

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

[1:07 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, ladies and gentlemen, let's begin. The agenda is there before you. Anything you'd like to add at this time? Certainly you can add things later. Anything else?

MR. HYLAND: I changed my mind. I just found it on the agenda.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; good. Can we take it that approval of the agenda is given? Okay. What is your desire with regard to item 3, the approval of the November 3 committee meeting?

MS BARRETT: I'll move approval.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; thank you. Moved by Edmonton-Highlands, approval of November 3 minutes. Questions? All those in favour? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Business Arising from the Minutes. Before we get into that, I think the general hope of the committee is that we will spend this afternoon working through these items and then be back again in the morning to have a brief introduction to where we might be going with the budget. So we can go away from there.

Okay; 4(a), Alternate Billing Means for Taxis and Airport Parking Charges. David?

DR. McNEIL: At the last meeting it was requested to investigate alternatives with respect to paying taxi and airport parking charges rather than using VISA. There are basically three alternatives with respect to taxis. You can pay cash or use a personal credit card and then complete an expense claim form. Members can obtain an accountable advance -- say, \$200 -- pay for taxis out of that advance, and then claim back against that advance to keep that advance topped up. The third is that we can issue taxi charge slips to your secretary or to you individually for certain taxi companies in Edmonton and Calgary, and then that is billed back automatically to the Assembly.

Airport parking: the first two, the same. We attempted to obtain a charge account at the various airports, and we were unable to secure that. The only way they said we could do it would be to have individual members have parking stalls or have a group of parking stalls.

So our recommendation, although it's not a . . . I think any of the three alternatives for the payment of taxi fares could apply. We recommend the first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okey doke. Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Well, just for clarity again, the three alternatives would be acceptable from the administration's point of view for taxi fares. And for airport parking, are we limited to the one, or did you say two?

DR. McNEIL: No, to the two, either paying in cash or personal credit or using the accountable advance and then in effect paying cash or credit that way. In one instance the member has a fund from which he or she can draw those funds directly to pay those charges and then claim back to top up that fund again, that advance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other discussion on that? Bob.

MR. BOGLE: Well, I'd also move that the members may use

any of the three alternatives presented to the committee for the payment of taxi fares and either of the first two alternatives for the payment of airport parking. The three examples, again, were the submission of personal expense claims as the first; the second, the accountable advance; and the third would be the use of taxi charge slips where an account is held by the Leg. Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further discussion?

The call for the question. All those in favour of the motion, please signify by the raising of hands, shouting, something like that. Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: I liked the old system.

MR. BOGLE: One last question, and that is from the administrative point of view. When would we expect the change-over to take place so that we can either send back our old Chargex cards or destroy them?

DR. McNEIL: I'm told that the PHH cards arrived in Calgary on Friday, and they were supposed to be sent up to me Friday or today. I haven't seen them yet. Also, attached to this briefing information is a draft letter to members from myself regarding the implementation. Now, it will have to be modified to reflect this present decision on the payment of taxi and airport parking, so I would suggest adding a paragraph to explain how the member would pay for the taxis and airport parking.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, please, Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you. It says here that we would have to save these slips with this new card as well. Does this mean that it doesn't show up on the bill? It's the slips that seem to cause the problems. What if they get lost?

DR. McNEIL: Now you'd be getting one slip. You still are required to retain those in case an audit is ever required of your transactions using the card, but we're not requiring you to submit them. All we're requiring you to do is to . . .

MRS. MIROSH: Oh, that should be clarified then.

MS BARRETT: Oh, boy. I'll say.

MR. TAYLOR: How long would you expect them to be held for an audit? One year? Two years?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okey dokey. We're going with Westlock-Sturgeon; we're going to Edmonton-Highlands; we're going to Taber-Warner.

MR. TAYLOR: Just a question. Maybe we should have something on paper as to how long we should retain our receipts. Is it two years for an audit?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. Michael Clegg, the receipts, holding on to them. Seven years?

MR. M. CLEGG: The limitation on contracts, Mr. Chairman, is six years. That's the limitation period. Theoretically, if a ques-

tion were to come up, it could come up for six years after the transaction year on a contractual basis.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The main thing is just to keep them in your own file. Thank you.

Edmonton-Highlands, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MS BARRETT: So what happens to those of us who have never done that? We get filed?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll try not to rat on you to the income tax department.

MS BARRETT: We don't get elected.

MR. HYLAND: You're okay.

MS BARRETT: Why?

MR. HYLAND: You'll have enough room in your office with all these pieces of paper because you're littler than us.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, starting now.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. Well, better get a memo out to everybody.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Wasn't Taber-Warner first?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I got kind of lost in the flurry here. All of a sudden everybody came awake at the same time and wanted in.

Taber-Warner, Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. BOGLE: Well, I merely wanted to make the suggestion that in the transition to the new card there be close consultation between the Clerk's office and the chiefs of staff of the various caucuses so that members are made aware of the new process and what obligations they have, as well as the options in terms of the process that's followed. I'm sure David was planning to do that in any event, but I thought I'd reinforce the point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: The question I have relating to that is: when this PHH card comes to the office, is it just a typewritten thing or an actual copy of the invoice?

DR. McNEIL: If you look in the material, the last page of the briefing material is a copy of an invoice that you receive. All we do with it is stamp that certification stamp on it and send it to you for your signature.

MR. HYLAND: Oh, okay. Then we do it that way.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I'd still like to get out of the responsibility of holding on to things for years and years. Can we discharge that by just sending all our receipts to them and letting them keep them six, seven years?

DR. McNEIL: If the members want to send in their receipts, we will accumulate them rather than the individual member. That's not difficult.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think we're really talking about a whole pile of boxes, folks.

MS BARRETT: If I might hop in.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MS BARRETT: The other thing is that they keep their receipts for a gazillion years, right? They keep their hard copy.

MR. HYLAND: Yeah, because you can always get it.

MS BARRETT: So you can always get it. That's right.

DR. McNEIL: But the other factor is that the Members' Services order requires that receipts be available for travel between the 10,000 and 25,000 kilometre limit, and that's stated in the order.

MS BARRETT: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Rocky Mountain House followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. CAMPBELL: Yeah. Mr. Chairman, if I understand this correctly now: PHH, you don't send in the receipt. Is that correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's correct.

MR. CAMPBELL: Okay. So now we're talking about the receipts you'll be receiving from PHH at the Clerk's office. Is that correct?

DR. McNEIL: That would be an alternative.

MR. CAMPBELL: Well, for billing it's my understanding that if I use the PHH, I don't have to send in any receipt; I can do whatever I wish with those.

DR. McNEIL: Well, you would have to keep them in case of an audit, but what we send to you is this invoice.

MR. CAMPBELL: Well, what have we done here? Have we streamlined the system or are you just using one credit card instead of having a number of them?

DR. McNEIL: Well, we've saved -- I guess about \$30,000 was my estimate.

MR. CAMPBELL: On charges.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah, on charges.

We've avoided members having to carry half a dozen cards around. And I think we've simplified the process in that members do not have to submit individual receipts. This document, if it's certified by yourself, counts for Treasury's purposes as sufficient information.

MR. CAMPBELL: However, to make sure I'm right, I should hold the receipts myself.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just put them in the file with your secretary. Just leave them there.

MR. TAYLOR: Not only that, Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry; you're after Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, it was just on a point of explanation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what all of these are. Sorry, Nick.

MR. TAYLOR: If you examine the things, the other charges . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. Cypress-Redcliff and then yourself.

MR. TAYLOR: I had the answer.

MR. HYLAND: It wouldn't be the first time you've been cut off when you had the answer, Nick.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Or thought he did.

MR. HYLAND: Or thought he did.

So in this case, if we happen to lose the receipts, then there are no copies.

DR. McNEIL: No, that's the value of this. All the receipt would be is a backup to this in case Treasury wanted to pursue it as far as an audit trail is concerned. But in terms of the authorization for payment, we do not need the receipt.

MR. HYLAND: But as far as the condition of how much fuel we burn, it's right here.

DR. McNEIL: That's right. We've got very specific information.

MR. HYLAND: The litres are right on there, so it's not a question of whether you're burning that fuel or not. You don't even need the receipts to prove that.

MS BARRETT: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, you have to keep your receipt, because the only identification is three -- oil, gas, and other -- as you see written on here. Unless your memory is very good, if you go back for antifreeze or lubricant or steering wheel fluid or whatever it is that you put in, you're going to have write it in. So you're going to have to sit down with your receipts when you get this bill and identify them. I doubt like hell they're going to pay everything marked "other" no matter what it is. "Other" has to be identified.

DR. McNEIL: In the letter we're asking that the secretary or the member identify those other charges as to what they are.

MR. CAMPBELL: So basically, Mr. Chairman, we're backing this up so the onus is still on the member to produce or keep a receipt which we had difficulty getting before.

MR. TAYLOR: This is what I'm getting at. How are you going to get somebody that has eaten these receipts or thrown them away to sit down each month and fill out what they did in the "other" column here?

MR. HYLAND: Then he pays it.

MR. TAYLOR: Have him pay the money, yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What will probably happen is something along this line. You take that one plastic card instead of four or five, so that saves you size in your wallet. That gives us the discount -- we, the Legislative Assembly Office -- which is a considerable saving.

MR. HYLAND: Plus the dealer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And the dealer? Okay. And the PHH card is very acceptable now wherever you go in the province. Nearly every place I've gone to there's been not even a second glance at it now. So it's a lot more efficient that way. You can go to almost any filling station now, which is better than what you've had before.

In terms of the receipts, just keep them. If somebody's out there losing a whole flock of them, well, that's his or her problem. But you just take that receipt and put it into one drawer or stick it in a file and let it go, because then you will get from our office this printout which shows you all the stuff. And I for one certainly don't sit there and try to compare the receipts back and forth. I look at it and make sure I was in those places at that time and just sign it. It's got to be a lot more convenient all the way around.

MR. TAYLOR: The only argument I had was that the other charges have to be identified, I would think. At least before I just sent up the receipts, and it was identified on the receipts. Now, am I gathering here that when we get the bill, we just sign it; we don't have to identify each one of these other charges?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What do you mean by another charge?

MR. TAYLOR: There's a column called other charges. Everything you buy that is not oil or gas shows up there. Whether it's antifreeze or a lubrication job or anything else, that shows up in that other charges column. It also might be a steak dinner; I don't know. But whatever they put on there has to be identified. On the old slip they identified it; this one doesn't. That's just why I was wondering.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You'd still have it identified on your receipt.

MS BARRETT: That's right; exactly.

MR. TAYLOR: That type of receipt is identified then?

DR. McNEIL: Yeah, if you do other than oil and gas, it's identified on the receipt.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Well, I always go to Turbo, and they used to just put down "auxiliary" or something like that if I had oil or windshield wiper fluid or what have you. I just told them, "Can you start spelling out what that is on the receipts for me?" And they do. So if you see them just putting down something like "auxiliary," get them to spell it out; it's as easy as that. They'll do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And we have to work on the theory that nobody's putting meals on it, for example, at your friendly restaurant. Then they're in danger of losing a lot more.

MR. TAYLOR: The type of meals you get there, you'd only do it once anyhow.

DR. McNEIL: It's not likely that with that card you'd be able to charge meals.

MS BARRETT: And Turbo doesn't serve them anyway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Now, any other questions or comments about the PHH card? That part's all right? Okay. No other comments about the taxi business? That's all right? And everything is fine with regard to the airport parking.

MR. HYLAND: So this becomes effective when we receive the PHH. The other cards go back, and we go onto chits for taxis and return the VISA.

DR. McNEIL: Chits and/or an accountable advance. We'll modify this memo in consultation with the chiefs of staff and decide how we're going to communicate the totality of the system to each member.

MS BARRETT: While you're doing that, would you mind, then, doing a notation to remind everybody how important it is that they hold on to all receipts?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MS BARRETT: Thanks. Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Now, Parliamentary Counsel, the decision is still . . . So there are no changes, Michael? We don't think there's anything here that needs to affect an order?

MR. M. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, unless there's an intention to allow taxi travel for some purpose other than before, it seems that what is being proposed is only to change the means of paying and recording. The present orders restrict taxi travel to reimbursement for the cost of taxi travel in the City of Edmonton and surrounding areas, and secondly, cost of taxi travel necessary to connect with other forms of transportation when travelling to and from the City of Edmonton.

If you're outside the city of Edmonton, it can only be used for the purposes of getting there or getting home again. So at the moment there's no authorization for taxi travel in and around the city of Medicine Hat or in and around the city of Calgary unless it's part of a trip home.

My understanding is that all that's being proposed is a

change in means of payment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: I guess there's one other issue related to the order, and that is that as it presently reads, it's subject to provision of fuel receipts in respect of 18,000 to 45,000 kilometres for rural members and 10,000 to 25,000 for urban members. Rather than saying "subject to the provision of fuel receipts" -- rather than requiring fuel receipts to receive payment -- it might be better to say "fuel receipts should be available on request," because that's the way it's been administered.

MR. HYLAND: This constitutes a receipt because it's got your litres named.

DR. McNEIL: That's why I think we don't need that provision in there now, because using that card, it's very explicit as to how much gas and how much it costs for each member.

MR. HYLAND: Instead of changing it, why don't we just leave it, because we can use this as the receipt. You don't have to submit the receipt.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, I agree with that.

MR. HYLAND: You can write it on a piece of paper, and away you go.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The motion had been carried.

Item 4(b) goes over to the next regular meeting. Other than the fact that the security study is under way, we were not inundated by a whole series of suggestions by yourselves or other members. I'm sure there's time to have that input if you still wish to do so. But a fair amount of interviewing has already taken place.

Okay; 4(c). Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members will recall that on several occasions we've had discussions about guidelines for the use of our constituency service allowance, and we have referred back to the chiefs of staff of the various caucuses some suggested amendments to the order. It is my understanding that we now have all-party agreement on the wording and the intent, and if that is the case, then I'm pleased to put forward a motion as contained in our agenda book, 4(c). Do you wish the motion read, Mr. Chairman?

MS BARRETT: We all have it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've all got it there, the two pages' worth, at this stage.

MS BARRETT: No, there's just one page.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, just the first page of it. Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: Just one page. Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The other one just gives what they read.

MS BARRETT: As it will form part of the minutes, why don't we just deal with it.

MR. BOGLE: Because there's been so much consultation on the matter, if it's unanimously agreed to, I'll . . .

MS BARRETT: Just move it.

MR. BOGLE: It's moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Moved by Taber-Warner, the first white page under 4(c). Call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no. Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Okay. Item 4(d), the Public Works, Supply and Services pilot project: RITE lines. Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: I had some discussion with Public Works, Supply and Services re some of the questions that were asked at the last meeting. The department interpreted our request for installation of a RITE line in each office as installing a RITE telephone in each office. They could have added the RITE line as an additional line on existing extensions rather than as a separate telephone, and therefore that additional handset would not have been required. We can go back to them -- and I would recommend that I go back to them -- and ask them to review the installation setup in each office to ensure that it meets the needs of the individual member. So if there's an extension system, the RITE line will be switched to that and the extra phone will be taken out.

MR. HYLAND: Agreed.

DR. McNEIL: The training can either be obtained directly through the RITE operator in the nearest RITE centre, or if the individual office wants to contact our office, we can arrange it through the RITE operation here in Edmonton. That would probably be easier in terms of making contact with the RITE centre nearest the member's office.

MR. HYLAND: It must be working. They're using it in my office. Maybe the installer showed them how to use it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All righty. The understanding is to follow through on that, being dealt with on an individual basis in one sense but co-ordinated through our office. All right; thank you.

Item 4(e), EDP Pilot Project.

DR. McNEIL: Okay. There are a number of items here. I think the first one we'll deal with is the response to Mr. Wright's concerns in the memo that was sent out by the Speaker to all members of the committee, and that's the two-page document dated November 21. Basically, that memo says that the pilot project assessed the utility of computers meeting a certain standard satisfying the needs of the constituency office. The summary report recommended a generic standard, which was necessary to ensure compatibility among the equipment in the constituency offices and the equipment in the central offices, the caucuses and the administration office.

There were some concerns about the term "IBM AT compatible". That doesn't imply an IBM computer per se. What that term means is that the computer selected meets a certain standard so that it will be compatible with all the other equipment we've already invested \$1 million to \$1.5 million in. That was, I think, the crux of the concern that Mr. Wright's memo raised, that we were recommending IBM equipment, and that's not the case. We were recommending a standard of computer equipment. The term "IBM AT compatible" is used to express or generalize what that standard is.

Are there any questions on that specific response to Mr. Wright's concerns?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Edmonton-Highlands, do you think that addresses it?

MS BARRETT: I know doggone well it does, because I knew that from the beginning. I think Gordon is convinced of it, and anyway he's not here. No, I think he finally understands that. He still believes in, you know, wide-area networking and all sorts of fancy high-tech stuff that we don't really need. That's just a personal belief. I think he does understand that we're talking about a generic commodity here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.  
Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Can I try a motion and see if it works? I do this hesitantly because of computers and me. I move that the Members' Services Committee approve computerization of constituency offices with the equipment meeting the generic standard recommended in the Summary Report of October 20, 1988. Implementation and funding to be centralized by the Legislative Assembly Office, and that a member may upgrade this package from funds available in his/her Members' Services allowance.

I think that will get away from the old system where we bought one -- and I did buy one that didn't work that well. It worked for a while. I think it was a lemon; it was painted the wrong colour.

At least this way we would have a standard, and if you wanted to upgrade the standard because of whatever in your office, whether you were doing more of one thing or more of the other, you have that ability to do that.

MS BARRETT: Generally I would agree with this motion, but I would like to point out something that caused me concern. I started to talk about it a few months ago, but now we're down to the specifics and now we understand we're dealing with a generic item here. The amount allocated for the IBM AT compatible in my assessment -- and, I would add, my direct experience -- is probably slightly overstated at \$4,000, even given 40 meg hard drive, et cetera, and the colour graphics, monitor, and adaptor. It's probably overstated by a bit, as is the cost of the 24 pin dot matrix printer.

What occurs to me is the following. Now, I don't want to hold this system up, but for the \$5,150 between the cost of the computer and the printer, I know for a fact that you can get that computer you're looking for and a laser printer. In other words, if you take about \$600 off the cost of the computer and transfer it to the cost of the printer, you can get a laser printer. Your abilities with a laser printer . . . In fact, I can tell you -- I've got dot matrix at home and at the constituency office, and my second computer, which is at the Leg. office, uses an IBM

Quietwriter, a very limited sort of thing but at least I can produce a document that looks like it came off an NBI. At constituency and at home I use dot matrix. I don't care how much you spend on a dot matrix, you're never going to get proper letter quality.

I know this to be true because I take a real active interest in computers. I know that on bulk purchase orders you can get laser printers for \$2,000 or less; \$1,800 was the quote I got if we were ordering 20 or 30 at a time. I also know that the IBM compatible -- the one I've got at home has virtually every single feature we're talking about here except that I purchased just 30 meg hard drive. I bought a paper white monitor which cost me exactly the same as a colour monitor. I had to take my colour bar out in order to use my monitor, and it still only cost me \$1,600.

So what I'm suggesting is that if we can do this for the same amount of money and get laser printers, folks, we're crazy not to. You're really confining yourself to very poor quality when in fact for only a few hundred dollars more, which can be gained from the large purchase of the compatible computers, I can guarantee you that the net bottom line will still come in under \$6,455. I just know it. I checked it out with a couple of companies, the names of which I can provide you if you wish.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Clerk, do you have comments?

DR. McNEIL: Yes. We could go to the marketplace, asking bids on a laser printer as well as the other, and come back to the committee and say, "This is what the results are."

MS BARRETT: I can tell you that it could be done this afternoon with a couple of phone calls.

DR. McNEIL: No, I don't have any difficulty. I understand you can get a laser printer for \$2,000. But if we go through the bid process we're recommending, we could likely get quite a break on that price as well because we're talking the numbers here.

MS BARRETT: You've got that right.

MRS. MIROSH: Are you talking about bulk buying then?

MS BARRETT: Yes.

MRS. MIROSH: So the members wouldn't have any choice?

MR. BOGLE: No, that isn't what the motion says at all. Read the motion.

MS BARRETT: Bulk buying on the generic basis. I mean, we're not telling you that you can't have . . . If you want a Mac, for instance, or whatever -- we have to work that out, getting every MLA to state which particular type they want, as long as it provides the basics written up in the generic fashion here. But I know from experience that most people simply will choose an IBM direct clone.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: It was just a question for information. What kind of money are we talking about now, the ideal setup, the printer and the IBM clone?

MS BARRETT: Cheaper than what's listed here, guaranteed.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, what's that? I haven't got what's there either. Have you got a cost here?

MS BARRETT: Yeah, it's on page 7. Maybe I'll come and sit beside you, walk you through this, Nick.

MR. TAYLOR: Page 7?

MS BARRETT: Page 7 of the report.

Mr. Chairman, can I add something else while he's looking through here?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Surely.

MS BARRETT: Now, this doesn't follow directly within Al's motion but I think should be considered in the context thereof. Almost certainly, if we follow the schedule as recommended by the committee, which is some on this year, some on next, some on the following year, first of all it's hard to find out who's going to get in on the early run. I tested our office, and everybody wants in on the early run, obviously.

But the second thing is this: I think we can save more money by tendering out 83 at once. I think we can save a lot of money. Companies, I'll tell you, are just dying for the business, and you can get really good deals. The more you buy, the better deal you get. In the long run, even if you consider interest lost, for instance, on money that you put out this year -- if you put out a hundred grand, and interest lost, effective 8 percent or whatever -- I'm quite certain that would be more than paid for by the advantage of the bulk buying all at once.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, it's going to be up to this group to decide so we can know what we're going to do with the budget too.

Clerk, in response.

DR. McNEIL: Mr. Chairman, our proposal was to tender out for the whole package immediately but that the buying would take place over the two years because of budget considerations. In other words, there'd be a certain amount allocated in '89-90 for this and another roughly similar amount allocated in '90-91.

MS BARRETT: Why? What are the savings?

DR. McNEIL: Well, I guess the committee has to decide on that in terms of the budget.

MS BARRETT: Oh, okay. Right.

DR. McNEIL: But our recommendation was, you know, there's a budget consideration, and there's also a management consideration in implementing the computerization in the offices. If we have to do 83 offices like that, that may be a little more difficult to manage than if we could phase it in.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Taber-Warner, Edmonton-Highlands. I'm saving it, Cypress-Redcliff, in case we get around to summing up on the motion; that's all.

MR. BOGLE: The Clerk has responded in part to the concern I had, and that is that this motion does not pass on to next year's or to any future year's budget obligations that would take away from the normal budgetary process. In other words, I read the motion to mean that any funds that are remaining in this current fiscal year's budget may be assigned to this task but that when we sit down shortly to talk about the fiscal budget for 1989-90, we will not have brought forward a requirement that ties our hands that we must put X number of thousands of dollars into the purchase of computer equipment. That is the understanding I have, looking at the motion. Is that the intent of the mover, and does that correspond with the administration?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you look at the motion, the last sentence as well, you can upgrade using your own allowance. Okay? But we would, as an Assembly, buy the whole works over whatever period of time is established.

Cypress-Redcliff, in response.

MR. HYLAND: A couple of things. Let's deal with the last question first. My intention is getting it on to get discussion on it. Ultimately the Members' Services Committee, when we're working as a budget committee, has to decide if something happens. If we can't do it, we can put it off for a year. There's nothing to stop us from doing that. But this is meant to be a decision of the committee -- get a decision of the committee -- and then when we sit down as budget, we'll control how it happens, hopefully over a two-year period, but who knows?

One other comment. As I said, I don't know a lot about computers, but I thought that no matter what kind of printer we settle for, a laser printer or a dot whatever, that can be made to fit any machine, can it not?

MS BARRETT: Oh, yeah.

MR. HYLAND: So even if some decide different kinds, we can still match that high-tech printer to any machine.

MS BARRETT: Oh, yes.

MR. HYLAND: So even if, as it goes out for bid, we have a listing of different kinds -- and maybe we'll have the same kind and maybe we won't; I don't know -- I would think we can easily put it out there and then come back to the committee if we decide that we can get a good break on the rest of the stuff that covers off the costs. We can have a bid with two kinds of printers.

Just a clarification. In reading this motion back over, when I said "constituency offices," I intended it to be constituency offices as in one setup per constituency.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not sort of like Ray Speaker's 12 offices.

MR. HYLAND: Yeah. It just dawned on me all of a sudden that it would throw our calculations all to hell if that was the case.

DR. McNEIL: That assumption was inherent in our proposal, that there would be one per constituency.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, but it's good for clarification, and we all agree, one per constituency? Okay, so that's one part of it. Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: I agree with the general tenor of the motion, but I think later on I'll bring up a request that we have fax machines in the one constituency office.

Aren't we better to vote a total dollar or some figure or something like that and then allow the MLA to jockey around with nice printers, cheap printers, big computers, little computers, or whatever? In other words, if there was a dollar limit there, maybe you could squeeze a fax machine into the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

This is a subject of correspondence from the Member for Calgary-Buffalo with regard to fax machines. It may as well come in here as anywhere. Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: To tell you the truth, my knowledge of this business now is such that for a grand total of \$6,455, as on page 7 of this report, you can get everything here including a laser printer plus the fax machine. I mean, the prices are just really competitive. Life is great out there; it's a wonderful market right now.

So, you know, I have absolutely no objection to that. All I'm asking for is that with respect to the printer we include laser within the global amount of \$6,455. I mean, you're just going backwards not doing it, real backwards. It's my only recommendation for a change in it. Otherwise, I wholeheartedly endorse the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Cypress-Redcliff, summation on the motion.

MR. HYLAND: Well, in case we get sidetracked, I'd like to move that we table the discussion on the fax till right after this one is dealt with so that we get one over with.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll just take that as happening rather than have you move on your motion.

MS BARRETT: Well, what's the effect of my recommendation here? What happens to this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the effect of your recommendation would be that you need to make it in the form of an amendment to say that this would take into effect the matter of . . . Are you going to tie everyone into having a laser printer, or are you just going to give a recommendation? Because some of them might not want it.

MS BARRETT: I can't imagine anybody not wanting it. I mean, that's like asking: do you want to phone through the operator system, or do you want pick up and call direct? There's just no comparison. If you give me a minute, I'll try to word it.

DR. McNEIL: Well, maybe just a question of clarification. What Ms Barrett is suggesting, I think, is a different standard for the printer.

MS BARRETT: Yes, exactly.

DR. McNEIL: The proposal is saying that we recommend a

minimum-standard printer, as is indicated on page 7. You're saying that that shouldn't be the standard, that there should be another standard. An alternative would be to leave that as the standard and leave it up to the member to invest the additional money to move up to a laser printer. Those are the two alternatives. I'm not advocating one or the other; I'm just trying to clarify.

MS BARRETT: Might I suggest the alternative being that the standard be the laser, and if you want to drop down, you can drop down. I know you can do it, absolutely guaranteed, for less money: the total package, including the laser printer, for less than \$6,455. I can do it as an individual buyer right now. So that's all I'm saying.

What I'm recommending -- in fact, I've got my amendment written out. The amendment would be after "October 20, 1988," but to upgrade the printer standard to a laser printer. Not the best grammar in the world, but it has the same effect.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, but it would do it.

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

Oh. Subject to the bottom line of \$6,455 per total constituency package. How's that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: As being the max?

MS BARRETT: . . . \$6,455 per constituency.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As a max?

MS BARRETT: Maximum.

MR. HYLAND: Or you could just say, "subject to the total amount in the report."

MS BARRETT: Well, why don't we use \$6,455, because that's what's listed. So I would move that now as my amendment, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the . . .

MS BARRETT: Maximum. I can read it again. After "October 20, 1988,"

but to upgrade the printer standard to a laser printer, subject to \$6,455 maximum per constituency.

That refers to the total package. Like I say, it's not the best grammar, but . . .

MR. HYLAND: So it's conditional on a deal.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, and I think we need to be that way.

MR. HYLAND: But we're not allowing it to cost any more. If the price comes in high, then it goes out.

MS BARRETT: That's right. That's why I wrote "subject to."

MR. BOGLE: And this is also conditional upon approval of the necessary budget dollars.

MS BARRETT: Oh, of course. I think that's always understood, isn't it, in a general motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Are you ready to vote on that amendment dealing with the printer?

MR. HYLAND: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no. Carried. Thank you.

Back on the main motion. Are you now ready to vote on it?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the main motion as amended, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no. Carried unanimously. Thank you.

DR. McNEIL: Just for my clarification, the proposal states that we recommend computerizing the eight constituency offices that participated in the pilot project, using existing budget funds. Can I conclude from the motion that we have authority to proceed with that?

MS BARRETT: Provided you come in under the \$6,455, yeah, I would think, wouldn't you? Or does that need to be a separate motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: As long as we've still got the money in the budget.

MS BARRETT: We already approved that motion a long time ago.

MR. HYLAND: That would be a good trial. I suppose that for participating in a trial project there should be some . . .

MS BARRETT: That's right. I want to be one of them.

MR. HYLAND: Wait your turn, Pam.

MS BARRETT: Get somebody to change with me, okay?

MR. HYLAND: Get one of your guys to back out, and then you can have his turn.

MS BARRETT: Hey, right on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Then that's taken as understood, that those who participated in the pilot project get their offices fitted up first, if indeed we have the money. So that's Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, Olds-Didsbury, Calgary-Egmont, Red Deer-North, Edmonton-Mill Woods, Calgary-Foothills, Athabasca-Lac La Biche, Westlock-Sturgeon, and if she can twist arms, perhaps Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: I'll try.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In place of one of hers.

MS BARRETT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All righty?

MS BARRETT: Uh huh.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

All right. Did you want to try to deal with the world of fax machines at the moment then? If you turn to the back of that same 4(e), you have a letter from Sheldon Chumir. Westlock-Sturgeon, do you wish to speak in this regard?

MR. TAYLOR: It's one step more in computerization. We have the RITE line; we've got computers. The fastest system they use now in business is the fax machine. As a matter of fact, the lawyers couldn't live without it. They just put a little meter on the fax machine and bill out the clients, and they don't do any work at all. So for the transmission of documents, articles, submissions anywhere in the province quickly and speedily, if we could fit that in... Mind you, I don't know costwise. Pam, if you're keeping up on the cost and economies here, those have been coming down to beat the dickens. I don't know just what they are right now though.

MS BARRETT: Boy, talk about future shock.

MR. TAYLOR: But I would think it might be in the \$3,000 range.

MS BARRETT: Oh, no.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Edmonton-Highlands, followed by the Clerk.

MS BARRETT: I'm personally of the view, although I will not make the motion right now, that this probably needs to be tabled temporarily until we get the costs on the package we've been approving, the eight pilot project offices going to the new real McCoy computers. But my personal experience...

MR. CHAIRMAN: She's not on the list to get a computer.

MS BARRETT: That's right. Maybe she wants to trade with somebody, David.

Anyway, I looked at the ads as recently as yesterday from Future Shop, and you can get a cheap fax now for \$900. And that's a single purchase. You can get the really decent-quality ones for less than \$1,300 on a single purchase. And if, as I know to be the case, because I did phone around to get some quotes on our package, including a laser system, and it came in well under \$6,455 — and in fact WordPerfect will sell us their packages for cheap if we bulk order — you probably have enough money in that \$6,455 to get a fax machine on top of it all. But I would recommend, although I'll let discussion go at this point, that you wait before you move on that, because you want to see what the bottom-line dollar is for incorporating the generic package now into the eight pilot project offices.

DR. McNEIL: This is a technological comment. The latest addition you can make to a microcomputer is a fax board, which changes your microcomputer into a fax machine as well. Again,

that's technology that within the next year, I suspect, will come down in price significantly. So I just wanted to add that information. I think a fax board now is about \$1,000, but in effect it adds to your microcomputer that capability to be a fax machine.

One other factor with respect to these thermal paper fax machines is that the message fades on the paper, so you have to be careful to make sure you copy it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sounds like a great selling point for politicians.

MR. TAYLOR: I did mention lawyers were using it.

DR. McNEIL: Plain paper fax copiers are significantly more expensive at this point in time.

MR. TAYLOR: Can I move then, Mr. Chairman, that it goes back to the Clerk for investigation as to the cost and availability?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the motion. Thank you.

Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: That's what I was going to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the motion of Westlock-Sturgeon, referring it to the Clerk to make some investigative studies with regard to fax machines, those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no. Carried. Thank you.

DR. McNEIL: So we'll provide the "facts" to the committee.

MR. TAYLOR: You'll have to go outside your constituency office to get peace and quiet from the hum and the clicking noises.

MS BARRETT: Until you get a cellular phone.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All righty; item 4(f)(i).

DR. McNEIL: Payment of Committee Allowance. The decision item sheet is the same. In some preliminary discussion before this meeting it was suggested that this order be modified slightly in section 1 by saying, "A Member who is authorized by the Members' Services Committee or the Speaker," rather than "by the Assembly or the Speaker," to attend a meeting and so on and so forth. So I've had that amended as such, just so you have the proper wording. That's just changing that wording slightly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: May the Chair assume that there has been consultation in this regard, so we are ready to move on it?

MR. CAMPBELL: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by the Member for Rocky Mountain House, the new Members' Services Committee order with respect to this issue. All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried. Thank you. And the order effective date, April 1, 1987.

The next item is Constituency Reference, (f)(ii). David.

DR. McNEIL: This relates to the provision of chartered aircraft services to members in remote constituencies. It adds Dunvegan as a remote constituency, and it clarifies the names of what used to be the Athabasca and Lac La Biche-McMurray ridings, which are now Fort McMurray and Athabasca-Lac La Biche. When reviewing the locations of the various ridings, it concluded that those were the four that should be served by it, to provide the opportunity for the member to use chartered aircraft as necessary to get around his or her riding.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, lack of roads can be a problem, can't it? So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moved by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. Any discussion? Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Just to say I think I was the one who raised the concern last time. I talked to Mr. Clegg about it, and he didn't have strong feelings one way or the other. He said that much of it is accessible by road; it's just sometimes awkward to get at it by road. It is a large area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no. Motion carries. Thank you.

Item (g), Travel Bonus Points. Clerk, please.

DR. McNEIL: This was tabled pending information on the existing government policy related to accumulation of travel bonus points. At the July 11 meeting the committee passed a motion relating to the Legislative Assembly

that all travel bonus program points, credits or prizes earned while traveling on official business by Members and staff of the Legislative Assembly may be accepted or redeemed for standard fares for travel on the business of the Assembly. The Legislative Assembly may pay a registration fee for such a travel bonus program if it is expected that it will result in a savings to the Legislative Assembly.

That's the policy which presently applies.

I think the question was raised originally as to what type of travel those bonus points can be applied to by the individual caucuses.

MR. CAMPBELL: I have a motion, Mr. Chairman, that I'd like to make or table.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Hopefully you'll just make it and put it on the table.

MR. CAMPBELL:

That the business of the Assembly for the purpose of Motion 88.151, MLA and Staff Bonus Travel Points, be defined as constituency travel, provincial travel, spouse/guest travel, and representation at Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meetings or events funded by the Legislative Assembly.

This particular motion would clarify it, and it would be the status quo.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Provincial travel means within this province.

MR. CAMPBELL: Yeah.

Constituency travel, provincial travel, spouse/guest travel, and representation at Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meetings/events, funded by the Legislative Assembly.

MRS. MIROSH: So no interdepartmental?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Edmonton-Highlands, followed by Calgary-Glenmore, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MS BARRETT: Well, I think the motion is a little restricting, because there are other things to which MLAs -- for instance, outside the province -- may be invited, which I believe can permit a discretionary decision. The state legislators conference, for instance, is not listed here. Those are things to which we're invited because we're MLAs. Recently one MLA was invited to New York and Washington to observe with other elected officials from around the world the American electoral process. The request was made to the Speaker at that time for a decision as to whether or not the bonus points could apply. I believe permission was granted in that individual case.

I think it is not unreasonable, unless the Speaker himself personally profoundly objects, in this instance to allow for discretionary authorization by the Speaker when it can be ascertained that the individual MLA is being invited to something as a sitting MLA; in other words, by virtue of the fact that they are elected provincial representatives. I think that would make it clear that no one would abuse the system so that, you know, "You're taking a holiday," or what have you. I mean, we've already seen how flexibility can be advantageous. We've had to do it on a motion-by-motion basis sometimes, but it can be advantageous. I think an amendment at the end which would allow for

or by discretion of the Speaker upon specific application from an MLA who can show an invitation to that person to travel out of province,

because they are an elected official on business that would help inform them as to things that are going on outside of the province. It would be a very useful amendment. Although I didn't write it out, I can.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not yet.

MS BARRETT: I can.

MRS. MIROSH: My question was: it can only be for legislative use, not interdepartmental use? So if you're going on government business anywhere outside the province, you couldn't use these travel points?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wouldn't think so. It's up to that department to be . . .

MR. HYLAND: Or indeed falls into play as opposition.

MS BARRETT: I'm missing this.

MRS. MIROSH: It's just any other government travel other

than Legislative Assembly travel? That's my question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, what's a for instance?

MRS. MIROSH: For instance, if you were invited to be a guest speaker in Vancouver.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the basis of your committee work, in your case. So it really should fall under the department of hospitals to come up with the funding to ship you off there and back rather than using the bonus points that have accumulated under the Legislative Assembly, right? That's roughly the kind of example we're talking about?

MRS. MIROSH: Uh huh.

MR. TAYLOR: You're not worried about the shipping there; it's the back that you're worried about.

MS BARRETT: That's why "subject to . . ." I'll write it out. But that's why that flexibility is very useful.

MR. HYLAND: If you're a government member and you're representing the government or a minister or a committee, I think that's different. Then you fall under the 1984 policy procedures as submitted by the Public Service Commissioner. I think that even falls into place with travel that the opposition would do relating to their role, and not relating to the role as Leg. Assembly, within province or whatever. I think that's the line we're trying to draw, if there's a way of doing it. Pam used the example of the meeting in the States over the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The state Legislatures.

MR. HYLAND: Yes, that's it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It actually fits under the CPA . . .

MR. HYLAND: Yeah. I thought this was a budget book, and it isn't. But in our budget I think we allowed for two people, three people, whatever, to go to that. You know, normally we'd take a percentage of each group and away you go, and I think that example does follow. Because that's a bulk invitation per se to the Assembly to send people, is it not? That kind of an invitation. So that's a different picture.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Taber-Warner, Westlock-Sturgeon, and Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, we as a committee have struggled with the question of travel bonus points and how properly to use them or allow members to use them. Normally I agree with remarks made by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. In this case, however, I'm not sure we would be fair to the Speaker if we were to say, "We'll cover in the motion the easy things to define . . ."

MS BARRETT: And he gets the hard stuff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is this, question period?

MR. BOGLE: . . . and pass on to the chairman the gray area. I

think we'd be wiser in approving a list that we're comfortable with, and if we feel that the list needs to be added to, then let's look at the parameters under which we might expand the list. But I really feel that we've got to either go with a list or allow this matter to continue in limbo, and I don't propose we follow the latter of the two suggestions.

MS BARRETT: I'm prepared to help draw up a list.

MR. TAYLOR: I agree that it probably saddles you with kind of a chore the way the Member for Edmonton-Highlands has put it forward, but I wouldn't be adverse to that if there was a little more precedent on it. I was just wondering. These travel points are quite common practice across Canada. I'd be interested in tabling it at least for one more meeting till the Clerk comes in with how travel points are handled in half a dozen other Legislatures. I'd be interested in postponing this until the Clerk is able to come in with a report on how this is handled in maybe five or six other Legislatures, just to see for comparison purposes. Because I think if the Speaker handles them there, I'm not adverse to giving them here. But I think that if in the other areas they're not, then we'd want to hold back. But I'd like to see what the other Legislatures are doing.

MS BARRETT: Well, I actually think that Taber-Warner's suggestion in this instance would be better. I think it would facilitate moving the project along. In the instance where a marketplace is offering you certain benefits as a result of flying frequently, which many MLAs have to do, I don't think the question of the application of those bonus points needs to be tested against the application of bonus points elsewhere in the country at this point. There's nothing the matter with being innovative. I'd like to see us draw up a list and maybe come back as early as tomorrow with this and review it one more time, if the rest of the committee advises. It does not prevent looking up what other jurisdictions do, but why don't we start with our own ideas first?

MR. TAYLOR: Can't we do it at the same time?

MS BARRETT: Yes. Do you want me to move it? Okay. So under the circumstances, which will not hurt Nick's suggestion either, I'll move now that we table this matter until tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Motion to table, nondiscussable. All those in favour of tabling this until tomorrow, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no.

MR. CAMPBELL: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I only hear one no, so I guess it's tomorrow.

MR. TAYLOR: You're still after that free trip to Caroline.

MR. CAMPBELL: The strangest thing is that, you know, it says, "funded by the Legislative Assembly." That's very simple. I mean, God, what are we trying to do?

MR. TAYLOR: Make it complicated; you know that. That's why we were elected.

MR. CAMPBELL: So we can fly someplace and tell everybody how good we are?

MR. TAYLOR: Make it complicated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All righty; I leave that to you people to discuss.

How about if we take a 10-minute break here?

MS BARRETT: Yes, good idea.

[The committed recessed from 2:17 p.m. to 2:32 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I'm ready if you are.

Item 4(g) is held over till tomorrow morning. There is some hope of that being resolved.

Mr. Hyland, 4(h), Members' Benefits Subcommittee.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The subcommittee met twice since the last meeting. There's been a number of subjects talked about, and when we get more recommendations, we'll bring them forward.

Today we have one for information and one recommendation. There was some talk at the last Members' Services meeting about benefits and travel, mostly travel by ex-members of the Assembly back for special occasions of the Assembly. I think what brought the discussion on was the 75th anniversary. So we asked the Clerk to do some work on costs. What I'm circulating is a piece of paper with the cost per person. It's broken down to whether it's five members per year, 10 members per year, et cetera. This is submitted for information so that if the committee decides to discuss it or take action on it, we know the numbers. The approximate estimated cost per person is, at five days' accommodation allowance, two trips per year, estimated mileage, about \$625.

There's no recommendation with this; it's just out there for discussion by the committee because it has budgetary implications. I don't know if any other committee members want to comment on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to deal with this one issue at a time rather than do the overview?

MR. HYLAND: Yeah, I think so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Subcommittee members?  
Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: I don't know if anybody wrote up the motion since this morning's meeting.

MR. HYLAND: No.

MS BARRETT: But one of the things I was recommending is that if we adopt this policy, I think it needs to have a guideline such that either the trips are authorized by virtue of an invitation from the Speaker to a particular event or function at the Assembly or -- and I don't know how the committee feels -- by an individual sitting MLA, but as long as it's authorized by the Speaker, for purposes of these two potential trips per year for

past MLAs. I just think it needs to have some sort of guideline, because the reason we're even thinking about this is because there are functions, sometimes several in a year, sometimes only one in a year, related to this building and the people who have represented Albertans here.

MR. BOGLE: I'm assuming we don't want to get into a prolonged discussion today, that the matter is here for information. There are a couple of observations I would like to make.

First of all, I think we should refer to them as former members rather than ex-members.

Secondly, the reason this is here is that when the Speaker and I were in Australia for the parliamentary conference, we learned that in Australia former members retain quite extensive travel privileges throughout the Commonwealth of Australia. There are no restrictions, by the verbal information we were given. The committee that's reviewed this matter very astutely did not look at an option like that. I would request that the committee in their further deliberations look at functions beyond those sanctioned by the Legislative Assembly. I'm thinking of a funeral or a memorial service for a former or a present member. There may be some other gathering of former colleagues of the member. I haven't thought of all the possibilities, but I would ask the committee in their further deliberations to give some thought to the process in terms of what has been suggested.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Rocky Mountain House.

MR. CAMPBELL: Yeah. You know, when this was brought forward at our subcommittee meeting. The fact is that certainly as far as some members are concerned, they have served a number of years in the Assembly and are being honoured for that particular time, and where they can invite former members that they were involved with back to probably more or less share in their experience or their term of office . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I could see where perhaps before a fall sitting we could go back and try to reinstitute the parliamentary dinner but have former members invited as well. That may be one way of being able to fit everybody together.

Does this assume that everybody still resides in Alberta? What about Aalborg or whoever, those that are out in B.C. somewhere?

MR. CAMPBELL: Well, this was just a comparative study which was done, probably based on travel between Edmonton and Calgary. However, that would have to be expanded to take into account anyone that lives out of the province. However, it was dealt with in a manner that you would be traveling by automobile rather than by air, in order to accommodate the travel expenses of the spouse.

MR. HYLAND: I think Jack covered it in his last few words. I guess some of us feel fairly strongly about this, because I think it's something we've missed. Whether the numbers are right and how often you do it or how you do it, I think we all agree, no matter which party we're in, that there's something about serving here that's different. Even though we may argue in the Legislature, there's something about building friendships with people on both sides of the House that's with you all the time, I think. After talking to some of the people who were up for the 75th and on other occasions, to them it brought back a lot of

memories. It just seems like, whether you don't run again or whether you're defeated or what, all of a sudden, bang, you're cut off, you're out. I think that celebration really did something to make them feel like they're still there and that somebody did remember they spent four, five, six, 10, 20, whatever years in the Assembly.

MR. CAMPBELL: Yes. Just to probably add to Alan's comments, and this has come back to me as party Whip a number of times. The fact is that it's just a cold cut. Certainly there are some people it hasn't affected at all; others it does affect. They valued that friendship and that camaraderie and just to be back around and maybe get into the swing of things again in a conversational way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For good, bad, or ill, it's a significant slice of your life.

Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. I wouldn't mind seeing a motion drafted up, and one of the things that just occurred to me was that in consideration of former MLAs that may reside out of province, maybe one of the things you want to consider is establishing a sort of maximum amount on an annual basis that could be used by a former member traveling back to the capital. Maybe our vice-chairman will want to try to get something drafted that would incorporate an either/or so that we could deal with it. I think everybody is sort of amenable; it's just that we don't have it in a motion form.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe that could be negotiated after the meeting, for tomorrow.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, why don't we?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Because it has budget ramifications for next year.

MR. HYLAND: That's why we wanted to report it.

MS BARRETT: What's going on next year?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it's just that if we put it into next year's budget, then we could maybe think about doing a thing like the dinner that I mentioned.

MS BARRETT: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what I meant.

MS BARRETT: I wondered if we had another anniversary or something, you know, another portrait unveiling.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, wait a minute. As a matter of fact . . .

MS BARRETT: Oh, my God; he's going to start adding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I guess we're all right for another year after that. If you want to wait for another budget, we can wait for another budget.

Okay? All right, Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Okay. The committee is recommending that

the Members' Services Committee look at and pass this proposed transportation order. What the order is doing, because of some problems that have been created, is: for those who never fly, it's taking the five air trips and allowing you to take that by automobile in the province. It doesn't mean that you can do any more moving around; it means you do it in a different form. The amount of trips can't vary. If you fly once, you've got four trips by automobile, you know, or a combination thereof. That's all it does if we've got it drafted right. I expect it won't make a lot of difference budgetwise. It'll be moving it from one subclause to another. But at the rate that travel seems to be inside this province, the rate of travel by automobiles seems to work out to almost the same money, if not less.

This was passed unanimously by the committee.

MR. BOGLE: Just to ensure that the intent of the motion is to assist members, all of whom have the right to travel anywhere in the province five times a year by air and that a member could still travel two times by air and three times by automobile or all five times by automobile and forfeit all of the air trips, but this does not in any way affect the travel from the normal residence to Edmonton -- and we're allowed a certain number free, whatever the number is per year -- and it does not affect our automobile travel within Alberta.

MR. HYLAND: No.

MR. BOGLE: This deals specifically with the five trips per year that all members are entitled to.

MR. HYLAND: By air.

MR. BOGLE: Yeah, and with the exception of the leaders of the parties. They have unlimited travel, as I recall. That's right?

MR. HYLAND: It's just adding flexibility; it's not making any more. It's adding flexibility to the existing. You can take your choice of one or the other. Okay?

Sorry; effective date: now. You didn't fill that in. Do you want to fill that in?

MR. CAMPBELL: Probably to add to the subcommittee chairman's remarks, I guess in some cases if people don't feel comfortable flying, this would certainly take care of that concern, and that's the reason it was brought in as such.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, effective date: today. Does that strike the members as fine, effective as of today?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Mover of the motion, the Chair takes it, is Cypress-Redcliff. All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried. Effective date: today. Thank you.

MR. HYLAND: The one thing we did stick in there after this morning: we took the 21 cents out and put a reference to one

section so if we ever change it, we didn't have to amend every Members' Services order that we write.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okey doke; that's passed unanimously. All righty. Next item.

MS BARRETT: Nice form. Motion to approve it.

MR. HYLAND: That's all that I've got.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's all there is so far out of the subcommittee?

MR. HYLAND: I thought we did pretty good. What other committee of politicians can come up with two suggestions in two meetings?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the committee still have a life to go on and discuss other items?

MS BARRETT: I think so.

MR. HYLAND: Yeah, we've got about one and a half inches of paper so far.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; good. You're submitting your daily expense sheets for the subcommittee as well, I trust.

MS BARRETT: We haven't, but we can incorporate it into this one today, can't we?

MR. HYLAND: Today's, yeah.

MS BARRETT: No, November 15 is the one, and there's only one meeting today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The one today is concurrent with this one.

MS BARRETT: It's incorporated, yeah. That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ready?

MS BARRETT: With respect to the other members' benefits stuff we're looking at, I assume it's this committee's desire that if we're making any recommendations with respect to benefits, they be done as soon as possible to be incorporated into the new budget year. Is this the assumption?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Uh huh.

MS BARRETT: Good.  
Do we start budget tomorrow?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Uh huh.

MS BARRETT: We're going to have to work fast.

MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Chairman, do you want us to fill in our expense accounts for today, or do you wish to wait till tomorrow?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Louise, tomorrow?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes; it'd be better.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tomorrow is better, unless you can't be here tomorrow, of course.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Item 5(a). Dr. Elliott is still not with us. I wonder if this is really being picked up or not. [interjection] So we'll have to wait for Grande Prairie to be with us.

MS BARRETT: I don't even know what this is anymore.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They think we're picking it up.

MS BARRETT: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Item 5(b), Members' Temporary Residence Claim Form. Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: Just an information item. I noted from some of the minutes last year some instances where there were changes to Members' Services orders. The committee wanted to look at how those changes were going to be implemented in terms of forms and procedures. So I thought, for information purposes, this is what the form is proposed to look like with respect to the temporary residence allowance. It just incorporates the capital residence aspect of the temporary residence out-of-session allowance.

MR. HYLAND: I just have a question with this, and I don't know . . .

MR. BOGLE: I'm sorry; I missed what you said.

MR. HYLAND: We're on 5(b), Bob. I think you should look at it in your case. At the asterisk, where it says "Copy of . . . rental agreement required." What about those who have condos; they're entitled to it.

DR. McNEIL: They're entitled.

MR. HYLAND: But they don't have a rental agreement or lease.

DR. McNEIL: Or the title to the property, you mean?

MR. HYLAND: Yeah, because when we passed the order, did we say we needed that? Or you had the choice of taking the \$750 and maybe staying 15 days or whatever, eh? Did we necessarily tie it to having to have a lease on a piece of property?

MS BARRETT: No.

MR. HYLAND: Because I remember some of the others in other jurisdictions don't necessarily have to have a lease.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Didn't a letter go out, or has that other not gone?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. HYLAND: What did it say? I can't remember.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it's along the lines of requesting a copy of the lease, isn't it?

DR. McNEIL: It requested a copy of the lease or the title or whatever so that there was some evidence that there was a property being rented or occupied.

MS BARRETT: I, too, have a question about this now. I recall that we talked about if you only paid \$500 a month in rent, would you claim the \$750, for instance? The answer was: well, it depends. I mean, if you had to go out and buy new cutlery and linen, et cetera, to operate the household, yes. So that's a good point.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The \$75 a day normally covers meals as well.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, that's right.

DR. McNEIL: It's not strictly just for accommodation.

MS BARRETT: Right. That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So they should be claiming the full \$750.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. It's to cover accommodation and meals and incidentals. It's broader than just paying for a hotel or leasing an apartment or whatever.

MS BARRETT: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me half a moment. What time do you wish to convene in the morning? Eight-thirty or 9 or 9:30?

MR. CAMPBELL: Eight-thirty would be great. We're all going to be here anyway.

MR. BOGLE: Nigel.

MR. CAMPBELL: Nigel? What time does he have to be in?

MR. BOGLE: He said 9.

MR. CAMPBELL: Nine o'clock? Nine o'clock would be excellent.

MR. TAYLOR: Tomorrow morning?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. Nine. Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: I can't be here till about near noon.

MRS. MIROSH: Eight-thirty is good.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I would anticipate that the meeting isn't going to take too terribly long, but it gives us a chance to do the initial overview.

MR. TAYLOR: It'll be about a quarter to 12 or 12 o'clock before I can get in.

MS BARRETT: Really?

MR. TAYLOR: Sorry; that was my own fault, I guess.

MS BARRETT: We're going to have fun tomorrow. Things are going to go clickety-click.

MR. TAYLOR: Tickety-boo. I'll come in at noon.

MS BARRETT: We'll let you know about it after the fact.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Nine o'clock, and it's still going to be the overview of the budget.

MR. CAMPBELL: Yeah. The business is the overview of the budget? Just primarily that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right.

MS BARRETT: At nine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. So next on this issue is Taber-Warner, back on the temporary residence form.

MR. BOGLE: Sorry, I may have missed something. But I guess I'll go back. What we're doing now seems to be working well. My wife and I own a home. I've submitted a copy of the certificate of title. It's been accepted. We're on the capital residence allowance. I've submitted forms once, and I'm not doing anything else, and each month you send me a cheque. What are you proposing that's going to change what I'm doing now?

DR. McNEIL: Nothing.

MR. BOGLE: Nothing.

All right. At the bottom of this new form -- the draft members' claim form for Members' Services Committee approval -- there's an asterisk: "Copy of lease or rental agreement required." Is there a reason we don't mention certificate of title there as well?

DR. McNEIL: It's just an oversight.

MR. BOGLE: So it's been added to the list.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah.

MS BARRETT: Well, not by formal motion. I think we should do it. I think it should say: "Copy of title, lease, or rental agreement required," and I would so move.

MR. BOGLE: But this form will not require any change in the approach that I've just described.

DR. McNEIL: No.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. All those in favour of the motion to add "title," in front of "lease"? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Okay. Everything else is fine with the form? Okay. Approval to the form. Would someone please move?

MS BARRETT: Uh huh.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Edmonton-Highlands. Those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no. Carried. Thank you.

Item 5(c).

DR. McNEIL: This is a proposal, I guess, based on some research we did with Edmonton Telephones and AGT. The question had arisen on a number of occasions in the past as to why, for the most part, MLAs' residence telephones that were temporary or permanent would not qualify for residential rates. We never got a satisfactory answer to that question, to my mind. So I wrote specifically to AGT and Ed Tel with a number of specific questions. The response from both Edmonton Tel and AGT was that residence services are classified as such when it's only used for normal household, domestic, and family use and not for business purposes. A description following the surname is allowed to identify or explain the listing. So if you have "Bob Bogle, MLA," and your phone number in the Taber phone book, on that basis it would qualify for residential rates.

In analyzing the number of residence telephones that we are now paying business rates on, both temporary residence and permanent residence telephones, I estimate that if we requested that those telephones be listed as residence telephones if they're primarily in use for residence purposes, we should be paying the residential rates, and therefore we'd save about \$11,500 a year.

MS BARRETT: Right on.

DR. McNEIL: That's a minimum.

My recommendation is that for those MLAs who wish their telephones to be listed in this fashion -- in other words, not in bold but just "Pam Barrett, MLA" and the residence number -- we should only be paying residential rates for that kind of listing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: I would move that the Clerk push forward with the recommendation.

MS BARRETT: What will it take? Just a letter from you?

DR. McNEIL: We'll follow up on the previous letter, saying, "Further to what you advise us, this is . . ."

MS BARRETT: Good. Right on.

MR. BOGLE: I very much appreciate the work that the Clerk has done in this matter. I'm assuming that with it we still have the assurance that for any member of the Assembly who chooses not to have a listed telephone number -- and that may be a cabinet minister -- they will still have the right to have an unlisted number here at their temporary residence.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I sure hope so.

MRS. MIROSH: It's sure going to make long distance calling a lot cheaper.

MS BARRETT: I don't think there's any difference.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour of the motion please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Well, the next one is tomorrow.

A couple of other things that are there. Clerk, would you like to speak to the group about the pension deductions with regard to committee income? Now, we have to deal with that for this year and then do the change.

DR. McNEIL: Yes. As was the case last year, the personnel manager, Cheryl Kvist, will be approaching individual members with respect to the pension deduction, the 7.5 percent for income earned as committee members, both on Legislature committees and any other role that members play outside the Legislature on committees or boards or whatever, for which they receive an allowance. We're going to collect that this year by request of a cheque from individual members. It's our intention as of January 1 to move all that income into the payroll system so that the 7.5 percent would be automatically deducted from members' cheques, whether they receive it from the Assembly or the department. Therefore, we wouldn't have to go through this rigamarole at the end of every year of chasing you down for 7.5 percent of whatever you earned on whatever committees.

MR. CAMPBELL: These are basically legislative committees, David?

DR. McNEIL: Legislative committees and those committees or boards or boards that some members serve on related to departments, agencies, and boards.

MR. HYLAND: Some of that is taken off.

DR. McNEIL: A lot of that is taken off now on the payroll system. But we're trying to clean that up so that on all members' committee allowances the pension deduction is taken off automatically, rather than doing it the way it's been done for the past I'm not sure how many years.

MR. HYLAND: Instead of you getting that tidy little bill at the end of the year, right around Christmas time.

DR. McNEIL: Exactly. And unfortunately, we weren't in a position to change at the beginning of last year. We will be this year.

MR. CAMPBELL: So this would be for Members' Services . . .

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. CAMPBELL: . . . for this past year?

MR. HYLAND: No. Next year.

DR. McNEIL: We'll have to come back to you within the next

couple of weeks to get that cheque for the income you earned for the allowances for Members' Services and any other committee work you did this year. But for next year we're going to eliminate that.

MR. CAMPBELL: Your timing is impeccable.

DR. McNEIL: We like . . .

MR. CAMPBELL: What's that, Ebenezer?

DR. McNEIL: We love to do that each year, at this time of year especially.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the key thing, though, is we'll get it cured for next year.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, thank goodness.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Because it's a real pain in the anatomy.

MS BARRETT: You bet. Not to mention the pocketbook

MR. CHAIRMAN: Which is a politer way than I phrased it when I came up against this in the last week or so.

All right; a couple of other reminders. With regard to estimates all the way around, after our initial go-round tomorrow hopefully we'll be then meeting in early February. The estimates have to be in by February 15. But I think that in light of all the hard work that was put in in the last two years, we would perhaps stand a better chance of getting through the budget process in a more efficient way.

One other thing, though, back through you to your caucus chiefs of staff and your members. It's that time of the year when they start going a little hog-wild about trying to spend all of their allowances before the end of the year, or certainly before the end of the fiscal year, and on examination of members' budgets it looks like a number of people have already got themselves right up to the end of the fiscal year. So would you please give them all the extra kind of encouragement and advice you think is proper so that we don't have a lot of unhappy people when we start getting into early '89, feeling they have been abused when in actual fact it's up to them to be looking after their own spending. By your own motion of the committee before, it's up to anyone who overspends to put it back out of their own pocket. That's the tradition we have, and that's the way it needs to be.

MR. BOGLE: Back on the estimates, Mr. Chairman, could I recommend that before we adjourn tomorrow, then, we identify the dates early in the new year when we do plan to meet, even if we have to hold a couple of days that hopefully will not be necessary? We're going to be right up against the wire: February 15 is the deadline.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We might be able to sneak another week

out of it, but I don't suppose we have much more than a few days' leeway.

MR. TAYLOR: This is a point of information. You're mentioning about budgeting to the year-end. If an election is called in the middle of February, let's say, what happens to the budget of an MLA who hasn't spent it by that time or has overspent not for March 31 but has overspent for, say, February 1?

MS BARRETT: Didn't we develop a policy a couple of years ago that said something like you couldn't spend more than 10 percent of your constituency budget in any given month, so that you're always pretty close? We didn't do that, eh?

MR. BOGLE: We talked about it, but we didn't do it.

MS BARRETT: We didn't do it? Oh, I thought we did.

MR. HYLAND: No. I think we had a reason for not doing it. Some of us -- for example, I do a mail-out.

MS BARRETT: I know; MLA reports take a big chunk out of one month. I understand that.

MR. HYLAND: Yeah. I think that's why we didn't do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We didn't have any other safeguards when we did it.

MR. TAYLOR: You're not tipping us to any election then, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Once an election is called, you can't spend any more, whatever year that is, whatever mystical month. Perhaps it's academic in terms of '89-90.

MR. HYLAND: The only thing you can spend during election time -- it's been the choice of the MLA whether the constituency office stays open or not. They were never closed down. You had that choice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any other items for today? A few tidy-up items in negotiation for tomorrow. We'll see most of you back here at 9 o'clock in the morning.

MR. TAYLOR: The meeting finishes at noon tomorrow, does it?

MS BARRETT: It could be done before then, Nick.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Same place. If you can get back, great.

Thank you all very much. The committee stands adjourned until tomorrow.

[The committee adjourned at 3:06 p.m.]

