

## Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

9:09 a.m.

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I neglected to mention yesterday that I had regrets from the Member for Red Deer-North for yesterday as well as for today. Could we incorporate that in the minutes?

I understand we were going to start at section 3 of the budget document today on our journey through things fiscal in relation to this committee. So, Mr. Clerk, would you like to start us with section 3, please.

DR. McNEIL: Okay.

MR. BOGLE: Did we finish section 2?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We had yesterday. We're waiting for two pieces of information to come to us, so we did not have a motion to approve.

Could we work our way through the whole thing and then come on back with bits and pieces? Thank you.

Okay. Front page. House Services section: minus 9.5.

DR. McNEIL: This budget is reduced for a couple of reasons. Most significant is the transfer of the printing costs to the *Hansard* budget. As you'll see later, that's one of the reasons the *Hansard* budget goes up quite significantly. So all the costs of printing all the House documents and other printing costs that were in this budget last year will now be in the *Hansard* budget for next year. There's no overall increase. In fact, there's a decrease in printing costs overall.

As well, we've reduced the travel and Hosting components of the House Services budget by 25 percent. As well, because the travel component is reduced, we've also reduced the payment to members related to conference attendance by 16.7 percent.

Do you want to go over it page by page?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, please.

DR. McNEIL: Questions on page 2?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir.

MR. WICKMAN: I guess this is one of the items that relates to staff . . . We're looking at page 2 here – right? – one of the items that relates to staff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Going back to the overview, I notice a transfer from contract employees reported to permanent employees, which accounts for the majority of the 24.4 percent increase.

DR. McNEIL: Correct.

MR. WICKMAN: Putting all that aside, what is the situation when it comes to the union employees with their collective agreement and their wage increases this year? What are you obligated to?

DR. McNEIL: We're obligated to pay what the contract requires. Now, we don't have any union employees. Employees are in classes that would be equivalent to individuals in the union or opted out and excluded classes in the public service. So this budget reflects what those contracts or those agreements call for in terms of both adjustments to the ranges and adjustments for individuals within the ranges.

MR. WICKMAN: What is it roughly, on the average?

DR. McNEIL: Blake, you can maybe help me out. It's probably about 4 percent in terms of the adjustment of the ranges and typically 3 to 4 percent for merit adjustments within the range.

MR. WICKMAN: So staff on the average would get an 8 percent increase.

DR. McNEIL: On average.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you.

MS BARRETT: What's the equivalent word of "market"? It's not COLA.

DR. McNEIL: In effect, yes.

MS BARRETT: It is COLA. Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Further questions on page 2? Now we proceed with page 4.

DR. McNEIL: Page 4. Basically, you see the transfers: the legal counsel from wages to permanent in terms of the hiring of Frank Work, and just a transfer from contract for the security staff. There's no increase there. The reason they're transferred to wages is because they're paid out of the wage budget, and it's much easier to put this in where it should be at the start of the year. Then the printouts that we receive are correct, and it's easier to track the expenditure on a month-to-month basis that way. So there are no increases there.

Page 5 just shows that transfer of the security staff from contracts to wages.

MR. HYLAND: So the UI and that on page 6 could still go up. You haven't factored in what it may be, because we don't know what it may be.

DR. McNEIL: Exactly. We haven't received the indication as to what the employer's share will be for next year. We're trying to get that information, but we haven't yet had any confirmation of the exact number we should use.

MR. HYLAND: You've taken a figure of 9 percent for management pensions? Or for pensions, I guess.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. That always has been the employer's share of the management pension plan.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there questions on page 6? You may go to 7.

DR. McNEIL: The only increases on 7 are: the membership fee in the international CPA went up by \$500; and because we have a new Parliamentary Counsel, a \$50 increase for his becoming a member of the Association of Clerks in Canada.

The next two pages relate to travel. Rather than say that we're not going to go on this trip and we are going to go on this trip and we're going to reduce the number of people going on this trip by one or two, what we've done is just taken the overall budget and reduced it by 25 percent to give discretion, depending on schedules and availability and so on, as to what travel will be done, by whom, and how many.

MR. BOGLE: Well, I'd like to put on the record, through you, Mr. Chairman, that I'm very appreciative that you've done this by following the recommended procedure set out by the Premier. That really was for the last few months of the current fiscal year. We're now into the new fiscal year. If you believe you can handle the matter, I think it gives you more flexibility, and it shows leadership on the part of the committee.

MR. HYLAND: We got hammered last year because of the location of some of the conferences and the cost of flying. It looks like in next year's case one of the bigger conferences is even farther away, yet we'd still reduce the total overall allotment by 25 percent. It's too bad there isn't somebody around to realize that and give that figure after the stories they wrote on us last year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Jasper Place, then Grande Prairie.

MR. McINNIS: Is \$82,200 the total amount of travel or of all House Services?

DR. McNEIL: No, of the travel.

MR. McINNIS: Can you tell me what it's the total of? There's the \$10,360.

DR. McNEIL: Well, \$82,200 minus \$10,360. In other words, the \$82,200 is 75 percent of the \$109,621, and then backed out of that are certain costs that are fixed: that \$10,360. So the balance of that would be for all of this travel.

MR. McINNIS: There's approximately \$62,000 budgeted, but at this point . . .

DR. McNEIL: No, it would be more like \$72,000.

MR. McINNIS: At this point we have no idea what for.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct. Well, yeah; you have some idea. It will be some of this travel.

9:19

MR. McINNIS: Some number of these?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

Next, page 10.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry; Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, on pages 8 and 9 I'm confused on things. Going to the top of page 8, you have the CPA Regional Conference, St. John's, for example. Under the 1991-92 estimate you have \$8,920, and beside that you have: four members and guests, August 1992. Should that be '91, to balance that number from last year's budget? The same with the top of page 9. You make reference to the CPA Washington conference: two delegates and guests, September '92.

DR. McNEIL: These conferences here are where this year's conferences are.

DR. ELLIOTT: The ones coming up?

DR. McNEIL: In the next fiscal year, yes.

DR. ELLIOTT: You've lost me somewhere.

MRS. BLACK: There's no number.

DR. ELLIOTT: No. I got lost. What happened to . . .

DR. McNEIL: We didn't put in the numbers here. All we did was put in the bottom line, so it's up to the Speaker to determine.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you. Okay; I've caught up to you now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right; we'll go to page 10.

DR. McNEIL: Again, typically this \$500 is not spent. If I drive safely, then it won't get spent, and of course I do drive safely.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, then, moving right along.

DR. McNEIL: Page 11, Freight and Postage: no change.

Page 12: no increase on rentals.

Page 13, Tolls and Rentals. We've talked about this in the admin budget. Because we have a new telephone system, we can track our telephone costs more accurately to each area, so that just reflects the actuals.

Page 14: no change.

MS BARRETT: I have a question about this. How come you get away with so little on vehicle repair compared to people like me?

MRS. BLACK: Because they don't crack them up as often.

MS BARRETT: I don't crack them up ever.

MR. McINNIS: He's got a new car though.

MS BARRETT: You've got a new car: that must be it.

DR. McNEIL: On this page is where you see the transfer of the printing of the various components.

MS BARRETT: I've got a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Absolutely.

MS BARRETT: Okay; what's this Consulting Services?

DR. McNEIL: The last couple of years we've had a number of occasions where we've had to go to outside consultants re the MLA pension plan issue. We've had sometimes to get outside legal opinions.

MS BARRETT: So you're budgeting on a just-in-case basis?

DR. McNEIL: This is, in effect, a contingency fund there. As the situations are more complex, we tend to seek outside advice on various issues, so that's what that's for.

Clerk's Hosting: a reduction of 25 percent.

MRS. MIROSH: Does that mean no more coffee?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it means no more buns.

MRS. MIROSH: No more buns now.

DR. McNEIL: Materials and Supplies: no change there.

Grants: no change.

The fees to MLAs. Again, because we're reducing the travel, the decrease will result in less pay to MLAs for that travel.

MR. WICKMAN: One last question on section 3 here. When you discount the transfers to *Hansard* and such and you look at the existing percentages, what's the net effect in terms of percentage as far as your budget is concerned?

DR. McNEIL: As far as our budget I think it's plus 4 percent, and that's strictly related to staff, the fact that we hired new counsel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: The total topic of conferences and travel and pay to MLAs and so on has shown very healthy cuts and reductions. I agree with the previous comments from Taber-Warner about austerity, sincerity, responsibility, and all those good things. Can you project, Mr. Chairman, about what is happening across the nation and what is the future of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and things like this? Is there a broad feeling about where things like that are going? Are other organizations experiencing things the same as we are here?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, first off, across the country there's still a commitment to the Parliamentary Association conferences and the seminars as well, but more and more we're finding fewer persons being sent to various conferences. The one in particular that concerns me is the seminar that has been traditionally held in Washington, D.C., which some people in this room have been to, and they've all, with one voice, come back and said what a great benefit it was to go there. Because while you're there, I've encouraged people to stay for an extra couple of days to go and get a better feeling for the American political system so you can compare it, as well as the issues of the conference. That's one conference in particular that I'm afraid probably won't survive much longer. It's unfortunate, because it was a good opportunity for Canadians to have a firsthand look at what really is happening in Washington without it being sort of deflected by some of the interpretation of the mass media. Then of course at every conference there's that great opportunity for establishing personal relationships with people, not only of other jurisdictions but of other political parties, because you're away from the hurly-burly of our own everyday politics that take place here in the province. That's one particular conference that I see as not too likely to survive. Across the country people are having great difficulty finding funds to be able to go to some of these things.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, could I ask a question? It's on page 7, and it has to do with memberships, the CPA international membership. Now, this would be a membership fee that Alberta would provide to an international organization based in London, England, known as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right.

MR. KOWALSKI: Our fee here in Alberta would be \$16,500 annually? There are 10 provinces in Canada presumably. Our \$16,500 would be small, if it's a prorated one, by comparison to, say, Ontario or Quebec or the government of Canada?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's usually based on the number of seats in your parliament, your Legislature.

MR. KOWALSKI: Now, the Commonwealth is a nice entity. It's now 1992; it's a nice, nice little opportunity. I really wonder who would be paying for the cost. If Alberta provides \$16,500 a year as a membership to that, then presumably all of Canada must be providing \$300,000-plus a year to run this thing. I can't believe that every country in the world that's a member of the Commonwealth would have their various states and little provinces within it providing that kind of fee. I'm just thinking that we're getting ripped. Why would we want to continue doing that? I can see us belonging in Canada, but why would there be a need for an international one that a province rather than a national government would provide a fee to? I've seen these offices in London: nice.

MR. BOGLE: I think you could draw a very strong parallel between the appropriations requested of the various members in the Commonwealth with what is done in the United Nations. For lack of a better term, the richer Commonwealth nations are really paying the cost of keeping the Commonwealth in operation. So we have countries like Australia, Britain, New Zealand, and Canada that are indeed providing the financial resources to keep the Commonwealth in operation, just as in the United Nations the richer nations in the world are paying the costs.

9:29

To come to the question of why, and in particular why a province would be paying in addition to a national government, the answer is evident in that each province is allowed to send a couple of delegates to the Commonwealth conferences and to participate not as exclusively part of the Canadian delegation, although the delegates all sit together. I've had the privilege of attending a parliamentary conference. When matters are being dealt with that are deemed to be sensitive and there's a consensus building in the Canadian delegates – that is, by the Members of Parliament and the legislators from the various provinces – it's done on a consensus basis. It is not done in any other way. The real benefits, in my view, of the parliamentary conference rest with the flow of information that is able to be transmitted. It is part of a family, a family of nations, and we play a role in it. Yes, the fee is high. If I remember correctly, Mr. Chairman, the fee went up quite dramatically either last year or the year before, and we did spend some time discussing it at that time, but to be blunt, if everyone paid strictly on the basis of size of their Legislature, our costs would be considerably less. If that were the case, then a number of smaller but more impoverished members of the Commonwealth would have to drop out, and that would be most unfortunate.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, my colleague from Taber-Warner has given a subjective view about saying it would be unfortunate if someone dropped out. That's very subjective. One could argue that it would not be unfortunate. I just look at page 7, and I look at page 8.

MR. McINNIS: What's your argument?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, 50,000 bucks. On page 7, \$16,500 and on page 8, \$37,000 to go a conference in the Bahamas. If we were not

a member of the CPA international, we'd save \$16,500, and we wouldn't have to send three people to go to the Bahamas, and that would save \$50,000. Now, to me that would be fiscally responsible, and I just wonder if maybe we would be prepared to entertain that as a reduction. Is it really necessary in 1992? The purpose of the Commonwealth is a very interesting question. What would it give to us? What would we benefit from it? If we didn't go, we could order the papers for 50 bucks or something. It's a thought, Mr. Chairman, that's all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the Chair is always open to a motion from the floor.

Calgary-Foothills and then Cypress-Redcliff and then the Chair would like to comment.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, I would be very much opposed to eliminating our membership to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, as it is . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: We'd still be in Canada. We'd still be a member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. One at a time.

MRS. BLACK: I believe I have the floor, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was just defending your right.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you.

I would be very much opposed to us pulling our membership out of there, and I'm afraid that that debate, when your question is what is the purpose of the Commonwealth, we could have in a different forum. I would be delighted to debate that, but the tradition and history of this House is to have a membership in the Commonwealth and to support the Commonwealth. Whether we send representatives to the conference is something we were dealing with on the other page as far as travel. That's something we will decide at a later time, but I would be very much opposed to us reneging on our obligations and our tradition of history. I would remind the hon. member that sitting right in this House that we're in today is the office of the Lieutenant Governor, who represents the head of the Commonwealth.

If we would like to get into the debate later, I would be prepared to in a different forum, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Cypress-Redcliff.

In the meantime, Member for Barrhead, I'm sending out to get you a muffin.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, it looks as if the cost per MLA in the Legislature is just a little more than what it costs for the fee for counsel to belong to the Bar Association, because that fee shows \$250. In rough terms we're between \$260 and \$270 per member to belong to both CPA conferences.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Some of the comments that have been made about the international body to which we belong are indeed true – well, all of them aren't – with respect to the participation at the international level. The offices which the CPA occupy at Westminster are less than palatial. In fact, they have a very crowded environment in which to live. Most MLAs in this province with regard to their constituency offices or this place of employment and the facilities that they enjoy here – thanks in large measure to the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services their offices here are palatial in comparison to what's there at Westminster. In the last

year they have gone through a very radical reorganization of their staff and a radical reduction in staff, and that's under the chairmanship of the now president of the association who is the former Speaker in Australia. So they've bitten the bullet in a very realistic way and are keeping their costs in line.

The international aspect of it, of course, is that it really promotes our parliamentary ties with Westminster in the tradition of British parliamentary procedure in terms of government rulings and opposition and having the opportunity to fully participate in the accountability of government. That British parliamentary model, of course, is radically different to the American model which we are cheek by jowl in existence with. When you go to those various conferences, of course, the one thing that impacts you is the fact – there's no other way to state it – that as white-skinned parliamentarians we are in the minority by far in terms of what parliamentary procedure and government is within the world, and that's a very good lesson. When you're there as a participant at those conferences, it's quite an eye-opener in terms of the various other overlays of political activities that occur within the world let alone within British parliamentary tradition. The influence of the continent of Africa is considerable. The influence of the subcontinent of India is again very considerable, and of course it's divided along some other racial and cultural lines.

As has been pointed out by the Member for Taber-Warner, each province and territory participates side by side with the Canadian delegation, and I must say that over the last number of years the Alberta delegation has had considerable influence in determining and giving strength to provincial and territorial positions not necessarily in congruence with the federal position of the Canadian delegation. Alberta has been giving a fair amount of leadership behind the scenes in terms of helping the transition of a number of people who were there for the first time but also making certain that the federal government position just doesn't steamroller over some of the issues that do indeed affect the provincial and territorial jurisdictions. So in that sense there's been a valuable role to play. Certainly I'm glad that the issue has been raised, because in terms of our associations each one of them needs to be examined as to whether or not they should continue.

#### 9:39

In terms of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, again because it has all developed from the Mother of Parliaments at Westminster – yes, that's our traditional base, but again we need to keep looking at that. It's from that base, then, that Canada as a country exists as a former member of the Commonwealth and certainly a continuing member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. That in turn then gives life to our own existence as a parliament within this province as being part of a larger country.

One other aspect about the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is that it's a free association of persons of all political parties. Those of us in this room who have been able to go to various conferences realize that we have that other developing relationship with other political parties, again, as I mentioned, apart from the hurly-burly of being here in our day-to-day sometimes confrontations with each other. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association as such actually makes the heads of government of the parliament more accountable, because when they go there, even though they also represent various political stripes, sometimes the heads of government tend to run roughshod and believe that they do not have to be accountable to opposition parties, no matter what their political stripe is, when they're trying to deal on the world stage, especially as a commonwealth. Over the last four years in particular there has been that dialogue, most of the time constructive but not always constructive, between the Commonwealth Parliamentary

Association and the heads of government of the Commonwealth nations. Some of those heads of government – let me choose what the correct phrase is here – really are heads of benevolent dictatorships at the best of times, and some of them are not quite so benevolent, so that through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association there is a lot of accountability brought to bear upon the other organization as well.

I'm sorry to have taken so long to give that explanation. Again, as always, we can have motions.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, on the Canadian Parliamentary Association, at one time I asked the question – I think the federal branch have a member, an MP that's secretary of their branch, and that allows them two votes. We had some discussion once at a meeting about looking at a member rather than the Clerk being the secretary, to give extra votes at the table at parliamentary meetings. That was about four years ago. When you started explaining, it brought back memories of when I went to Malaysia, and that's when that subject came up. I brought it up the budget year after that, which is probably three years ago now. I just wondered if anything has been done, or if we've all forgotten about it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd have to check. It doesn't come immediately to mind.

MR. HYLAND: The comment, you know, wasn't because of any service; it was the ability, that at that time I was told was there, to put a parliamentarian in to be secretary of our local branch, and it should have gained us a spot at the table. Now, that doesn't mean to say that that information was right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; well, I'll check on that one.

One item needs to be brought to mind here: this \$16,500. The official Alberta delegate that travels to the conference: the air fare and accommodation is covered back from CPA, so that in actual fact out of the \$16,500 our main delegate then pays less money to attend the conference.

May we proceed?

That's the general on section 3. Are we intending today to do motions to approve in principle or go through every section? We did that with section 1. Is someone willing to do that? Calgary-Foothills? Call for the question.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please say aye. Stick your arm up or wave or something, please. Opposed? Carried.

MR. R. DAY: Mr. Chairman, the overview of the Speaker's office budget, although showing a 2 percent increase, is just providing maintenance of existing operations within the office. The increase arises primarily from an increase in the salaries and employee benefits portion that came from routine market adjustments, an increase in premium for the benefits for the three staff in the Speaker's office. The Supply and Services portion of the budget was reduced both in the travel and the hosting areas, page 1 specifically.

The Salaries (Nonpermanent) is a position our office shares with the Deputy Speaker. For half the year we pay the salary of the secretary; the other half of the year the Deputy Speaker's office pays. That's half a position. The contract employees are myself, your administrative assistant, and the ministerial secretary.

Travel Expenses on the top of Supply and Services shows a 10.5 percent reduction, and that is due to the fact there are three vehicles

there where we cannot impact the travel portion, but when we get to the specific page where we could reduce it by 25 percent, we did.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Speaker, Deputy Speaker, and Deputy Chairman of Committees.

MR. R. DAY: Those three vehicles come under the Speaker's office budget.

So you'll see the bottom-line impact on Supplies and Services was 6.3 percent but not sufficient to offset the increase in the top: Salaries, Wages, and Employee Benefits.

On a page-by-page basis, page 2 is blank. Page 3 is the Deputy Speaker's budget. Page 4 is the three contract employees in the office: myself and the two others. The increases on page 5 are due to the market adjustment in the contracts and the premium increases; they do not yet reflect the increase in U.I.C., which is the case with the other budgets. Staff training has been left and is minimal, primarily for office automation training. On page 7 there are the three vehicles I referred to in the overview, but the travel by presiding officers has been reduced by 25 percent. We could not impact the above number; it's a fixed lease rate from public works. Page 8 is the insurance on those three vehicles. Page 9 shows a modest increase. Again, that just reflects an actual expenditure pattern for freight and postage within the office. A lot of that is due to the contact we keep with former members.

Photocopier is an actual contract cost. It's very minimal for an expenditure; although it shows an increase, that's just an accurate reflection of what the annual cost is. Long-Distance Tolls again reflects the actual expenditure pattern for those tolls on page 11. Page 12 shows no increase under professional, tech, and labour services. Page 13, Hosting, is hospitality in the Speaker's office, and that again has been reduced by 25 percent. Materials and Supplies does show a modest increase, but again this reflects the actual expenditure pattern. Page 15 is the remuneration and benefits for the positions of Speaker, Deputy Speaker, and Deputy Chairman, which show no increase.

9:49

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions at all with regards to the comments of the speaker?

MR. McINNIS: Just one. Robert, can you break down the 5.9 percent salary increase between market and merit adjustment?

MR. R. DAY: It was the case of the administrative assistant and the ministerial secretary.

DR. McNEIL: In the case of the management position, I think it was 5 percent. Then the market and merit for the others was, I think, 7 something.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry. We're lost at this end of the table here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know. You can't hear because this room is not as good on an acoustic basis as the room we were in yesterday. We've got a noisy thing back here, so we all need to talk a bit louder.

DR. ELLIOTT: Page number, sir?

MR. R. DAY: I'm sorry. Page 1. The question was with respect to the contract employees, the 5.9 percent increase. What was the specific breakdown? The increase for two of the contract positions was 5 percent. For one of the positions it was 3.

MR. McINNIS: I just wanted a breakdown between market and merit. What's the market factor we use? Is it 3? Is it 4?

MR. R. DAY: For market in our office we used 3, and for merit we used 2, for a total of 5.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional questions on the Speaker's Office section?

MR. R. DAY: For a point of clarification, Mr. Chairman, the nonpermanent salaries we do not control from our office.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, a general question on photocopying that would apply right through the entire program here. I see more and more material coming across my desk that's photocopied on both sides. Is there an extra special effort throughout the entire Assembly to become more involved in how we use the photocopier?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There certainly is in the Speaker's office. Clerk?

DR. McNEIL: We reviewed in this committee in the past year the green initiatives the Legislative Assembly Office had implemented. Photocopying on both sides was one of those initiatives, along with some other recycling initiatives. So yes, in the Legislative Assembly Office there has been an effort to do so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And I trust some of your own offices in all three caucuses. Good.  
Cyress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: In the budget is there any estimate or any amount of money – and I guess that could fall to the other budget too – for changing equipment so you can do that in all offices? Some of the equipment can, but I don't think it all can. Can photocopiers copy on both sides?

MRS. AINSLIE: We have some that do that.

MR. HYLAND: But not all.

MRS. AINSLIE: It's up to the individual offices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is correct.

MR. HYLAND: So with time there can be a problem of the cost of equipment to do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional comments or questions? Calgary-Foothills.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, could we move a motion to approve in principle section 4?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. All those in favour of the motion with regards to section 4? Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

I assume we now move on to section 8, which is Legislature Committees.

The Clerk, please.

DR. McNEIL: Overall in committees there's a reduction, if you exclude the constitutional reform, of 6.7 percent from last year's

budget. Including the Constitutional Reform Committee, there's a reduction of 79.4 percent.

Do you want to go into heritage savings?

MR. HYLAND: I have a question first. That doesn't include the boundaries commission?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, they're separate.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct. The very last section is the boundaries commission.

MR. HYLAND: Because it's a committee reporting to the Legislature. It's not a legislative . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

MR. WICKMAN: I've got one general question, Mr. Chairman. The chairmen of the various committees of course get a class B car, if I recall correctly. Where does that show up in the budget?

DR. McNEIL: In each committee under travel.

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, it shows up under travel.

DR. McNEIL: Travel and insurance, and repairs and maintenance.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay; thank you.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, this may be an appropriate time to make a comment and then a motion. It's been our custom when approving the budget in its final stages to ask chairmen of various committees to join us when going through their budget. I think it appropriate, if the majority of the committee agrees with this position, that we signal the various committees that have not reached the 25 percent reduction in travel and hosting and ask them to take a second look at that aspect. If there are reasons they can't achieve that, then fine; that can be part of their summary when they appear before us. But they should be signaled that we would like you to take a look at that.

With that thought I'd like to make a motion that we notify various legislative committees that when the chairman appears before the committee to review the committee's budget, special consideration be given to reaching, if at all possible, the 25 percent reduction in travel and hosting, and if the committee feels that's not possible, an explanation should be given as to why.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We have that motion before us about having committee chairmen appear before the committee any time, with a letter being communicated to them about the goals.

Are you ready for that question or further discussion?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

Then with respect to page 1 of Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, you can see by looking down there that they have a minus 5.7 bottom line in terms of the change, but as pointed out by the Member for Taber-Warner, I guess this is one area where the hosting does not appear to be in a state of reduction.

MR. HYLAND: But it would appear that their forecasting is \$150 out of \$1,000, so they're not using anywhere near what they budgeted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. We don't have the chairman of that committee in this committee, nor the vice-chairman.

MR. BOGLE: Even if we approve it in principle today, Mr. Chairman, when we finally approve and put to bed the budget, prior to doing that we will give the chairmen of the committees the opportunity to come in.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If they're unable to be here in person, they could communicate by mail or message. Thank you.

All right. Do you wish to go to page 2 of Heritage Savings Trust Fund? It does show a decrease there. Clerk, is there a vehicle involved in this case?

DR. McNEIL: My understanding is that there is, yes.

9:59

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

I think as you look through the sheets there that we then really come up to page 7 on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. The others are pretty well normal housekeeping, with the exception of page 6 which was already mentioned. That will be communicated to the chairman and vice-chairman for review.

What is your pleasure, committee members? Are you prepared to go on to the next committee?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; Law and Regulations.

DR. McNEIL: That's an easy one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've got some interesting figures there.

With respect to the Legislative Offices Committee, well, we do have the chairman here. Chairman of the Legislative Offices Committee, would you like to take us page by page through this one?

MR. BOGLE: Well, Mr. Chairman, you'll see that there is a total expenditure reduction of 12 and a half percent. The committee has followed the lead of the chairman of Members' Services in dealing with attendance at conferences by using a global figure. The travel expenses are down by 25 percent, as are hosting expenses.

We do have on page 6 a probable 5 percent increase in auditing fees. This is the outside auditor who audits the Auditor General. That's something the committee must still decide in the final state. I might mention that the \$12,500 figure is constant during the current fiscal year, and it was the figure used in the last fiscal year.

MRS. BLACK: An outside auditor?

MR. BOGLE: Yes. We are required by the statute to contract with a private auditor who does an audit on the Auditor General's office.

The only other thing I might mention is with the Ethics Commissioner's office. That would be a separate category.

Maybe I should just pause at that point, Mr. Chairman, and see if there are any questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions that you'd like to direct through to the chairman of the Leg. Offices? Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Just one. The proposal in the Assembly budget for a 25 percent cut in travel: is that something that can be looked at, can be considered?

MR. BOGLE: The Leg. Offices Committee? Yes, we did, and that's why we've recommended in our budget a 25 percent reduction.

MR. McINNIS: Similarly, you haven't decided which conferences to attend or not.

MR. BOGLE: No. Actually, we believe that when members use travel points that have been accumulated – and keep in mind we do have a major conference coming up, the Ombudsman's conference in Vienna, Austria. We are allowed to send up to three. I don't think we will. I think the consensus in the committee is that we'd send one or two. We think that we can attend the conferences just by being a little bit meaner and leaner in the process.

MR. CHAIRMAN: May we go on to page 2?

MR. BOGLE: On page 2 we have a list of the conferences which we normally do attend.

The locations. The COGEL Conference is in Toronto this year. That's the ethics conference, which is always held in North America, usually in an American city. This is the first time in recent history where a Canadian city has hosted the conference.

The other meetings. Comprehensive auditing is in Toronto. As I mentioned, once every four years there is an International Ombudsman Conference. In the following three years there's an Ombudsman conference in one of the provinces in Canada.

It's also important to point out that Alberta is rather unique in that there is an all-party committee – i.e., the Legislative Offices Committee – through which the three existing officers of the Assembly report to the Speaker. So in most jurisdictions the Ombudsman, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Auditor General report to the government. In fact, we've noticed that in the province of Newfoundland, following the change in government, the new Liberal administration has dismissed the Auditor General. In fact, they did so at a banquet; that's where the Auditor General learned that he was being removed from office.

MS BARRETT: It killed the Ombudsman's office; wiped it out.

MR. BOGLE: The Ombudsman's office was just eliminated, but because the Ombudsman had a no-cut contract, they just abolished the legislation. Therefore, they don't have an Ombudsman. That would not be possible in Alberta because of the relationship we have with our all-party committee, in that it's the all-party committee for whom the three officers work and in fact it's the all-party committee that does the selection. The new Ethics Commissioner is not being appointed by the government of the province. The final decision will be made by the Legislative Offices Committee.

MS BARRETT: When?

MR. BOGLE: We still plan to have the position filled by April 1, and we're on target even though we had a large number of applicants. What was it, Louise, 289 applicants? We're through the process in that we're down to a short list of candidates to be interviewed by executive search. The candidates are from across Alberta. Of course, the majority are from Edmonton and Calgary. There are also a number from the smaller cities and rural Alberta. It's a part-time position. We've determined that the successful candidate may reside anywhere in the province because it is part-time, and that individual will receive the same kind of travel benefits and privileges that an MLA receives.

The administrative position is currently being recruited and filled as well, so it's our intent to have the office up and running by April 1.

The other conference I think I mentioned. The Canadian Council on Public Accounts is a conference which both the Public Accounts Committee and Leg. Offices traditionally send two delegates to. This year it's being held in Fredericton.

On pages 4 and 5 there is no allocation for a chairman's vehicle because the chairman doesn't receive a vehicle through this committee, doesn't require a vehicle.

I mentioned previously the Audit of Auditor General's Office, which is on page 6.

Page 7, Hosting of Meetings is reduced by 25 percent.

Page 8. We've been looking for ways to reduce costs in meetings, and we have a projected reduction of 10.9 percent in that area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional questions on this section, Leg. Offices?

MRS. MIROSH: Did you want a motion, Mr. Chairman, to accept that budget?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you're ready to do so; sure.

I take it as moved by Calgary-Glenmore to approve Leg. Offices budgets. Call for the question?

MS BARRETT: Sure.

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

Members' Services. The draft proposal is before us here. We can certainly amend this one, but for purposes of discussion it's here. Perhaps Mr. Day would just like to show us the highlights.

10:09

MR. R. DAY: Mr. Chairman, the 50 percent reduction in Travel Expenses is a reflection of what actually occurs. Numerous members are here when we do have our meetings. Consequently, we do not pay for their travel to have them attend these meetings, so we've cut that in half. We have had a requirement on the committee at times for outside consulting and advice, and we felt it appropriate to budget a modest amount in that area. That's why, for the first time, we see a fee under Professional, Tech, and Labour Services. Then the Hosting has been reduced by 25 percent. We had been budgeting for pay to members of the committee far in excess of the number of meetings we have historically had over the past three years and consequently have reduced that number by 20 percent.

MR. WICKMAN: Robert, can you explain the last column, your forecast?

MR. R. DAY: That's our year-to-date expenditure figures.

MR. WICKMAN: So on the Travel Expenses, where we budgeted \$8,000, only 10 bucks were spent?

MR. R. DAY: That's correct. That's all to this point.

MR. WICKMAN: So why would you anticipate the need for \$4,000 this year? If you prorate that, we should get by with \$12.50.

MR. R. DAY: My concern, though, is that in prior years it has been considerably higher, and we also run into the difficulty that not all

members submit their claim forms in an expeditious manner. We sometimes do a lot of cleanup prior to year-end.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I see one or two blushes around the table. Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: I think another reason for that is that historically the bulk of the meetings of this committee take place in January, February, and March, so that anticipates the possibility of a number of meetings in this period.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We had our one meeting after the session, and then the rest have been held since. Traditionally, the budget does consume a certain amount of time.

All right; that then finishes with page 2.

MR. R. DAY: On page 3 we have the 50 percent reduction in travel. It has been transferred to Professional Contract Services. The Hosting then is a precursor to this reduction. It's the reason for no muffins this morning, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Which we attribute to the unhappy disposition of the Member for Barrhead.

MR. R. DAY: On page 5, again the actual reductions there are just indicative of the past three-year history of the meetings of this committee.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I'd move in principle the acceptance of the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? It's carried unanimously. Thank you.

Private Bills. Pat Black, the chairman of this committee, is here.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our committee hasn't met since we were last in session; however, there isn't a tremendous change in our budget. There is a little drop. The major change comes in Travel Expenses. Certainly I would propose to the committee that we also follow suit with a reduction in Hosting when our committee meets, and I would be very surprised if we would have any difficulty. We did reduce. I believe the previous year had a \$500 budget for Hosting which we dropped last year to \$200, and we certainly can live within that general guideline.

This committee traditionally has met only during session. As such, we've tried to keep our costs as low as possible, with an overall reduction this year of 3.2 percent, which I think we could reduce a little bit more.

I haven't had the opportunity to present this budget to my committee, and I will do that before final budget time. Basically, what's involved in this is the chairman's vehicle on page 2; there's a reduction there. The advertising in Private Bills is our major expenditure, and that is governed with our orders, the form that we must advertise. Insurance, on the next page, is similar to all other committees, and repairs of the vehicle. Hosting is probably where we could have a reduction, as I say. We're at \$200, and year to date we've spent \$136. We won't have any more meetings before the next budget kicks in, so I don't see that there'd be a problem there. The last page is the meeting attendance. There's no change in that, Mr. Chairman.

Do any members have any questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Taber-Warner, then Calgary-Glenmore, and then Cypress-Redcliff.



MR. BOGLE: I was going to ask under Other on page 1, Pay to Members of the Legislative Assembly, if the forecast for 1991-92 is \$3,889, could the estimate for 1992-93 be reduced from \$18,144?

MRS. BLACK: Quite likely. As I say, we try to hold our meetings, traditionally, while we're sitting. It's unfortunate that we don't know until we get into session how many petitioners will be appearing before our committee, so we have left that open. We could probably bring that down, and that's something I will present to the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Glenmore, then Cypress-Redcliff.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, to the chairman of this committee, under Other does that mean that the '91-92 actual is representative of members not making claims for payment by that committee?

MRS. BLACK: Some members made claims; the majority did not, Mr. Chairman. It was felt that since they were here during the session, they were here in any event and would not charge the per diem for the meeting as they are entitled to, but they felt they were not. So some did and some did not.

MRS. MIROSH: So that's the reflection of the actual . . .

MRS. BLACK: That's the actual difference, yes.

MRS. MIROSH: . . . compared to the estimate.

MRS. BLACK: Yes, but we have to, of course, budget for the event that all members would make a claim. But as I said, last year some did; some did not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: That was my question. I'd thought I'd missed out on something.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. So there's a possibility that there would be some changes in this given the fact that your committee is not likely to meet until the session is called. We have the difficulty of having to prepare the estimates for publication by the Treasurer.

MRS. BLACK: What is the time frame on that, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: At the latest, mid-February.

MRS. BLACK: I will be in touch with my committee before that time, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I think in this case, then, we should – well, what's your pleasure? Do you wish to approve this in a motion?

MR. WICKMAN: I'll move a motion that it be approved in principle with the understanding that the chairman of the committee will make every effort to reduce it as much as possible. That gives her the flexibility to go ahead and proceed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Those in favour of the motion to approve in principle with that caveat? Opposed? Carried. Thank you, and thank you, Madam Chairman.

Privileges and Elections has a zero budget.

MRS. MIROSH: I move that we accept that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a motion. Those in favour, please signify. Carried.

MS BARRETT: We should do the same with Law and Regs though. We really should.

MRS. MIROSH: With what?

MS BARRETT: Law and Regs. That other section, Law and Regs, has got a zip budget, and we should move to accept it as well. So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for that. That's useful. It's the understanding of the committee that the previous motion also include Law and Regs. Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Page 1, Public Accounts. Do we have the vice-chairman of Public Accounts here?

10:19

MS BARRETT: Who is the vice-chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ron Moore.

Clerk, would you like . . .

DR. McNEIL: Allowances and Supplementary Benefits: we've got an increase here because previously the conference attendance fees weren't budgeted and now they're in here. You'll see on the next page, though, page 3, that the overall budget for travel has been reduced by 30.5 percent, and again that would be a decision of the committee as to who goes and how many.

Page 4, Insurance for Chairman's Vehicle: straightforward.

Page 5, repairs: no change.

Annual report production, \$250.

MS BARRETT: Wait a minute. That can't be. How can you do an annual report for \$250? Is that the printing of it?

MRS. MIROSH: It's just photocopied.

MS BARRETT: Oh, I see. Okay. Cheap.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Taber-Warner, on this point?

MR. BOGLE: No, a separate point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

DR. McNEIL: Pay to MLAs: a slight increase related to an estimate of an increase to MLAs in Conference Attendance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For a point of information on this whole section, the reason we're having a little bit of difficulty here is that Karen South is on holidays this week and is due back next week, and so we're just moving ahead a little bit further; that's all. Any other questions on the whole section? Thank you.

Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Well, again I am assuming that we won't deal with this in detail until we're able to speak with the chairman, but under Other Expenditures, Pay to Members of the Legislative Assembly, again I wonder, if the forecast for '91-92 is \$10,502, why we'd be budgeting \$37,930 when Public Accounts meets primarily when the House is sitting and members traditionally do not claim. Can we take a second look at that or ask the chairman or vice-chairman to take a second look at that so we can deal with that matter when they are present?

MR. HYLAND: Almost half that amount should be what the chairman receives. The other – could we get a breakdown before coffee on that, the percentage: what the chairman gets and what members get?

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. On page 7, \$4,200 is estimated as Chairman's Salary and \$25,200 for Meeting Attendance. That \$4,200 is fixed, so the \$25,200 there is what's paid to . . .

MR. HYLAND: I thought it might be interesting to see the actual, what has happened in the last year.

DR. McNEIL: Well, that's what that \$10,502 is, year to date.

MR. HYLAND: Yeah, but this estimate won't give us the actual: what's happened in Conference Attendance versus those that have billed for attendance at Public Accounts during session. That's the figure I'm looking for.

MR. BOGLE: I think we can direct that question to the chairman of the committee when he's here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I think with regard to this section we will not have a motion.  
Public Affairs Committee.

MRS. BLACK: A motion to approve.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion to approve by the Member for Calgary-Foothills. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you.

Now, the Committee on Constitutional Reform. We are in receipt of a budget. I don't know; it doesn't give us a lot of room to manoeuvre here. We have the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. You are on that committee?

MS BARRETT: Yeah; the same with Edmonton-Jasper Place. I don't know what to say about this. I think what usually happens is either our chairman, Jim Horsman, or the secretary of the committee, Garry Pocock, basically just give information to the committee. Most of the members don't have a hands-on participation in this budget at all.

MR. McINNIS: I think there may be an expectation here that the committee will complete its work prior to the end of the current fiscal year, although we don't know that for sure. This is a never ending song of love, the Constitution in Canada. So we'll have to see what comes of it. With the Premier's announcement yesterday, maybe the committee's work is passed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: As I understand it, Mr. Chairman, the committee is not requesting any funds for 1992-93. So unless there's some extraordinary change . . .

MR. McDOUGALL: I telephoned Mr. Garry Pocock and asked this question: did they require some funds? He said that they'd hoped to have the report published before the end of the fiscal year and it was possible that something might occur. They had no way of telling what it would be, so that's why we've done what we've done. It's possible, but it may not be likely.

MS BARRETT: I have an idea. We meet on the 22nd of this month. Nothing needs to be finalized before, I don't know, mid to late February. So why don't we just report back after the 22nd, when we'll know?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will you please, and take that sheet along to see if there's any radical changes to it?

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MRS. BLACK: In the meantime, Mr. Chairman, can we approve in principle?

MRS. MIROSH: A zero budget.

MR. McINNIS: I think the situation is that there's nothing official from the committee. What was just said was that perhaps the secretary of the committee, Garry Pocock, may be making a submission later on. So can we hold this item?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think, given the undertaking by the members of that committee, that we'll just leave this one until further information.

MS BARRETT: Thanks. I agree.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I was just going to suggest that you as chairman of this committee write to the chairman of that committee outlining the discussions and saying that two members are prepared to respond back to us and that we'd appreciate it if it were discussed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That way we'll cover it for sure.

Section 9, Legislative Interns.

Actually, why don't we take a five-minute stretch?

[The committee adjourned from 10:27 a.m. to 10:38 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Ladies and gentlemen, in the last number of months I've had Robert Day take over a lot of the jurisdiction for legislative interns, and he's tied up on the phone trying to make some arrangements for the committee chairman to perhaps come and see us on Monday, so I wonder if we might now just move past section 9 for a moment to section 10, *Alberta Hansard*, and have Dr. Garrison take us through that.

Gary.

DR. GARRISON: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope nobody was too startled by the 24.7 percent that shows on the overview page. The explanation makes it clear that the total amount of the increase requested, \$201,159, is basically just transfers from other areas. This is happening primarily because for a number of years I had been responsible for administering the printing contracts for House documents, and there had always been a bit of an anomaly involved as well with being responsible for *Hansard*, yet not having

anything to do with *Hansard* subscriptions. So what we did in the summer was that the scrolls and subscriptions clerk, Jane Pickard, was transferred up from the eighth floor to the ninth floor, and now I have total responsibility for all of the House publications, the printing and the distribution.

At the same time that Jane was moved up, we did a little bit of something with the new phone system. The Legislative Assembly Office, as you probably know, had a new phone system installed – I think it was in June – and we established a public information line so that a lot of the calls that didn't have anyplace to go or used to go to general administration, to the switchboard, are now being directed up to Jane, and we have the position backed up, of course, when she's not there. That's basically what's happened with that position. It seems logical to me that the responsibility for the printing contracts should be together with the responsibility for the funding for the printing.

That covers most of the transfer. The \$7,085 under (e) is basically money for printing that was handled by visitor services before. As you know, last year, about a year ago this month, I was given responsibility for visitor services, which came to the Legislative Assembly on April 1. It made sense, as well, for the printing to be more or less centralized in one area. That's why we're not budgeting any longer for printing in visitor services. It's all being done in the *Hansard* budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On this general section, Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I first saw that number, I thought that after all the years that Gary had done on contracting and reducing costs and being quite efficient, maybe something had snapped, and out comes the 24 percent. I guess the question is really, ignoring this 24 percent increase because of transfers, what is your actual budget compared to last year? Can you give us a shot at that?

DR. GARRISON: The actual budget change?

MR. HYLAND: Yeah.

DR. GARRISON: The actual budget change would be zero.

MR. HYLAND: Okay.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, I'm just wondering with all these changes, these transfers, then does this mean that what you've gained is reduced somewhere else in this budget, that it did show a reduction, obviously, somewhere else?

DR. GARRISON: Yes, that's right. I don't know what the committee has gone through already.

DR. McNEIL: House Services is where some of the reductions are.

DR. GARRISON: Then Jane's position, of course, would have come from administration.

MRS. MIROSH: Where they show the reduction, you show the increase, so it basically balances out in that respect.

DR. GARRISON: That's right.

MR. HYLAND: But your portion is zero.

DR. GARRISON: That's right; it is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As Gary has pointed out, what's happened here is a rationalization, if you will, of various components in the whole system, and hopefully it's the last major rationalization unless Leg. Assembly is called upon to take on other services that are in other government departments in the future.

Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, this is a question that I should have asked in the general overview. Are we following the guideline as put out by the Premier in terms of a wage freeze for our senior managers throughout the system? That's for the 1992-93 fiscal year.

DR. McNEIL: Yes. There are no increases budgeted for '92-93 fiscal year for managers. Now, some of these numbers show an increase because they are increases that came about in June '91 or April '91, either merit increases and, I think in a couple of instances, reclassifications.

MR. BOGLE: For clarification, if there was an increase in June of '91, then the increase is covered in the '91-92 budget.

DR. McNEIL: No. For management salaries – and it's my understanding that this is also the case in government – we have never budgeted for anticipated increases, because typically with management salaries there's never a contract, so you never knew what the increase might be. Since I've been here, anyway, we've absorbed any increases in the budget.

MR. BOGLE: All right. Then is it fair to say that in the next budget, in the '93-94 budget . . .

DR. McNEIL: You'd have zero increase in salary, wages, and benefits unless there were increases in benefit costs.

MR. BOGLE: Even though there may be increases in June of '93. If I'm following you, we're a year behind in the budget.

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. BOGLE: All right.

DR. McNEIL: Because if we continued with the same policy, we'd absorb those funds.

MR. BOGLE: Okay. Everyone else on track?

MRS. MIROSH: But you haven't got any flexibility in this budget to absorb much.

DR. McNEIL: No, that's correct. I guess our policy position was that we would not adjust management salaries in '92-93 and that we would adjust nonmanagement salaries in accordance with the bargaining unit and opted-out and excluded classes at equivalent levels. That was the policy that was implemented in these estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Additional questions on the general? Thank you.

All right we'll go to page 2 of the *Hansard* section.

We're on section 10, Mr. Wickman.

As has been pointed out, most of this is transfers and the basic overall is a zero position. Are there any questions on section 10, page 1, salaries, benefits? Page 2; page 3?

Page 4: that reflects that great army of people that work here for at least two hours after everybody else goes home, hopefully more or less to bed, at the end of a long night.

Page 5 is the things that just naturally flow along.

Page 6, Staff Training. I assume that is taking into consideration the possibilities of the training, and those figures allow you to train any new persons that might come to you as well as ongoing training?

10:48

DR. GARRISON: This doesn't cover the training of part-time staff. That's all done in-house.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Might we go to page 7, committee members? There's an important note there on page 7.

Page 8.

Page 9.

MS BARRETT: I have a question on page 9.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

MS BARRETT: In Mailing of Daily Issues, Bound Volumes, and Index, you show zip increase. Didn't the postal rates go up January 1?

DR. GARRISON: Yeah, they did go up a little bit, but we're anticipating that the number of subscriptions will go down slightly to compensate.

MS BARRETT: Okay.

MR. BOGLE: Can we review that again? I think this is a matter we discussed a year ago. Can you tell us what we're mailing of the daily issues, bound volumes, and indexes? Who are we mailing them to, and why are we covering those costs?

DR. GARRISON: We're mailing them to people who have paid for subscriptions for the daily *Hansard*, and the *Hansard* issues are mailed out to them daily as they're published.

MR. BOGLE: And the revenue flows back . . .

DR. GARRISON: It goes to the Provincial Treasurer.

MR. BOGLE: . . . to the general revenues. That's why it doesn't show. All right. But it is based on cost recovery?

DR. GARRISON: That's right.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. We made that decision several years ago.

MR. BOGLE: That's what I thought.

DR. GARRISON: The same for the bound volumes. Those are paid for as well, and the index is included as part of the regular subscription.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 10, Photocopying, stays the same.

Page 11, Long Distance Tolls, stays the same, \$200.

Page 12 indicates a transfer.

Page 13. Again, a lot of this reflects the transfer from House Services.

Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, if you took away those dollars that were transferred from House Services and Visitor Services, what's the real increase?

DR. GARRISON: In this particular code, or are you talking about overall?

MR. WICKMAN: No, on page 13, for *Hansard*.

DR. GARRISON: Overall, the increase would be zero when you take into account the whole budget.

MR. WICKMAN: The whole budget, yeah. Your whole budget, Gary, but this particular section on page 13: in fairness to you, it doesn't reflect properly when it shows a 76.3 percent increase. If you took those transferred amounts away, would this page then also be zero percent, or would it be a reduction?

DR. GARRISON: I expect it would be pretty close. I haven't really worked it out that way.

DR. McNEIL: I will right now. I'm working it out.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, if you look on page 1 there, it says there's \$201,159 transferred in. That's almost all of the difference; in fact more than that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The same observation was made earlier when the member had not yet joined the meeting.

DR. McNEIL: The number works out to be \$195,958, so there's about a thousand-dollar increase if you factor out those documents that were transferred to *Hansard* from House Services.

DR. GARRISON: And that difference, I expect, is attributable to the fact that the dollars you see here, under Orders of the Day, Votes and Proceedings, Bills, are based on the new, 1992 printing contract.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

Any other questions on the whole section on *Hansard*? Can I have a motion?

MRS. BLACK: Motion to approve.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Calgary-Foothills. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you very much.

We will now return to section 9, the interns. Mr. Day.

MR. R. DAY: Mr. Chairman, the intern budget shows a reduction of 1.9 percent. The budget provides for maintenance of the program as it currently exists. If you look at page 1, the four interns are contract employees of the Assembly. There's no increase in benefits there, although there's a marginal increase in employee benefits that are provided for the four interns.

Travel Expenses has been reduced by 25 percent, as has Hosting. The interns themselves do not do hosting, but we do receive interns from other provinces, and that's why there is a hosting budget for the interns. So Supplies and Services has been reduced by 19.6 percent.

On a page-by-page basis, page 2 is the contract payments for the four interns; page 3 is the benefits, and that's where the increase

occurred. They are all single. That's why the rates are calculated as single.

Travel expenses are detailed on page 4. As you can see, they attend the conventions for the three parties represented in the province. We have a budget because we advertise throughout the province for the internship program and bring our short list of candidates to Edmonton. We have an item here called Constituency Travel for Interns. We've expanded the program this year by getting our four interns out around the province and traveling to other venues. We've expanded the program to look at what we call significant infrastructure in looking at the province. To date they've traveled to the remand centre and the new prison in Fort Saskatchewan and the Swan Hills waste treatment facility. They'll be going to the Oldman dam in the spring, and this month they'll be visiting three portions of the agri-economy. Poultry processing, grain, and beef have been arranged through the kind assistance of various government departments. The interns have found this to be a very beneficial expansion of the program.

We used to go to Calgary and Lethbridge to hold our seminars, where we would provide information to university students on the internship program. As you can see, we've deleted those expenses entirely. We will rely on printed advertising.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On that page, Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, it seems to me the last time we advertised there were some problems with the number of applications we were getting and the way the universities were circulating or not circulating the information. Has that improved in the last year?

MR. R. DAY: I would appreciate a comment from the one chief of staff that is available and possibly our representatives as well from the New Democrats. But I have found that although our numbers are down in total applicants, the quality of our applicants has risen significantly. I think that's primarily due to the fact that now we're not relying so much on the universities, specifically political science professors, to comment on the program; we're getting word of mouth from both those that have applied for the program and been up here and those who have successfully gone through it, some of whom have been retained by the various caucuses. The four we've got this year have been very good ambassadors for the program as well, because for the first time since I've been here, I've already received queries, as early as two months ago, about "Don't forget me; I want to apply." So I'm quite delighted, Mr. Chairman.

We do advertise in all Canada employment offices, all campuses, all community colleges, and we get a good response from that as well. The members of the Assembly have been very good about letting constituents know, and they've been good ambassadors for the program as well.

10:58

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I guess that will sort of look after page 5, Intern Recruitment.

MR. R. DAY: No increase in Freight and Postage. No increase on 7. No increase on 8. This is the primary recruiting tool here, where we do the posters and get them out to the universities, the Canada employment recruiting offices. We have an annual reception for the interns and the members of the Assembly and we introduce staff. Although it says Ontario interns, we do host one other internship coming in. We've reduced that. The total reduction there was 25 percent.

General Supplies. We do give them scrolls at the conclusion of the program.

That's the budget, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: I move we accept the budget.

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

Legislature Library, number 11.  
Blake, please.

MR. McDOUGALL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to speak to the committee regarding the library's budget. First of all, I'd like to distribute a table and a brief summary that may be helpful to members in their study of the library's budget. I won't speak to it until everyone has it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay? Everybody has a copy? Thank you.  
Blake, please.

MR. McDOUGALL: First of all, we have a table that's a survey of Canadian parliamentary libraries. I feel that this table may be useful for two reasons. First of all, it shows our relative ranking in Canada with respect to other parliamentary libraries. I think it shows that we're not spending an inordinate amount of money on a parliamentary library service in Alberta. However, some of you may have a different view of that. Then the last column in that table shows, I feel, that in terms of cost efficiency the library is, again on a relative basis, a cost-efficient organization as well. Those were just two points I wanted to make on the table.

The reason for the attached summary is that we maintain a small unit on the ninth floor of the Legislature Annex, where I have my office, and its responsibility is to facilitate resource sharing among Alberta government libraries as well as the University of Alberta. By sharing resources, loaning material among the libraries and the university, instead of buying this material, we realize a large saving every year. This summary shows the amount of the saving; for '91-92 it would be over a million dollars. So that saving through resource sharing alone is greater than the entire Legislature Library budget let alone the unit that is primarily responsible for realizing those savings.

I thought perhaps those two items would give a sort of general view of the organization, where we are on a relative basis, and some of the savings we've been able to appreciate through resource sharing, which I think is important in these times of fiscal restraint that we're in.

Now, if there are any questions on that, I'd be pleased to answer them. Otherwise, I'll address the general overview in the budget book.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: The comment I would make to Blake, Mr. Chairman, is that we apply this same principle throughout the entire government. Instead of collecting taxes, we can give royalties at the end of each year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Carry on, I guess. The summary sheet, section 11, 3.4 percent.

MR. McDOUGALL: All right. Regarding the general summary page, we see that the overall increase is 3.4 percent, and that

provides for the maintenance of the library operation as it now stands. You will have noticed that a B budget item has been included in the estimates book, but since we've centralized our EDP budgets and so on, it will be discussed and I will address it, if it's the committee's pleasure, when we get to the information system's budget. Bill and I will both address the B budget item. So if it's acceptable to the committee, I will just address the A budget or the maintenance budget now.

Briefly, an overview again. The increase in Salaries, Wages, and Employee Benefits is the result of the routine salary and merit increases and higher benefit rates. The increase in Supplies and Services – I'll spend some time on this when we get to the accounts – is primarily higher material costs: books, microfilm, and the periodicals, the research journals. Finally, the increase in the Purchase of Fixed Assets is caused by the fact that we have one microform reader unit in the library that's becoming inefficient and we are having to pay a lot for repairs. We'd like to replace the unit in the next fiscal year if that's possible. So that budget would allow us to replace that unit that currently has a high rate of repair.

Does anyone want to ask any questions on the overview?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. We'll move along.

MR. McDOUGALL: Okay.

I'm on page 1, the summary overview. Right? I imagine your eyes would be attracted to the minus 9.8 percent in the control group of Salaries, Wages, and Employee Benefits. That's a result of cutting travel. Some of the conference registration expenses are in there. When you cut travel, naturally conference registrations are cut as well, so that's the cause of that. The overall increases I explained before as a result of routine increases that are administered.

Then in the next control group, Supplies and Services, we see that there's almost a 25 percent cut. There's actually more than 25 percent in a way because the registrations in the allowance section are also part of that cut. So in effect the travel, if you include registration for the conferences, is really cut a bit more than 25 percent.

You will see a decline in Freight and Postage and then a sharp increase in Telephone and Communications. We're using the mail system less and less and using the telecommunications system more and more. So what's happening is that we've got to get more money across into our Telephone and Communications budget to compensate for that. Of course, we're taking out of Freight and Postage. Now, the net change there is actually a saving. In other words, if you took one from the other, you would find we're asking for less for those two accounts than we did in previous fiscal years. We're actually making savings in these two areas.

The minus 25 percent in Hosting of course is policy, fiscal restraint.

Finally, as I indicated before, there's a sharp increase in Purchase of Fixed Assets to replace one of the units that has a high rate of repair.

11:08

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll move to page 2. Market and merit: a 2 percent change in administrative support.

Page 3. Edmonton-Jasper Place, do you have a question?

MR. McINNIS: I have a question with regard to special projects. One of them is listed as Updating MLA Files. What type of files were those?

MR. McDOUGALL: The library has actually kept files since it was first founded in 1906. We have files that date back to that period of time on the Premiers, Lieutenant Governors, and individual members. They're primarily newspaper clippings or photocopies of them and also things families have sent in in some cases. For instance, the best record we have of Premier Stewart in our files, the only complete record, has come from his family. It's very complete and was used as the basis for the article on him in the Premier's book. What we want to do: because of this upcoming project of members doing biographical summaries, we are collecting obituaries. We're taking a systematic approach to getting obituaries for deceased members and the actual articles in local papers about their deaths, of course, because they give a great deal of biographical information that isn't recorded in the *Parliamentary Guide* and so on that we feel is useful. Well, I know it's useful because people come in to refer to the files. So we aren't creating any data ourselves on the members; maybe that's what you were referring to. It's published data and things that have been sent in by members of the families and friends.

MR. McINNIS: Publicly accessible.

MR. McDOUGALL: Oh, yes. It's used at least every day now.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional questions on page 3?

Page 4, pretty well consequential developments of the earlier . . . Page 5.

MS BARRETT: I have a silly technical question about page 5. The U of A borrowing cards, right? Do you buy them for two individuals in the library?

MR. McDOUGALL: Yes.

MS BARRETT: Then if I want something from the U of A library, they go and get it on their own card?

MR. McDOUGALL: Primarily we'll get it for you, but we need the card to do it.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. You have to use this card to do it. That's what I thought.

MR. McDOUGALL: Right. Yes. We have two, one for the technician and one that's kept right in the library for people that drop in.

MS BARRETT: Right. Thanks. The U of A is sticky about that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 6, conferences, and page 7. Questions there, or am I to move on page 8?

MR. McDOUGALL: We have included a calculation for the postal rate increase in this amount even though it's a minus 16.5 percent. We took that into consideration.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, indeed. Sorry. Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Yeah, a question on page 7. I notice the travel expenses for one delegate to an annual conference of the Canadian Library Association. That's obviously not sending a delegate.

MR. McDUGALL: No. We feel that since funds are limited, it's more important that staff attend and support the provincial conferences. So a number of technicians will be going to the technicians' conference – I believe it's in Lethbridge this year – and then we'll have a representative at the provincial librarians' conference in Jasper. We feel it's more important that we support provincial organizations at this time at least rather than take that money and send someone to Ottawa to the Canadian Library Association Conference.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, I'm just wondering: is that a crippling decision? Is it not important to have somebody at that national convention?

MR. McDUGALL: There's value in all these various conferences. The Canadian Library Association is the major organization in the country, but after the conference they have a special edition, they publish proceedings and so on. We can study those. We attend other meetings where representatives of that association would be present and updating us. So it's a desirable thing, but in view of available funds, I feel it's more important that we support the provincial associations.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Page 8 is fairly routine. The same thing with page 9, the use of photocopying equipment.

MR. McDUGALL: On that point, Mr. Chairman, there was a question earlier about two-sided copying. We've converted. The unit in the Annex has been changed to double-sided copying. One unit has been converted to double-sided copying in the library, and the other two we'll do as we're able. We have been doing the conversion so everyone who wishes to do double-sided copying can have a double. We've been doing that conversion; we started it a year ago. Hopefully before too long we'll have that capability on all our equipment.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, it looks good. I'm just wondering whether we're paying a terrible price for it over and above what we save in paper with the extra costs of equipment, the extra costs of labour, or whatever's involved there. I don't know.

MR. McDUGALL: It's some time now since we changed the last unit. I recall it was a bit more expensive for the unit to get the capability. Of course, the meter rate the companies charge, the exposure rate, is the same. If you do two exposures, you pay for them whether it's on one piece of paper or not. But I feel that overall there probably would be a saving there.

DR. ELLIOTT: Good. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Page 10 reflects the earlier comments about the increase in telephone – it's shifted – and page 11 stays the same. Page 12, the binding of volumes.

MR. McDUGALL: There's quite a sharp increase there. The reason for that of course is that parts of our library collection are

aging and binding is a much more economical way of remedying the problem of wear than buying replacement items. So we feel we just have to spend more money on the maintenance of it. We feel we'll more than recover that, you know, rebinding old material rather than replacing material in the library. So 40 percent is \$1,200 only in actual figures, but it is quite a sharp increase. This binding is done by local firms.

11:18

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you care to proceed?

Page 13 is the Hosting and minus 25 percent position.

Page 14, Blake.

MR. McDUGALL: Regarding Material and Supplies, we spent a considerable amount of time discussing what we should do. This is the staff on this particular item. The temptation was to have a lower figure, of course, but we felt that overall the long-term effect of that would be very destructive on the library collection. So the increases we put in we did on the basis of some study and feel that would at least maintain, you know, the present extent of the collection and allow us to meet the inflationary costs we have and that consequently the library in the long term won't suffer because we've cut our information resources budget and let the collection fall into allowing it to fail.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Any questions on that page?

May we go to page 15? There's a substantial change to replace existing equipment, which may mean replacing something that's obsolete by the sound of it.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if Blake can tell us – he said about the extensive cost to repair the old one – what it's costing us per year. How long will it take to recover that money?

MR. McDUGALL: Okay. I'll be straightforward with you on this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I thought you were straightforward with us all the time.

MR. McDUGALL: Well, of course. I'm just saying I can't tell you exactly how many years it would take to recover on the basis of repair, but what I will say is that on the basis of the rate of repair we have now, we feel it's no longer efficient. It's functional, and if the committee feels that because of the fiscal restraint situation we're in that should be delayed for another year, we can accommodate that. We would prefer to make that change now, but that's our situation. We can get along with that.

MR. HYLAND: What's a shot at your yearly cost of repair?

MR. McDUGALL: It's \$3,100.

MR. BOGLE: To be clear: is that for one machine or is that all of them?

MR. McDUGALL: No, that's to maintain all our equipment. Well, you've seen the library; you know how many microreaders and so on now. Most of those are with the maintenance people. We call them when they're required, and some of the maintenance on them is minimal or there is no maintenance. That's on the straight readers, but the microreader printer is much more sophisticated mechanically, and so what we do there is have maintenance contracts on some of them. We don't want to take the risk of a major repair on equipment and having to absorb that in a year, so instead of that we have a maintenance agreement with the companies. One

of the companies is Bell & Howell and the other one is 3M, I believe, and for that money they have to provide us with service throughout the year regardless of the cost. We found by misfortune a number of years ago – we let one drop – that that was really a better way for us to operate, because we encountered a very major equipment failure and a very expensive repair; if we'd have had the maintenance contract, we wouldn't have had to pay as much money to get that equipment operational again. So I feel that the purchase of these maintenance agreements from the companies on a selective basis is worth while.

MS BARRETT: Does the maintenance contract cover that one microreader printer that's causing trouble, or do you have to pay for that out of pocket every time?

MR. McDOUGALL: No, we've got a contract on that unit.  
As I say, we can carry on if that's the wish of the committee.

MS BARRETT: You do have two of those, right? Two that are available to us?

MR. McDOUGALL: Yes, there are two larger units that are both microprinters, and we have maintenance agreements on that equipment.

DR. ELLIOTT: How old are they?

MS BARRETT: They're old. Have you ever seen them? Oh God, I know which dinosaur you're talking about.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, they're dinosaurs.

MS BARRETT: Oh, the one that he's talking about especially. No one uses it because it's always broken, and it's hard to use.

MR. BOGLE: Then there can't be many repairs on it.

MS BARRETT: Well, that's true.

MRS. MIROSH: We might as well get rid of it if it's costing us that much.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. What you find sometimes is especially when the House sits and everybody wants to go and find something from an old article from somewhere, people are queued up at the good machine because the bad one's broken or because it's so hard to operate. It's really dumb.

MRS. BLACK: Really, this is quite minor, Mr. Chairman, in the overall makeup of the operation of the library that I don't know that it would be fitting to be without the best equipment for retrieval.

MS BARRETT: I agree.

MR. CHAIRMAN: May I take it that perhaps you're ready to have a motion with respect to the whole section? Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: I'll move adoption of the budget as presented.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you, hon. members. Those of us that have poor eyesight when we want to deal with things such as the last piece of equipment, thank you very much.

Information systems: Mr. Gano, please. Section 12. Again, hon. members, just to double-check, we're hoping to conclude at 12 o'clock.

MR. BOGLE: We are.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm glad you gave the message to the committee, hon. member.

MR. BOGLE: Well, the meeting was scheduled to go from 9 to 12.

MR. HYLAND: It was just the way you said it.

MRS. MIROSH: Whether we're finished or not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: My former students were always like that. [interjections] I hope you all heard that.

MS BARRETT: We did. We just didn't know about whom you were speaking. Now we do. It's on the record, Bob.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did you hear the next part?

MS BARRETT: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Glenmore said, "My God, was he your teacher?" and his reply was, "That will let you know how ancient he is."

Mr. Gano, as one of the younger bucks, please.

MR. GANO: Thank you. With the information systems budget summary page we are showing a decrease of 5.3 percent in the A budget. Salaries and wages are increasing 7.2 percent mainly due to salary increases and increased costs of benefits. We have a decrease of 3.8 percent in Supplies and Services. This is mainly due to the fact that we were able to decrease our maintenance costs on computer equipment again this year. The decrease would have been greater had we not had to accept a responsibility that has been transferred from Treasury, so we are doing some things that Treasury did last year. The fixed assets: there again is a decrease of 21 percent. This is due to the completion of the caucus office automation project.

We are including a B budget item within information systems. When we get to the end, I'll speak to it in a little bit more detail, but it is looking at improving the service within the library by acquiring an integrated on-line system for the library.

MS BARRETT: Is that software mainly?

MR. GANO: It's mainly hardware.

MS BARRETT: Oh, is that right? Good.

11:28

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next page, which gives us the overview of the section. Page 1, summary. Any questions on that page?  
Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: Yes. On the B budget, the data processing equipment. Is this for constituency offices?

MR. GANO: No. That's for the library system that we're suggesting be acquired for the Legislature Library.

MRS. BLACK: We're going to get to that later, are we not?



MR. GANO: We can discuss it in detail now, if you wish.

DR. McNEIL: We can go through it first and then get to it later.

MR. GANO: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Page 2.

I wonder if Taber-Warner would care to share the note I just sent him.

MR. BOGLE: It's obvious the chairman of this committee is a little sensitive about his age, as he sent a note saying: see how kind I was; I forgot to say that it took you so long to get out of high school that you were 45 when you entered Mount Royal.

The things we have to do to humour our chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

Well, page 3. Page 4 is consequential. Page 5, Staff Training with respect to caucuses and the Legislative Assembly: that's the same.

MR. HYLAND: Does that come in from other sources as well? That's a transfer in?

MR. GANO: It was originally, yes. It's been in the budget for a couple of years now, but it was originally transferred from other sources.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 6. Bill, could you explain what this is?

MR. GANO: Okay. On page 6 we are experiencing an increase there mainly due to the need to travel to constituency offices in order to support them. We had had some money in last year. It's proving not to be enough. We are going to be over budget this year in that area, so we're asking for an increase there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Foothills.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, could you clarify the type of support that you're offering to constituency offices, please?

MR. GANO: Mainly a hand-holding type of support. We like to get out to each office at least once a year just to kind of touch base with them and ensure that they are able to use the equipment in the most effective manner. If a person is having a particular problem, we attempt to help them over the phone. That doesn't always work, and we need to go directly to the office in order to help them.

MS BARRETT: You're also dealing with technical upgrades all the time too, aren't you?

MR. GANO: Yes; that's right. We do have a trip scheduled down to Calgary within the next three weeks and will be doing some upgrades to equipment down there and assisting people with some problems they're having that are not urgent but they would like us to visit and show them how to do some things.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There seems to have been very good feedback on this from all the caucuses. Thank you.

Page 7. Good old postage raises its head again. In this case it's freight raising its head.

MR. GANO: Yes. I'm afraid the freight is increasing again; the same kind of thing. This is basically for constituency office support.

We have a maintenance pool of spare equipment, and often when a piece of equipment fails and when something breaks, we ship it out to the constituency office and the constituency offices returns the broken piece. We then repair it and put it into the maintenance pool.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

Page 8, Fax Machines.

MR. GANO: There's an increase here mainly due to the impact of visitor services coming within the Legislative Assembly. We're assuming responsibility for their fax machine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's consequential.

Page 9.

MS BARRETT: Who answers the phones? Info systems? Like, your office directly?

MR. GANO: That's right. We do have a couple of offices that we were not able to install RITE lines into, and consequently for the data communications we had to install a normal telephone line.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 10.

MR. GANO: We do have a decrease in here. The main area of decrease is the maintenance and support. We are finding that because of the new equipment we have acquired, we're still able to continue to decrease the maintenance costs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 11.

MR. GANO: This is basically a new item that has not been budgeted previously. It's for customs and brokerage fees. We do acquire a lot of software and whatnot from the States, and of course coming across the States we have to deal with customs and so on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I guess that reflects reality.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. What is that about, though? What do you get from the States that you can't acquire locally?

MR. GANO: A lot of the network software is not marketed locally and has to come across the border.

MS BARRETT: I should have known. I've seen it in CompuServe. You know, when you go to the mall and see what's available, a lot of stuff you just can't even get out of Canadian suppliers. You're right. I forgot about that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Page 12.

MS BARRETT: This is interesting.

MRS. BLACK: Payroll?

MS BARRETT: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dear old Treasury.

MS BARRETT: Payroll for info systems, you mean?

MR. GANO: No, this is payroll in the personnel area. Personnel is now entering wage information directly where that was done previously by Treasury.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, I remember. Oh, that's very interesting.

MR. GANO: They're entering it directly via terminals, and as a result we have a charge for using the government computer and whatnot.

MR. BOGLE: Is this an off-loading across the board that's happening in departments of government as well as the Leg. Assembly?

MR. GANO: It's my understanding that yes, it is.

DR. McNEIL: Yes, it is.

MR. BOGLE: And we can expect to see a similar savings in the Treasury Department's estimates as a result of this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: In God we trust. Yes, I agree we should see it.

MS BARRETT: We'll find out when we get to the real budget.

DR. McNEIL: You'll remember last year that in personnel we budgeted additional funds for an individual to do that, but we didn't anticipate the size of the costs of doing it, just the line charges.

MS BARRETT: We were told to do it, weren't we?

DR. McNEIL: Oh, yeah. We didn't have a choice, because they wouldn't have the staff to do it in Treasury.

MR. HYLAND: So when they told us we had to do this ourselves, they didn't tell us at that time that they were going to charge us line costs as well? That was an additive?

MR. GANO: There is no indication from them at that point. Certainly I guess the anticipation on my part should have been there. When you take on a responsibility like that, you are going to be charged for mainframe computer time, and it wasn't anticipated on my part.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, because of the ultimate sensitivity of a payroll and benefit system, are you developing this system or are you actually inputting to the system?

MR. GANO: No. We are on-line to the system that was developed by Treasury, so we use Treasury's system to input our data.

MRS. BLACK: Your data being . . .

MR. GANO: The wage information: the name of the person, the number of hours that person worked, the person's rate of pay.

MRS. BLACK: Is this just from your department?

MR. GANO: No. This is from the Legislative Assembly as a whole.

MRS. BLACK: Where is the payroll department in all this? Where does the payroll department report?

DR. McNEIL: You mean the payroll department?

MRS. BLACK: We must have a payroll department.

DR. McNEIL: It's in the personnel function.

MRS. BLACK: Which reports to . . .

DR. McNEIL: The director of personnel reports to me.

MRS. BLACK: To you.

DR. McNEIL: Right.

11:38

MRS. BLACK: Your people were not inputting the payroll information into the system?

DR. McNEIL: They were producing it, but on a hard copy, and sending it by courier or messenger over there. Now it's being done by the telephone lines, in effect.

MRS. BLACK: Please, for clarification. Payroll is always a very touchy area. Are the payroll people inputting the payroll data into the system?

DR. McNEIL: The payroll people are doing the input. Then there's two levels of checking, of approval . . .

MRS. BLACK: Within the payroll department?

DR. McNEIL: . . . within the Legislative Assembly Office.

MRS. BLACK: Your office?

DR. McNEIL: Within our office. So there's a payroll clerk who inputs it. The director of personnel is the second level. Another accounting officer, either Blake or myself, is the third level before it's released to the system. So there's the input, and then there's the review at two levels before it goes into the system.

MRS. BLACK: So your people are doing the actual input and check.

What is it your people are doing, Bill?

MR. GANO: My people really aren't doing anything. We are just taking the charges. Because it's an EDP charge, a charge for computer time, it's my area that's being charged for it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under the total envelope of the Legislative Assembly Office.

MRS. BLACK: So this could have been in legislative offices under personnel?

DR. McNEIL: Oh, yes.

MRS. BLACK: I'm just querying why it is showing up under the information systems department as opposed . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under Legislative Assembly, not leg. offices.

MRS. BLACK: I'm sorry; Legislative Assembly's budget is where I would have preferred to have seen this item, for clarification.

DR. McNEIL: The reason we've done that is . . .

MRS. BLACK: I think this is inappropriately placed, quite frankly, Mr. Chairman.

DR. McNEIL: I think I would like to provide a counterargument. What we've done with the information systems costs is attempted to consolidate them so that we have overall control. We used to have individual systems budgets in each area of the department. The problem was that there were inefficiencies resulting in terms of maintenance contracts and so on. So now Bill can overlook the whole information systems budget. That's the purpose of the consolidation, so that we've got one manager, in effect, who's overseeing that function, if you will: the information systems and costs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And, in addition, make it more efficient. A manager who has that expertise . . .

DR. McNEIL: That was the reason, the rationale for it.

MRS. BLACK: I agree with your argument, and certainly he's listed off, but maybe this should have been better served as maintenance of existing systems as opposed to data processing services.

MR. GANO: I was going to just suggest that perhaps it would have been better just to simply say personnel instead of payroll, because all the other lines in there do indicate the particular section that that service is being offered to. So perhaps it should have said personnel.

MRS. BLACK: My clarification was just that your department is not touching payroll records; all you're doing is maintaining a system.

MR. GANO: That's right.

MRS. BLACK: So I haven't a problem with you maintaining it as long as his department is controlling it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One comment I would like to share with you. During the course of the last number of months there was a communication – Clerk, correct me if I'm wrong – from Treasury to our department to slow down the payment of its bills because we were too efficient, that we had shortened the time of the turnaround.

MS BARRETT: I'm not surprised; they're slow at paying the bills.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Neither were we. So I take it as a compliment to the staff as well as to the committee's supervision, working with them.

MR. BOGLE: Well, continue to pay them as quickly as you can.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I have a general question about information systems services, and I don't know which item to ask it under. It concerns what type of evaluation we undertake on software that's been purchased and implemented. I have a feeling that the data base program that we use in our constituency offices is very user friendly but not as powerful in its relational capabilities as some others. I just wondered if there is some system in place to evaluate that and how you go about upgrading and, in particular, if you have any comment about that database.

MR. GANO: Yes, that particular database we have had some comments on. We are currently looking at other alternatives. We have recently implemented an alternative in the caucus offices that

we suspect will apply to the constituency offices once the caucus offices have had a chance to get into it.

MS BARRETT: That's the Maximizer?

MR. GANO: That's the Maximizer.

MR. McINNIS: So we shouldn't have to reinput the data then?

MR. GANO: No. The data gets transferred over.

MS BARRETT: That item actually comes up on page 14 under software, and, boy, I don't know how you get such a good deal on your software prices considering the stuff you get.

MR. GANO: Well, the thing, too, to realize there is that a lot of the software that we acquire now are upgrades, and upgrades are a lot cheaper.

MS BARRETT: When you buy for the system, they just charge you a network price and that's it?

MR. GANO: That's right.

MS BARRETT: Boy, that's a good deal.

MR. GANO: In most instances. There are pieces of software that even though you put it on a network, you still have to buy it for every person that uses it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Cypress-Redcliff, on this section.

MR. HYLAND: The comment made about the time it takes to pay accounts – I know I've had some stuff that I've bought through newspaper ads and stuff like that – the comments about how much quicker the Legislative Assembly is in paying the bills versus Treasury or the government. I know some suppliers in small towns just can't afford to carry government. If you're a government official and you don't have a credit card, your POs are worth zippo, yet they'll readily accept Legislative Assembly purchase orders because they know they're going to get paid within, at the very latest, probably two weeks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Can we move to page 15?

Well, that takes us to the B budget items. So could we first have a motion dealing with the first chunk?

Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. I'd like to move adoption of the A budget in principle and, in so doing, maybe comment about information systems. We get great service, in my opinion, from every element of the Assembly: from admin, from visitor services, from *Hansard*, from the library and everybody. But you know, for a group that is really new to this place, I can't say enough good about info systems. They're incredibly co-operative people and just plugged in like they've always lived here. Saying that, I move the adoption for this part.

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

MR. McINNIS: Well, can we have some discussion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: On that motion?

MR. McINNIS: Yeah.

MS BARRETT: We're just on item A.

MR. McINNIS: Oh, the A budget? I'm sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion to give approval to the first section of section 12? Opposed, if any? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Now the B section. Mr. Gano, with some comments, no doubt, from the assistant deputy minister.

MR. GANO: Speaking to the B budget item, there were a number of comments when we were going through the budget process last year regarding the increase in costs of the library systems. Based on that the Legislature Library initiated a project whereby we began looking at alternatives to the already existing systems. The result of that is the B budget item, and as a result we are asking for some additional dollars there to provide some hardware and software to the Legislature Library so that it's able to consolidate all its systems into one area and also to allow it to control its own destiny in that the systems that are currently being used by the library are located in other areas, such as the University of Alberta, such as the public works mainframe computer. As a result of that we do not have any control over the costs of those systems. In one case last year the PWSS system support for a particular part of that was withdrawn, and as a result we had to upgrade the system at an unanticipated cost to us of about \$15,000. We have recently been informed by the University of Alberta that they are considering a similar type of thing in terms of withdrawing support for parts of the two batch systems that run at the University of Alberta, which again would impact us in having to upgrade those existing systems.

Having said that, Blake, do you have any . . .

11:48

MR. CHAIRMAN: Blake, do you have other comments on this?

MR. McDOUGALL: No, not at this point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Jasper Place, then Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. McINNIS: I'm just not clear on how this works mechanically. You obviously have to buy some equipment, but does the library staff have to input all of the catalogue entries into a machine mechanically, or is there some way that it can be electronically . . .

MR. GANO: Yes and no. Certain parts we'll be able to transfer electronically; in other words, directly into the system. There are other parts, depending on where they're running, that will have to be input manually.

MR. McINNIS: That would be what? The card catalogue for sure would be manual, right?

MR. GANO: Definitely the existing card catalogue.

MR. McDOUGALL: Basically, what we want to do here in the simplest terms is . . . Presently the library has three batch system indexes to the collection that people use, and they're in this format, which is microfiche. Now, when we adopted this system in the late '70s and another in the early '80s, that was the conventional technology at the time, and it was fine.

But now there's new, more advanced technology available, and what we want to do is merge these three files into one so, first of all, the user only has to look at one location to get information and data. We want to put that on-line so that your staff and other Albertans across the province – because we would enter into a network, you know, with other libraries when we do this – would also be able to access the indexes to our collections from remote locations, like your research staff in your caucus offices, constituency office staff, and other libraries in the province like the University of Alberta or public libraries. So we want to take these separate batch systems, merge them, and put them on-line. That's the current technology. That technology isn't state of the art; that's now conventional technology.

Now, what we'd be doing with the data we have is taking this data and as much as we can on a machine basis, through machines, stripping it off and putting it into the new data base. There are a number of ways of doing that. That would be done on a contract basis, and then new items that the library acquires would be put in by our staff on their terminals in the library proper. One of the big advantages of this is that you would be able to access that data as soon as it goes into the system, not after it's been in the system for a month or two months, because these come out in batches and there's a delay between the time that we put them in the system and the users can actually see that we've got them. So it's a great increase in the level of service to have the data on-line and have it all in one file instead of three files as we presently have it.

MR. McINNIS: No question; just a quick supplementary. So if we approve this item, how long until it's up and running?

MR. McDOUGALL: Well, the plan that we have presently is a two-year implementation period, and we state that in the overview here, the B budget item. If this were approved, of course, we'd have to do an RFP, which takes some time to administer and that. So it would probably be the fall that we would actually be starting to do something in the system.

MR. GANO: Parts of it would be available in the fall. That's not to say the whole system would be available.

MR. McDOUGALL: Yeah. Then by the end of two years, though, our plan is to have the files on-line, and you would be able to examine them from a remote location or in the library proper.

MR. McINNIS: I'm sorry. What's RFP?

MR. McDOUGALL: I'm sorry. We'd have to tender so that vendors have an opportunity to . . .

MR. McINNIS: Request for proposal?

MR. McDOUGALL: Request for proposal; yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

I have Edmonton-Highlands, Taber-Warner, Calgary-Foothills.

MS BARRETT: My question is: to whom are we paying this \$35,000 a year for the data processing costs? Is that to other government departments as well as public libraries, universities, and colleges?

MR. GANO: To the U of A and to public works.

MS BARRETT: For mainframe time, period, to the both of them?

MR. GANO: That's right.

MS BARRETT: If we go on our own system, which I like in principle, does that mean that when they access us, they have to pay us?

MR. McDOUGALL: If we go into a network situation, and they're currently planning toward that in the Edmonton area, it's a sharing situation. There'd be certain common charges in the network. In order for us, for instance, to access the University of Alberta's collection, we'd have to reciprocate and allow them to access and borrow our material as well. So we wouldn't be making money.

MS BARRETT: Yeah. We can wipe out those charges.

MR. McDOUGALL: Yeah, we could recover the \$35,000 a year. We figure we could recover, as we state under Tangible Benefits, the cost of the system in five years. It is a new program in a way, but we're already spending money in this area, and those expenditures would diminish and then be recovered to pay for the new system.

MS BARRETT: Okay. A supplementary then. I remember the days when I couldn't operate a computer. They just scared the you-know-what out of me. I went to the U of A library, and they have an on-line system. Oh, God, I couldn't use it – right? – so I had to use the card system. If I or any other MLA is not familiar with computers, can we come down and get your staff to do it for us if you've got the new system?

MR. McDOUGALL: Oh, yes. And the new systems are much more user friendly than the older systems; they're much more user friendly. I think you'd find the newer systems much easier to use now. I'm aware of the system you're talking about, and they're actually abandoning that system presently.

MS BARRETT: They are? That was horrendous. I could probably handle it now that I know computers, but I had to give up and go to real cards.

MR. GANO: Just a comment on that. There is an automated system installed in the library in St. Albert, and they have done away with their card catalogue entirely. They have three- and four-year-old kids using it.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, I agree, but the fact of the matter is that you've got some people here who are very busy and who will never learn computers, especially the MLAs. So you'll do that for us?

MR. McDOUGALL: Oh, yes. We presently do a lot of personalized service.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Keeping an eye on the clock, Taber-Warner and Calgary-Foothills.

MR. BOGLE: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. There's no question of the value of the proposal which Blake has brought forward. I've been listening to our caucus chief of staff with her impassioned lobbying on why we should do this, and I'm sure the same would be true of the other two caucus staffs in terms of their workload and how much more efficient things would be. However, I'm troubled by the cost in these times. If we do this, it's a \$130,000 expenditure, albeit over a five-year period. We're advised that we'd recover that in that we are not paying out the funds. I see that under B, Problem, the last

sentence in that section is, "Failure to convert would have resulted in an annual expenditure of \$18,000." As I'm reading this, and I'd like clarification from Bill or Blake, if we choose at this time not to invest \$130,000 in this new on-line integrated Legislature Library system, we can expect an added cost of \$18,000 for this year.

11:58

MR. GANO: Okay; clarification there. That \$18,000 would have been the charge if we had failed to convert the PWSS component that was discontinued.

MR. BOGLE: All right.

MR. GANO: If we choose not to go forward with this item, then we will just continue encountering the \$35,000 per year. That's with a proviso that the U of A continues to support their two subsystems. If they choose not to, then we can anticipate some increased costs there.

MR. BOGLE: Okay. Well, I'd like to move, in part keeping with the hour but also because I'm troubled by it – if I have to vote on it today, I think I still must vote against it – that we table a decision on the B budget item and reassess. Give us an opportunity to go through the material in a little more detail and think about some compelling arguments for us, because it's a big-ticket item, it's a B budget item. Those are both difficult matters for us in this particular fiscal year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to go to the motion, or is there general agreement to have the meeting stand adjourned until Monday?

MS BARRETT: Why don't we just have it stand adjourned until Monday?

MR. BOGLE: That's fine.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, could I make a request for information on this system when we come back?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Foothills, then Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MRS. BLACK: Keeping in mind that a tabling motion has been made, could Mr. Gano or Blake provide a schedule of the full cost of the system? Right now we've got just \$130,000 this year and \$45,000 next year. What will be the full cost of the system fully installed, and what will be the full conversion cost, including manpower costs, until fully up and running? If you could provide that, please, I'd appreciate it.

MR. McINNIS: Since we're going to think about this on the weekend, just a couple of things to think about. One is that our business is an information business, and a lot of the arguments that we sometimes get into are over facts. If you've got the right facts, sometimes you don't have to argue about them. The other thought is that a lot of the research that's done around this place is here-and-now kind of research. It isn't "make a paper in six months' time" but something that's needed within an hour or a half hour, and I find that increasingly we're asking the library to do on-line searches in commercial data bases for which we pay, I think, fairly hefty charges. I have a feeling that if our own resources were accessible on-line, we might not have to spend as much money on commercial data bases as we perhaps do, and as we will in the future because I

think more and more people will expect to get answers computer fast rather than paper library slow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members. If the Member for Taber-Warner is prepared to withdraw the motion, I think we'll just have the meeting adjourn in a moment or two and come back on Monday at 1 o'clock. We will be meeting in this room again.

MS BARRETT: We don't meet till 1 o'clock on Monday?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was my understanding.

MS BARRETT: I thought it was a full day. Oh, goody.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good; we have caused joy and celebration. In this room, 1 o'clock.

I apologize to other persons who were here on the possibility that today we would get to their budget. Mr. Pritchard, I hope you will be back Monday afternoon. Dr. Garrison will be back on Monday afternoon with respect to Visitor Services elements. We also have confirmed that Mr. Pashak will join us on behalf of Public Accounts, and Halvar Jonson will join us as vice-chairman of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Other information should be available by Monday afternoon as posed in the last two days here to various members of the staff.

Thank you very much. We stand adjourned. Safe miles, and see you again on Monday.

[The committee adjourned at 12:02 p.m.]