in the capital city. That's 180 days, which is approximately half the days in a year. Now mind you, a lot of travel goes on on weekends, but I would suggest that out of that 180, that would be probably a minimum of one trip a month for every MLA somewhere in the province of Alberta. So it's not a big space in between the times, when you consider the amount of time it's estimated we spend here. Now, not all spend that amount of time here, granted. But I agree with what the hon. member said about travel, and I note that travel to and from the constituency and the capital was not affected or suggested to be affected in any way.

I think that at a time when we have to reassess all things, maybe that's one reassessment that could take place, and probably the Member for Barrhead made a good suggestion. Talking to several members in our caucus about this, I know they felt that the amount they travel outside the constituency, bar from Edmonton back and forth, five trips would be adequate at least on an experimental basis to see how it worked out this year, and I would hope with this motion would be a recognition that we re-examine it next budget year. That's what I would base my support of this motion on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Edmonton-Highlands, followed by Taber-Warner.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I speak against this motion, and I think it's pretty clear why. First of all, I don't use the flying credit card. I try not to fly unless I have to -- you know, like to Ottawa and places like that. But I would assume I get about 15, maybe a few more, speaking engagements per year in Calgary or points further south, and I don't think I'm any exception. I think a lot of members of our caucus get the same sorts of requests and do what we can to be there. That's a fairly important part of our job, as I think all members will recognize. That's what we do. We develop certain skills on certain subjects and become a wanted commodity. Now, it seems to me that this motion would have the most deleterious effects on members from Edmonton, three-quarters of whom happen to be New Democrats.

I think that if you want to save money on traveling, we can reverse a couple of our previous increases on the mileage refund. We could do that and save a lot more money, because that part of the budget costs \$600,000. The flying part of the budget costs \$228,000, and that constitutes a zero percent increase. The driving part of the budget has already got a 3.7 percent increase. It seems to me if you really want to save money, that's where to do it, not by curtailing the ability of members to function in their roles as members and all that goes with that, including meetings and speaking engagements in cities other than Edmonton.

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I speak in favour of the motion. The intent of the amendment, as I see it, is clearly in line with a general restraint that's being practised by the government at this time. I think that in terms of helping members travel between their respective constituencies in the capital, we

have, if not the most generous, among the most generous programs of any province in this country, and I think that's very commendable. We allow travel by air or by automobile. By this amendment we are giving some further flexibility to allow a member to travel from his constituency and, if it is more reasonable and convenient, to do so by going outside of the province, and an example was used.

The member's absolutely correct in that during the past year we did increase the kilometre charge for rural members, and we now have a differential rate between urban and rural. I believe it's 45,000 kilometres for rural members and 25,000 for urban members. I don't know how many of our members are at or near the maximum in that program. For my part, I use it extensively because I find that in my own situation, as long as the weather is reasonable, I prefer to drive between my constituency and Edmonton. For me, that's in excess of a 1,200 kilometre round trip, about 6 hours and 15 minutes from doorstep to doorstep. But that's a choice I make. If the weather's not good, then I drive to Lethbridge and take one of the scheduled airline carriers. I don't see how this in any way will affect the member's ability to represent the constituency he or she has been elected to serve and do work in the capital.

Now, as for the question of those who may reside in Edmonton or opposition members, I'd remind the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands that in the opposition allowances there is a special recognition in the leader's allowance. Clearly that is a fund that is at the discretion of the leader to be used in any way the leader sees fit. If the leader feels it's important that members of the caucus attend a function and it's not practical to do so having them travel by car, then the leader certainly can authorize the travel by air. That's assuming that the five trips have already been used up. I don't know what specific figures the opposition caucus has for travel. I approach this looking at my own situation and based on some discussions I've had with other members. But I do think this is reasonable in light of the restraint program we're into, and I don't see that it affects the members' ability at all to represent the constituencies they've been elected to serve.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, the proposal is blatantly discriminatory. The members outside Edmonton can speak on Edmonton members' turf as often as they like, and they do. The members who happen to reside in Edmonton and represent Edmonton constituencies cannot speak on other people's turf as often as they like. They need to in the course of the ordinary duties of the Official Opposition. One might think this had not been thought of, if one accepts at face value the protestations of the mover of the motion, were it not for the fact that it's the one area where this will have that effect, that economy could be achieved in. If economy is really what he is after, then let it be a general reduction in this area of the budget, not in that one area which shows the hand, the true hand, of the mover of the motion. It is not the function of this committee to make political decisions, I submit, that are discriminatory and impair the functions of some of the ordinary parts of the working of the Legislature.

MR. TAYLOR: I have a couple of points. First was more clarification. The old one used to mention place of residence as well as constituency. That's particularly of interest to me because my principle residence and business is still in Calgary. I have another residence in the constituency, but there is a question of travel back and forth. The old one used to mention

residence. That's a point of information. That's all, I think. In other words, it should be amended to cover residence in a constituency, the tricomer deal.

Secondly, I couldn't quite see the sense of cutting. I can see it in worrying about everybody running around Alberta, unlike the hon. Minister of the Environment that now doesn't think it hurts the MLAs to learn a little bit more about something besides their own constituency. But one thing that bothers me is that this doesn't even stop travel. It in effect forces MLAs to use car travel and not air travel. Yet in your budget air travel is zero; car travel is up. The logic of the move is a little beyond me. If he wanted to cut MLAs' travel allowances, it seems to me car allowances rather than plane allowances would make sense. So apparently you can make five trips with a plane but you can make 55 trips with the car. The logic behind that escapes me, unless we have shares in Goodyear rubber now or the heritage trust fund has invested in Chrysler. Nevertheless, why would we want to go in the car?

Lastly is the question of opposition. Different opposition members are responsible for certain critiques. If we had more than 45 members, we're automatically the government, so therefore we can have cabinet ministers. If we have less than that, we're supposed to criticize in certain areas -- Environment, Energy, all the ministries. I should accept Environment since I'm on the same side this time. Can you pick another department I could pick on? Something like Treasury? Consequently, opposition members are going to be asked from time to time to go to different points in Alberta to speak to a different lobby or group that is interested in presenting a case in the House that's maybe counter to the minister of the day. The minister apparently is going to be allowed to fly everywhere. They're not going to be allowed only five trips, yet the opposition critic is supposed to have his or her feet nailed down to the Legislature floor and not have a chance to go out and meet the different lobby groups that may be interested.

So I think the motion, although maybe well intentioned to sort of slow down the gypsy instincts of some of our MLAs that are wandering about beautiful Alberta, still is badly crafted and badly thought out, and there's no particular logic behind it. So I would have to vote against it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further discussion on the motion?

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, just partly on what the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon said. He made some comment that they could still do 50 trips a year to different parts in Alberta. I don't think that's right, because the 52 trips a year, say, to the capital from your constituency in the other allowance: though it doesn't say where you go, it's a maximum, a bulk allowance, that you can apply for. Was it 48,000 or 45,000 kilometres on it, or something like that? I just want to throw that correction in.

MR. TAYLOR: It makes you travel by car; you need more time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further discussion? Call for the question.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A call for the question. Those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed? Carried 5 to 4. The page will be readjusted to take that into account.

All right. That was page 2. Page 3, MLA Communication

Allowance. Questions on that page? If not, is there a motion to approve that page?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, under the section Freight & Postage, is the formula for communication allowance for members updated to reflect the recent postal increase?

DR. McNEIL: I'm sorry. Is it communication allowance?

MR. BOGLE: Well, there are three components that make up the members' service allowance. Communication allowance is one of the three, and there is a formula used for postage. It looks at the number of constituents times . . . There is a formula within that overall formula. My question was merely to determine whether or not the figure in the book reflects the recently announced postal rate increases.

DR. McNEIL: The figures, the postage and freight at the top do; the communication allowance calculation does not. That's a formula that's in a Members' Services order, and as far as I understand it's not dependent on the postal rates. It's a factor times the number of electors in the most recent lists, so that number comes out to \$787,800 based on . . .

MR. BOGLE: If memory serves me correctly, Mr. Chairman, we adjusted the figure last year at this time because of a postal rate increase. It may not be specifically in the formula. I stand corrected. But I do recall having reviewed and adjusted the figure, because it is our ability as legislators to communicate with our constituents, and it is based on the number of constituents, so the weighting is in favour of urban ridings where there are more electors.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think with respect to the postage and freight section, you see that the adjustment has been made there on page 4?

MR. BOGLE: Well, for caucuses it has. I'm not sure that that same principle applies to the individual MLAs. Could that be addressed and reported back at a future meeting?

DR. McNEIL: Yes, it could. Let me clarify what you would expect. That would be a proposal as to how the Members' Services order should be modified to reflect the postal increase.

MR. BOGLE: And also to reflect in the budget estimates what dollars would be necessary to see that achieved.

DR. McNEIL: Following from that, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Page 4. Questions or comments with respect to page 4? Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I assume we're now under MLA Administration, right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir.

MR. HYLAND: Okay. I guess I drank too much coffee. I had to step out for a minute, so there was one item that I wanted to bring up.

MR. TAYLOR: They've restricted you to five trips to [inaudible].

MR. HYLAND: You're on page 4. I think it appears on probably page 1. It's related to Telephone & Communications. So if I could do that maybe before we end off this section or now, whatever's . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's do it now. So it relates to page 1 in this section and page 4?

MR. HYLAND: It relates to Telephone & Communications, and I think a copy of the motion is being passed around. I'll read it in a moment but would quickly explain it first. What it would do is allow members to put telephones in their temporary residences in Edmonton, in order to cut down on the cost, and have those phones billed directly to the Assembly rather than have a private phone put in and then be using their credit cards to accept calls on that phone. I believe somewhere, when I look through the information on budget, there was about a third of the calls being made out of the Edmonton offices, a third out of the constituency offices, and a third out of the homes. I think that might even change that more and bring some of that money out of -- because a substantial amount I noted for credit cards. With the rates on credit cards versus the rates on dialing direct, I don't think it would take long to recover the remainder of the costs there. So as a result I'd like to move the following motion:

That the Transportation and Administrative Services Order be amended by repealing section 1(1)(d) and substituting:

(d) the purchase or rental and installation of an office telephone service in the Member's constituency office and in his office in the Legislature and a listing residence telephone in his constituency and in his temporary residence within the meaning of section 41 of the Legislative Assembly Act.

(d.1) private line service for the residence telephone installed in his constituency pursuant to clause (d).

And that the amendment be effective on the date of passage. And that the Administration Office prepare an estimate of the cost savings of telephone tolls and report to the next meeting of [this committee].

I should say that the last part of the motion -- it may not be possible to do it at the next meeting of this committee, being as we're meeting tomorrow, but perhaps at a further meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Further discussion or comment? Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to speak in support of the motion. Up until very recently, I was using my credit card for all of the calls placed from my temporary residence here in Edmonton back to the constituency and other points in Alberta. It was brought to my attention that there would be a savings if in fact I used a telephone with a direct dial, DDD, because the cost is approximately half of an operator-assisted call.

I am concerned, though, that the charge being levied here in Edmonton -- and it may be the same in other parts of the province under AGT. I'm now made aware that the phone is classified as a business telephone, and I'm told that it's a business telephone because the initials "MLA" appear behind my name and will appear behind my name in the telephone directory. I suggest there's a double standard that applies in that for over 10 years the same telephone number was listed under my wife's name with a capital "D" and small "r" behind her name, yet it

was fully accepted by the telephone company as being a residential listing. But now for some reason we're told that if you have "MLA" behind your name, that's a business listing.

We're talking about a temporary residential situation, and because the cost of a business phone is substantially higher than that of a residential phone, I believe the administration does have appropriate grounds to insist that MLAs who are listing their telephones be given a residential rather than the business rate. Again, I'm not sure of the situation in other parts of the province. Up to this point in time I have not had a residential telephone supplied by Leg. Assembly in my permanent home, so I don't know what the case would be in that instance. Maybe other members have some firsthand experience.

But I am supportive. I think it's a way we can further reduce costs. I don't know how else you can tackle the problem. It would certainly not be fair to put a dollar limit on each member, because those of us who represent constituencies some distance from Edmonton are by nature of the distance factor running up a larger bill per month than those who are in close proximity to the city. But I am very supportive of the thrust of the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Because of this information about the phone being listed as a business phone if "MLA" is attached to it, do we then need to put a proviso on this that if negotiations can be made so it does not become a business phone by tacking on "MLA", then this motion should proceed?

MR. BOGLE: Well, I raised the anomaly, though, that for more than 10 years the same telephone had a "Dr." behind my wife's name and that didn't suddenly cause a bell to ring in the telephone office and a business rate to apply. It was always acknowledged as a residential rate, and it should still be.

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

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I would think it would be much preferred, the residential rate, but even if that can't be negotiated, there is still a substantial savings in the cost of the calls and the savings in the calls even if all fails at the business rate.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I mean, I understand this, and I agree with it. But what I don't understand, then, is why it is that when I make a long-distance call from my constituency office, I've been told to use the credit card, which means I have to go through the operator. Now, exactly the reverse of that was recommended by this committee last year when we sent out a memo to every MLA and said, "Look, you'd be saving us money in the long run if you'd hook up an additional phone in your house, call it your MLA phone, dial direct, and don't use the credit card." And now I get instructions, or we've been told for a year and a half that when you make calls from a constituency, you have to use the credit card. So I'm just pointing out a little anomaly, like you know, one hand puts some sense into something and the next hand takes it out.

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

MS BARRETT: No?

MR. HYLAND: Whichever hand was telling you to phone from your constituency office on credit card was telling you wrong, because we used to do that -- Mr. Kowalski can maybe help me.

Probably five years ago we took that away from constituency offices and used direct dialing. Up to that point in time we were using credit cards, and if my memory serves me right, we saved something like \$80,000.

MS BARRETT: No surprise. I did check again just recently, and that's why I brought it up. I mean, it's only related to my support of the motion, because it was more a question of, you know, uniformity of policy.

MR. HYLAND: Perhaps if that's the question and if this motion does pass, when the Clerk and/or Speaker let members know about it, we should again list the constituency offices and, as the Member for Edmonton-Highlands has said, make sure that misunderstanding isn't out there in too many more spots. I should say that it doesn't preclude the use of credit cards when you are away from either your temporary residence or your constituency office. It's just a way to cut down on the use of them when you're at home.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a call for the question. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. The amendment is effective as of today.

The Chair's understanding is that we now have gone past page 4. We are now on page 5. Questions or comments, page 5, constituency offices, photocopiers, office automation?

DR. McNEIL: Office automation: that's the NBI word processing system.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Minus 24.8 percent there.

May we move to page 6? The AGT credit card figure should shift because of the motion. This ought to be noted, okay? Those are the residential charges, I'm informed, primarily. Any questions in regard to page 6?

May we move on, then, to page 7? Again, here is the support service, really, to the constituency offices. Any questions on page 7?

MR. WRIGHT: What does OA stand for?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Office automation.

May we go to page 8, Professional, Technical, and Labour Services?

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, on page 7 still, photocopying equipment: it says 78 at \$57. That must be more than photocopying equipment in the constituency offices.

DR. McNEIL: That may be some caucus photocopying equipment, but I'm not certain on that.

MR. HYLAND: I know it's the same as last year, but it's that it seems like \$57 a quarter, almost \$165 or \$164 a year on a \$1,500 machine, is a substantial service charge, and I would guess there's a lot of them that don't get serviced that often.

DR. McNEIL: There's a standard service contract on these machines is my understanding. So we're paying a constant number of dollars per quarter to maintain the machines as opposed to paying for each service charge.

MR. HYLAND: The only reason why I ask it: I know that the

Assembly is in the process of changing from some of the old photocopying equipment that gave a fair amount of trouble to newer, smaller equipment. I just wondered if we're still on 78 old ones or if this includes a combination of new and old ones.

DR. McNEIL: I don't know the answer to that question. I would think it would be a combination of the two, but the distribution I don't know.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On which page, Calgary-Glenmore?

MRS. MIROSH: On page 8, could I have some clarification as to MLA Printing, Brochures and Pamphlets? I thought that came under our communication budget in Constituency Offices.

DR. McNEIL: Yes, that \$284,400 was transferred from the Communication Allowance.

MRS. MIROSH: But that does not show up in our constituency budget now. Is that what you mean?

DR. McNEIL: On page 4, MLA Communication Allowance, there's \$787,800 allocated there. Of that amount, we transferred \$284,400 to MLA Printing, Brochures and Pamphlets. It's just in this category because it's a Professional, Technical, and Labour Services item, but it's still budgeted for under your Communication Allowance, and you would see on your monthly printout those charges.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okeydoke, page 8.

May we move on to page 9, the lounge at the back?

Might we go to page 10, utilities for constituency offices? It's transferred.

Cypress-Redcliff, page 11?

MR. HYLAND: On page 11, I would assume then that the MLA Promotional Allowance is a transfer, but stationery purchased for use by MLAs is out of the General Administration budget in most cases.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, the additional benefit from here over to the individual MLA. Agreed with page 11?

We can go on to page 12 then: Data Processing Supplies. I always wonder if there are a few items that we might be able to move from my budget into your budget. [interjection] I know. Any questions on page 12, or agreed we move on to 13?

Page 13 then: purchase of data processing equipment, Purchase of Fixed Assets.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, a couple of questions, and the one I may know the answer for. The MLA caucus operation office automation system: is the one we're talking about the other half of the study program or whatever it's called?

DR. McNEIL: MLA caucus office automation system would be the present NBI word processing system. This is the final payment for that system. That's my understanding.

MR. HYLAND: Didn't we make a payment on that last year, or we pulled it from somewhere? Because it looks like a 100 percent increase.

DR. McNEIL: Yes, it was paid under Rental of Property, Equipment and Goods last year. That's on page 5. There was \$159,000 paid out last year. This \$56,000 is the final payment this year.

MR. HYLAND: Then does that same follow true for the \$60,000 MLA Accounting System? What are we accounting for?

DR. McNEIL: No, it does not. That is a new item. It relates to, as I mentioned previously, a need to upgrade the MLA accounting system in terms of the equipment and the software that provide you with the information on a monthly basis as to your allowances and so on. Right now we're using a lot of overtime because of slow printers and slow processing. This is an area that was identified, again by the Auditor General, as an area requiring some upgrading with respect to equipment, and this is an estimate of what would be required to do that.

MR. BOGLE: Can you tell me what will happen if we don't approve the \$60,000 item?

DR. McNEIL: There would be potential for delays with the system. We're spending about \$25,000 a year on software repairs and maintenance on the system right now, as well as additional overtime. So we would continue to incur those costs that relate to running this system. Really, what this is is an allocation of dollars in anticipation that the EDP strategic plan would identify this as one of the most critical elements needing attention in the overall office, so this is why those dollars were allocated there.

MR. BOGLE: I want to make sure I understand, Mr. Chairman. We're investing \$60,000 in what. Software?

DR. McNEIL: And hardware.

MR. BOGLE: And hardware. That's a one-time expenditure?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. BOGLE: And that will save us what -- \$25,000 a year? Or are you estimating a higher figure?

DR. McNEIL: It would be \$30,000, \$35,000 a year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hopefully, it should make the whole system much more efficient. As mentioned, because of the overtime and the breakdowns at the moment, this is a higher area of frustration for MLAs trying to get the feedback as to what's gone on in terms of their expenditure envelope. So as you correctly point out, Mr. Bogle, this savings of \$25,000 -- or \$30,000 or \$35,000, as pointed out by the Clerk -- per year should obviously offset this within the two years. Again, it was pointed out by the Auditor General.

MR. WRIGHT: Was that arrived at by subtracting all the maintenance costs? Surely not. I mean, there will be maintenance costs.

DR. McNEIL: Definitely there would be maintenance costs too, but the expectation would be that they would be much lower than they are now.

MR. WRIGHT: Reduced by \$30,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, page 13.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, a comment. I hope it indeed does save money, but it seems like in all the automation we've gone through in the last few years, our intention was to save money and time. But I don't think it always saved money and time. It may have got us stuff in a different condition, but when you start paying the operations, I don't think the money and time part ever did work out totally.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I think where it really has worked out is in terms of the training, in terms of the next-day production of *Hansard*, the matter of typesetting, and all that kind of thing. We're now into the first year of a lot of the cost-effectiveness with regard to the laser printer, for example. So I think indeed we should be seeing that economy effected in this next while for some of those past things we did in this last 18 months.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, we do see the *Hansard* budget in the last three years reduced from eight to five, largely because of automation, I would think.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further discussion of page 13?

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, with the very top item again, I had the impression that there was very little data processing equipment in the MLA constituency offices, hence the second item. In other words, we were going to put a system together. I was just wondering how this is so. Is that \$105,000 worth of data processing equipment that's going to be bought subsequent to the \$56,000 program, or is it \$105,000 that's going to be bought by MLAs without taking recognition of the \$56,000 program? In other words, is that \$105,000 going ahead without awaiting the results of the \$56,000 experiment?

DR. McNEIL: My expectation would be that the majority of MLAs would likely want to wait until the outcome of the experiment unless they have, you know, a critical need now where they would want to purchase equipment, and they would take into account the issue of compatibility.

MR. TAYLOR: How do you arrive at \$105,000? Have some MLAs phoned you up and said they would? I'm just wondering how that comes about.

DR. McNEIL: That figure is just based on what we budgeted, what we transferred from the Communication Allowance last year. And we made the same assumption for . . .

MR. TAYLOR: This is a transfer from the MLAs' account anyhow, and whether it's spent or not spent really doesn't matter. It just gives you an idea. So it was entirely under the MLAs' jurisdiction, not ours, anyhow.

DR. McNEIL: Correct.

MR. TAYLOR: Should it be in our budget, things like that that are entirely under the MLAs'? I notice a few other transfers through our budgeting system. In other words, it seems it's more confusing. I noticed the Member for Calgary-Glenmore also asked about something that was a transfer. If they're en-

tirely outside this committee's authority or entirely outside our ability to do anything with, I'm just wondering: maybe that's why you need the extra accounting system, because you're pushing these in and out so many times that it gets confused.

DR. McNEIL: I think it has to be reflected in the overall budget for the Assembly.

MR. WRIGHT: Well, just to recap, this is that part of the constituency budgets that permits, under the existing regime, MLAs to purchase data processing equipment for their constituency offices. Have you any idea how much of that has been used up in the current year?

DR. McNEIL: I don't. Maybe if we can move on, I can get back to you in a sec on that one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any other questions with regard to page 13? We'll come back to this in a moment then.

Page 14, Purchase of Office Equipment. Does 14 strike you as fair enough? Agreed.

MR. WRIGHT: May I just ask what Dictamites are, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's a new form of dog flea.

MR. WRIGHT: These are hand-held dictaphones or . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps the Chair could check with committee members in this section. The Chair's understanding is that page 1 will have to change to reflect certain actions. Page 2 will reflect a readjustment vis-à-vis a motion that was passed with regard to five trips per year, so that will change a figure. Page 3: there's a question there with regard to a Members' Services order. Page 4 was approved by the committee, although we haven't got a formal motion to approve till we do the whole section. Pages 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14 have been given the general approval of the committee. Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, maybe because we misunderstood the process, I had a question or point of information on that motion 2 that was passed, on page 3 is it? What the hell was it now? Travel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is now information after it's already been passed? What's the question?

MR. TAYLOR: I know. I guess I screwed up there somehow or another. I thought I was going to get an answer, and I never did. Because it's in draftsmanship, and I wanted to point out that "Member's constituency" -- in other regulations, it says "constituency or place of residence and Edmonton," and this was out, and I don't know what I do. Do I have to make a notice to amend it, or can we get it back, because most motions or regulations carry -- because I'm quite conversant with it when living outside my constituency -- "between the member's constituency or place of residence and Edmonton."

MR. WRIGHT: I'm just guessing, but I think this was just an oversight, I would guess.

MR. TAYLOR: I thought it was too, but then I began to get a

little bit worried that I was sitting at one end of the province with no money to get to the other.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I do recall the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon raising the issue with all of us, and I would certainly believe that to bring the motion back in a friendly amendment to include "and normal place of residence" would be in order. I certainly don't think it's . . .

MR. WRIGHT: Yes. Using the existing wording on that point.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the Chair will take it that there was a motion from Taber-Warner which would be an amendment to the previous motion.

MR. TAYLOR: I second that motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No need to second, but we have the amendment.

MR. BOGLE: Behind the words "between the Member's constituency," add "and/or normal place of residence and Edmonton."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Minister of the Environment, on this point?

MR. KOWALSKI: Oh, it's just a point of clarification, Mr. Chairman. I'm not quite sure what the point here is. The motion, this is to provide for travel between a member's constituency and the provincial capital. Is there a situation whereby perhaps a member would not live in his constituency and would require this to have happened here? I'm not quite sure what the peculiar circumstances are that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is talking about. I just assumed that the member lived in his constituency. Am I being told here now, today, that he doesn't? Just a little bit of information to help me best understand this would be helpful.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the motion also relates to air travel. Is there air service between . . .

MR. TAYLOR: We have air services for people that want them. Sometimes I've flown it, but I think it's a normal income tax for the Member for Barrhead, who may have been lucky

enough never to have paid income tax. But if he looks at his income tax form next time, it will say, "by a principal place of residence" and "place of residence." So you can have two under the income tax rules, even under this government.

AN HON. MEMBER: You're the only one in the whole province who can.

MR. TAYLOR: I know, but some of them would argue that after 20 years of Tory rule, they couldn't afford to, but nevertheless.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a call for the question on the amendment. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Motion carries.

With the permission of the committee, could we have this amendment occur in the minutes following on where the previous motion was indeed discussed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed? Thank you.

Now, with respect to the question raised on page 13, Dr. McNeil?

DR. McNEIL: Yes. So far this year there's been approximately \$11,000 spent out of the Communication Allowance for data processing equipment.

MR. TAYLOR: "This year", meaning [inaudible] fiscal year?

DR. McNEIL: Fiscal '87-88 to date, to December 31.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does that give us general agreement on page 13? Thank you.

The Chair had pointed out earlier the pages where further information or an adjustment of the figures is required. Is it the understanding that the committee will entertain a motion to adjourn for today and return tomorrow at 9 a.m.? So moved. Is there a motion to that effect? The Chair recognizes Edmonton-Strathcona. All those in favour of adjournment until tomorrow at 9 a.m., please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 4:03 p.m.]

