

## Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

**10:07 a.m.**

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, ladies and gentlemen; let's come to order. We do indeed have a quorum. As you may recall, we do have the chairpersons of a number of committees coming to us about their budget estimates. They've been put back for half an hour, and it's a fairly tight time schedule.

You have the agenda before you in your minute books, and we're here for the better part of two days. Is there a motion to approve the agenda?

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, I have a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Maybe I should be asking the question after the motion is made, but I do want to ask about tomorrow's meeting. It would be very, very inconvenient for me in particular to be here until 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. I was wondering if we could zero in on 1 o'clock. I'd offer that as a request.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to start earlier than 9:30?

DR. ELLIOTT: If necessary but not likely.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay; as a target date I'm hearing 1 o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

The Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: I was going to be on the same subject. I have a meeting in Lacombe later in the afternoon, and I don't want to be too late. If we could go at 1, I'd certainly appreciate it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The general hope would be to try to adjourn by 1 o'clock tomorrow, so we'll work right on through. Would you like lunch provided? I take it as general agreement.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Approval of the agenda then. Is there a motion?

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Chairman, as I understand, 1 o'clock is a guideline: if we're through our work, we'll adjourn then. The motion is not to the effect that we adjourn regardless; is it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We might adjourn because of lack of quorum, and if we're not through our business, then we will set another date to reconvene.

MR. McINNIS: Oh, I see. Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right; a motion for the approval of the agenda. The Member for Lacombe. A call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

A motion with respect to Approval of Committee Meeting Minutes of Thursday, March 18. What is your pleasure?

MR. CHERRY: I so move, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The Member for Lloydminster moves the approval of the committee meeting minutes of March 18. A call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

Before we go to the very next item of business, hon. members, since the committee last met the Clerk and the Speaker have received, with regret, the resignation of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, Mr. Ritter. We have indeed had two occasions to do an appropriate farewell for the Parliamentary Counsel, and on one of those occasions a considerable number of the members were present. I know that Mr. Ritter greatly appreciated that. I just wanted to go on the public record of this committee that we do indeed see it with regret that Mr. Ritter has chosen to move on to other things. Thank you.

Item 4, where we will be dealing with the 1993-94 Legislative Assembly budget estimates. The first is with regard to Private Bills. The Member for Calgary-Bow would like to speak to the group. Welcome.

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have also with me today Louise Kamuchik, the Clerk of Committees, who will be here to aid as this is my first appearance. I'd like to indicate also that the budget that you see before you is one prepared by the former chairman, the MLA from Calgary-Foothills.

You'll notice that there are certain things set in the budget, such as the vehicle for the chairman, which are done by legislation. Advertising deadlines for private Bill petitions is an expense which has to remain. This enables them to be aware of the dates for receiving submissions, and we're unable to change that. As well the insurance for the chairman's vehicle is a set item, and although I understand it has not been utilized on many occasions, I suppose repairs also is an item that must remain. Hosting for the meetings includes the tea and coffee and juice which is provided to the members of the committee and to the members of the public who attend the hearings. Where you will find a significant reduction is in the meeting attendance allotment. The former chairman found that many members were not claiming for the expense of the meeting, so actually the \$1,000 requested is an 83 percent reduction. It reflects more the actual claims that are being made. The chairman's salary is set by legislation. Pension, of course, is also set by legislation and so is the LTDI.

There is a general decrease of the budget. The total budget would be \$17,516. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That represents minus 23.1 percent. Any questions? The Member for Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, I was going to ask for additional information on travel expenses. I'd like to have some detail about how that figure was arrived at and what the anticipations are.

MRS. B. LAING: Mr. Chairman, the travel expenses are primarily based on gas, oil, et cetera, being supplied for the chairman's vehicle for \$3,812.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is about the chairman of this committee's vehicle. I wonder if we could have some explanation of what kinds of activities the chair of the committee is involved in that require the use of a vehicle for traveling. I appreciate that there's been a change in the chair. Maybe this information isn't known, but I'd be curious what kind of activities the chair is involved in that require the use of a vehicle.

MRS. B. LAING: Mr. Chairman, it's my intention not to really claim for this this year, but I understand that because of the legislation it has to remain in the budget. If there are changes to the chair, then, you know, it's not fair for me to say that this would be taken out and affect another person.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Welcome, Cypress-Redcliff.  
Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I would ask of the chairman of the committee: have you taken a car?

MRS. B. LAING: No, I have not received one. It's my intention not to take one.

MR. BOGLE: Well, then I would suggest that we use the practice used in other committees where the chairman has chosen to not take the car: there's no estimate; there's no dollar built in. The same practice should apply, so we should take out the entire \$3,812.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clerk Assistant.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The problem with that is that we're all hearing the rumours about an upcoming election. If the chair of this committee does change and that person is entitled to the car and wishes to take the car, then there will be no provision in the budget for this.

10:17

MR. BOGLE: On that point, if we look ahead to the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices, which is the next committee we'll examine, we see that there are no dollars built in for the chairman's vehicle. That's based on past practice. So there should be consistency. The present chairman is not taking the vehicle. I have every belief that the present chairman will be the chairman a year from today, and if her position is not to take the car today, it will be the same a year from today. Therefore, the figure should be removed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, again the staff have put the provision in there. Of course, it's the decision of the committee to make that, so I will take that as a motion when we're finished with the general comments in this section.

MR. BOGLE: We've gotten right into the budgetary process, but I'm assuming we'll follow the same practice we have in the past. We'll go through the budget item by item. We'll have a general concurrence as we're moving, but we will come back sometime tomorrow presumably and try to wrap up the entire budget with a binding motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Cypress-Redcliff is next.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I was going to make the comment the Member for Taber-Warner made about the other committee chairmen that don't have vehicles. It's not listed in there.

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

MR. McINNIS: Well, just so it's clear, I support the suggestion made by Taber-Warner. I don't think we should vote in the committee on who's going to be the chair a year from now, but I intend to ask throughout where vehicles are provided by the taxpayers. If they're used, fine. If not, then I think we should take them out. That's the object of the exercise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: That's fine, Mr. Chairman. I got my answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional comments, questions with respect to this entire section?

MR. BOGLE: I was hoping we would be able to make changes where there's a consensus, but if there's not a consensus by all members, then possibly a motion is in order, and since the matter was first raised by Grande Prairie . . .

DR. ELLIOTT: I accept that, Mr. Chairman. I'm prepared to go along with the consensus, and we'll withdraw the item.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do we have absolute consensus to withdraw that item?

MR. BOGLE: No; I'm sorry. I don't think we have the consensus because John is saying that as the chairman has the right to take the vehicle, we should automatically put dollars in, not only for this committee – John, did I miss your point?

MR. McINNIS: No, absolutely not. What I'm saying is: if vehicles are not being used for the purpose they should be, the expenditure should be taken out of the budget. That's why I asked the question.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you. All right; I'm the one who misunderstood that. Then we do have a consensus.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do we have a consensus that this particular item, 712AOO, which is Travel Expenses, in the amount of \$3,812 be deleted? Is that correct?

MR. McINNIS: Then there would be related expenditures for insurance, repairs and maintenance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes; that would follow as a logical consequence. So for the purposes of the minutes it's understood that 712AOO, followed by 712DOO and 712JOO: those three items are now deleted. Thank you.  
Additional comments? Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Not on this point, sir, but before you do move to Legislative Offices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any additional comments on this Private Bills section?

For the public record – no doubt there will be quite a news story about this one tomorrow – the bottom line here will be \$12,904, which shows a reduction of 56.6 percent.

Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: When we come back tomorrow, sir, we'll be highlighting areas where there have been adjustments from what is presented. When we began the review of legislative committees, we were right into Private Bills, and I did have a query on the general page which appears after the tab Legislative Committees General. I see reductions in many of the categories, but I don't understand. At the bottom we have a total expenditure increase of 34.2 percent. Am I reading something wrong, or is that correct? Can we have some explanation? I don't know how you come up with that figure after looking at other reductions.

DR. McNEIL: The 34.2 percent increase overall reflects the budget due to the Parliamentary Reform Committee. If you take the budgets for all the other standing committees of the Legislative Assembly, the overall forecast for those committees, excluding Parliamentary Reform, is minus 7 percent, but adding in the requirement that the Parliamentary Reform Committee has put forward changes the figures to reflect an overall increase of 34.2 percent in the overall committees budget.

MR. BOGLE: In our estimates we didn't have Electoral Boundaries for '92-93? I see under forecast you've got \$208,000 for Electoral Boundaries, which of course wrapped up as of March 31. There were no dollars in the estimates last year for Electoral Boundaries?

DR. McNEIL: Not for the committee. There were funds allocated in the budget last year for the Electoral Boundaries Commission. When the commission was finished up, the remaining funds were transferred, upon approval of the Members' Services Committee, to the . . .

MR. BOGLE: I understand, but why do we want to convey an image of a 34 percent increase when it's actually not so? There were dollars there for the commission, and some of the remaining dollars were transferred to the Electoral Boundaries Committee. Why wouldn't that appear under the estimate?

DR. McNEIL: The reason it wasn't put there is because the initial budget allocation for '92-93 had no funds allocated for a committee. They had it for a commission which is not part of the Legislative Assembly committees.

MR. BOGLE: Then why not put in another line, David, to cover Electoral Boundaries?

DR. McNEIL: Yeah, we could do that. We dealt with the commission under the very last tab in the budget book. There was a total of \$437,447 allocated to the commission, if you'd like that changed to reflect that transfer.

MR. BOGLE: Well, this frustration is again that we seem to prepare the bullets which others use. I understand where you're coming from. The commission is technically not a committee. Therefore, it is not under Leg. Assembly committees, but it certainly gives a wrong impression to the public on our overall expenditures.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think this dispute is not really a dispute at all. In reality the estimates as prepared by this

Assembly were for an Electoral Boundaries Commission. The commission wrapped up its work. The Assembly created a new committee to deal with the problem, and funds were transferred from another budget. So I think that to some extent this is a problem that's caused by history. When these allocations are calculated, the percentage change is always given on an estimate-to-estimate basis. I suppose the most relevant comparison would be estimate to forecast, because then you're comparing estimate to actual. In reality the history is that there was a commission created. The commission didn't spend all the money; the unspent portion was transferred to a committee. I guess the only other thing we could do would be to create kind of retroactively a new estimate under committees for the Electoral Boundaries Committee and put the transferred portion there into the base estimate, but that also involves rewriting history to some extent.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the simple solution is found under the Electoral Boundaries Commission where there is an explanatory note at the bottom that funds were indeed transferred from the Electoral Boundaries Commission as directed by the Members' Services Committee. If we could have a simple one- or two-liner on the bottom of this page which would explain that – and I've forgotten the amount that was actually transferred from the Electoral Boundaries Commission to the Electoral Boundaries Committee. If that were to be factored in, I mean if this is all in the note, then the actual total expenditure would be such and such with the various percentages.

10:27

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we could add the printing of that particular note in two places. All right. I just looked up that one myself. Thank you.

Further discussion? Yes, Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: Just before we do Private Bills – I think you're ready to leave that – I have one question for clarification, if I could, Mr. Chairman. On Advertising, \$7,000: I'd like to just know the scope of that, because it will have a bearing when we look at future estimates here. Some go up as high as \$50,000. What is the scope of your advertising? I think you would cover the province with that; wouldn't you?

MRS. B. LAING: May I refer that to Louise, please.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The advertising for the private Bills is done in the *Alberta Gazette*. It doesn't go to the weekly newspapers and the daily newspapers in Alberta.

MR. MOORE: Addressing it to you, Mr. Chairman, do you feel that is adequate, then, to cover the province in this area?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes; it has been in the past. We're going with what was expended by the committee in the past and what is anticipated for the future. Those were the actual claims against the committee for the advertising in the past year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional comments with respect to Private Bills?

Thank you, Madam Chairman, for your attendance. Thank you for your fragility.

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Legislative Offices is next. The Member for Rocky Mountain House.

MR. LUND: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. This is a budget I was not part of the preparation of—I became chairman after it had been approved—but I'll walk you through the various components of it.

First, Salaries, Wages, and Employee Benefits. That has to do with the conferences: the registration, that type of thing. It shows a reduction of 2.3 percent to \$3,760.

The next element amount, the conference travel and attendance, has a decrease of 23.4 percent. One of the cautions I must put in here, though, is the fact that with the exception of one, the conferences that are listed are all within Canada, so the travel costs are down considerably. That may change if there are members attending outside Canada in the future.

The next two to do with the chairman's car: this chairman will not be using a car, so there are no costs there.

The next one, \$13,125, has to do with the auditing of the Auditor General's office. That went out for tender, and that was the bid that was accepted.

The next one is a very small item for hosting of meetings: \$525.

The next one is the payment to Members of the Legislative Assembly: a reduction there of .8 percent. While there was an increase of 28.9 percent in pensions and long-term disability insurance, the overall budget showed a reduction of .8 percent to \$36,359.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comments with respect to Leg. Offices? The Member for Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On pages 2 and 3 of the conferences—I don't know whether this is being picky or what it is, but I want to put it forward regardless. My belief is that the guests who travel with the delegates should be the responsibility of the delegates rather than the government. So I guess in fiscal restraint, which we're all trying to look at, I was wanting to see whether the chairman thought my way or felt that this had to be continued.

MR. LUND: Well, I would only be expressing a personal opinion if I commented on it as I was not part of the discussion when this budget was approved.

MR. McINNIS: My question concerns the item payments to Members of the Legislative Assembly. I note that last year the forecast expenditure is approximately \$25,000 compared with a budget of some \$36,600. Now, I know that this year the budget expenditure is the same as budgeted last year, \$36,400 approximately. I have two questions. First of all, I'm wondering why the actual expenditure was \$11,000 below budget last year. Perhaps if there's an answer, I could hold my supplementary until then.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chairman, are you in a position to answer that, or perhaps the secretary to your committee?

MR. LUND: I think it would be more appropriate if the secretary could, because I haven't studied what has happened over the last year.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The estimate of attendance at meetings is based on full attendance including travel time. If not all of the members come to the meeting, of course, there is no expenditure. At the end of the year then there is a saving to the committee.

MR. McINNIS: Well, in the past—this is my experience—we've made adjustments to the budget to try to bring some of these expenditures in line with actual experience. I suppose the easy way to make a reduction in the budget is to not budget for money you don't expect to spend, although if this is purely a case of members who are expected to attend not attending, I guess there's probably no way that you can budget for absenteeism. I guess I've talked myself into leaving it where it is.

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Chairman, I might add that there is an anticipation that in the coming year there will be more meetings as well. So if we reduced it back to the forecast for '92-93, I'm sure we would be running into problems.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Lacombe, and then Lloydminster.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, there are four conferences listed here, and we have two groups of people: the auditors and the Ombudsmen. I look at that and say: what are we as taxpayers going to gain out of it? I don't think we need to send the auditors to two conferences, one public accounts and one comprehensive auditing. I think we have the Public Accounts Committee going to one. I don't think the auditors need to be there. They have their own. I think if they have their comprehensive auditing, that's fine. I don't think either one of them needs to go to the ethics laws one down in Minnesota or wherever it is. The Ombudsmen, of course, have their conference. So I think we've got just two too many there. One for the auditors to go to, one for the Ombudsmen: that is good. That'll cover for the taxpayers of Alberta, with enough time to confer with their colleagues across the country.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I would make a further recommendation that instead of the two delegates, one delegate plus a guest would go. I think that maybe if the chairman wanted to have a little time to think about that, maybe it would be permissible if he came back tomorrow with a recommendation to us.

10:37

MR. CHAIRMAN: The chair interprets that most of this discussion relates with regard to page 3 of the section on Legislative Offices, and the suggestion being placed at the moment is that for the conferences in Toronto, St. Paul, Ottawa, and the Toronto area it be one delegate accompanied by one guest in each case instead of the two.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I have to concur and commend the Member for Lloydminster. I think that now more so than ever budgets are becoming an extreme problem with the accumulated debt. What may have been partially acceptable two or three years ago I don't believe is any longer acceptable. I had the opportunity to attend a parliamentary conference taking my spouse roughly two years ago, I believe it was. It's a whole different ball game now that we see the figures. I believe to deal with this we should simply make a blanket motion—and I'm prepared to do it at the appropriate time—that relating to all the standing committees all travel to parliamentary conferences not include the cost of spousal travel, or partner travel or whatever the term is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the chair will take that as notice to be dealt with later, when we've gone through all the estimates, and does

not regard the motion as on the table at the moment. I've made note of it for later. Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: These things are all interrelated, but I would just like to note that under the Public Accounts Committee budget there are delegates budgeted for the public accounts committees, Toronto, and the comprehensive auditing conference, Ottawa. Just in respect to the suggestion that we reconsider, I think there are also budget items for those same two conferences here, so we might consider those things together. If we have a representative going, I don't think it matters a great deal which committee it comes from; the committees can work that out. Those things should be considered together.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: I just wanted to speak in support of colleague Doug in giving some suggestions to the chairman and asking the chairman to consider coming back to the committee tomorrow or, if he's not able, to at least send a note indicating preference. There may be something we're missing. It could be that there's a particular reason they'd want more than one delegate at one of the conferences; I don't know. But I would like to see the chairman given the opportunity to come back with advice, because I think he understands the general feeling of the committee, and that is that we want to see travel reduced and we want to do it in a compassionate way in line with the objectives of the chairman of the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

On that note, any other comments to be made? The chairman of that committee seems to be nodding in agreement with those suggestions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. LUND: You're welcome.

MR. CHAIRMAN: See you or hear from you tomorrow then.

MR. LUND: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Heritage savings trust fund, the Member for Calgary-Currie, who I gather encountered a lot of traffic problems getting here today. We're glad you're here safe and sound.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The budget before the committee today really is the same budget the committee assessed last year, minus 5 percent. The previous chairman, without benefit of a schedule or plan for the coming year given the various events, submitted the budget on that basis, so in all categories the costs are assumed to be similar. My understanding is that the committee of last year budgeted for a couple of trips to look at the facilities the heritage savings trust fund has funded and also dealt with the costs that would be associated with approximately 24 meetings of the heritage savings trust fund and, in all of that, suggested cutting the budget by 5 percent.

The costs of those meetings have the same question attached to them as was asked by Mr. McInnis. The costs assume a hundred percent attendance of committee members at the various meetings. Past history has not shown a hundred percent attendance to be a reality. Nonetheless, the staff has budgeted for that amount with the assumption that that attendance may be there. We're in the committee's hands in terms of the budget itself. I think there is an argument for looking at further reduction on the assumption there isn't a hundred percent attendance over the next year. Nonetheless,

that probably should be a matter of policy, which only your committee can deal with.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have two questions. The first one. The 1992-93 estimate of \$48,000 and the actual forecast of \$9,000 is a very, very dramatic change. Is that because the two on-site tours that were referred to, which didn't go ahead, accounted for that significant reduction?

MR. ANDERSON: My understanding, Mr. Chairman, is that – I assume the member is referring to the \$49,000 under the '92-93 forecast.

MR. WICKMAN: On my page under Travel Expenses you have your '93-94 estimate of \$46,000, your '92-93 estimate of \$48,000, but your '92-93 forecast of \$9,000.

MR. ANDERSON: Oh, yes. That's correct. It's both because of the trips that did not take place this year as a result of other events and also the number of meetings that were not scheduled for the same reasons.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, when I look at the figures in more detail, it still spells out to me that those two on-site tours must have been budgeted a pretty substantial amount. How many people go, and where are they? I know they're in Alberta. Where in Alberta?

MR. ANDERSON: In fact, Mr. Chairman, last year they were scheduled for the trip to the facility we fund on the coast, the Prince Rupert terminal, as well as to Calgary for the cancer centre, and there was one other location, which I don't recall from my briefing. There were three locations, and I believe there were about six members budgeted for each. In addition, though, that figure does deal with the meetings and the per diems which didn't take place in the numbers that were originally anticipated.

MR. WICKMAN: My last point, Mr. Chairman, is that I think the \$9,000 forecast would be a very safe figure to plug in again in terms of the attendance and the travel expenses related to the attendance at meetings. That then leaves roughly \$38,000 for travel to the two sites. That could be looked at, possibly reducing substantially the number of people that would go and questioning the necessity of that particular on-site tour.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, if I might comment on that. You know, we're likely in a position where another chairman will be responsible for this committee sometime through this year's budget. I wouldn't want to encumber the committee too greatly, and I would argue the benefit of on-site visits. I do think it's essential that we understand and see the expenditures to know whether they're being made appropriately. Having said that, I as chairman, without the benefit of having discussed it with the full heritage trust fund committee at this point in time, would not be averse to some reduction in the budget, up to perhaps 20 percent, that did place some restrictions on that in this period of restraint.

10:47

MR. CHAIRMAN: Speaking order: the Member for Cypress-Redcliff, Edmonton-Jasper Place, and the Member for Lacombe.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A comment first and then a question. It's my understanding, in reviewing the estimates, that the travel to meetings is covered elsewhere in the estimates and not in the \$46,000 and change or the \$48,000 and change that we're talking about. Assuming that, I spent a number of years on the heritage savings trust fund committee. The trust fund committee, as I thought then – and I weighed the comment from the chairman – used to operate on about a four-year cycle. You have a lot of new members on the committee as you start a Legislature. You tended to do more travel in looking at facilities, and as the period went on, because there's not a lot of change in committee membership, you would do less and less travel in that time period. We're now in a four-and-a-bit-year span of a five-year term.

I suppose if the method of the committee has changed, it would account for the amount of money requested, but I would wonder really how much travel is done. Even if it does change and something does happen, by the time people get organized – as I remember when I was on the committee, we were into our second year of a term before we did any travel. We were simply getting used to the committee and the operations of the committee before we decided to travel to look at facilities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, followed by Lacombe.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I happen to think this particular committee is a very important committee and will probably be extremely important in the year to come. It's no secret that there's some discussion going on throughout Alberta society about the role of the heritage savings trust fund. Albertans received a report, dated March 31, two days ago from the Financial Review Commission which suggests very clearly that the investments of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund should be transferred into the provincial government's main fund, the general revenue fund, and the investments managed without a separate fund by Treasury as a part of the management of other provincial funds.

I understand that the Liberal Party has some kind of policy that they want to liquidate the assets of the fund as well. I suspect that doing either of these things, transferring assets to the general fund or liquidating them, is not as simple as it sounds. There are all kinds of assets in the fund, some of them extremely important in terms of the economy of the province. It would have quite a bearing in terms of employment, jobs, and a whole lot of other things. So I think there's some work that needs to be done. For that reason, I don't support scrapping the work of the committee altogether, because I think there's some sorting out that has to be done, even if we do accept the idea of selling assets that can be sold, selling or transferring or whatever.

I have heard the chairman indicate, though, that he wouldn't be averse to a 20 percent reduction, and I think I would therefore like to move

that the travel be reduced by \$9,250 in this year, which is 20 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I will take a motion in a moment or two, after I listen to the Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm dealing with page 2. It actually covers two areas: travel by the committee and the chairman's vehicle. I'll just touch on the chairman's vehicle. For clarification, I'd like to know just how much we need a vehicle there? What purpose is it used for? To tie up a vehicle all year long for what? How much is it used? How many miles? Is it very well used?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure I can responsibly answer the question. I've only been chairman of the committee for a short time. The vehicle was deemed to be necessary in terms of the previous activity of the committee. I have been using the vehicle. I wouldn't in all honesty be able to say that I've used it most of the time for the work of this committee exclusively. How much it will be utilized over the following year I suppose will depend very much on the work of the committee. I haven't discussed that with the past chairman.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, does Mr. Anderson have knowledge that the previous chairman had a government car?

MR. ANDERSON: That's my understanding.

MR. MOORE: He did. Okay.

Let's move on to that other big item there, travel of the committee. We as a committee examine all the expenditures and the investments of the committee, and I think that's a very important role. I wonder if it's necessary to do this traveling? The last chairman just downplayed that considerably, as you may have made note of. I think it's time we as a committee sat down with the people here, as we do normally, that administer that fund and for this coming year cut out all travel. I think it is time that we take our time and make efforts to examine what's actually going on with the people involved without going and looking at projects. Some of them have been completed for several years and we're going out and looking at them. We know they're depreciating a little, but that's all right; they still look the same. So I think, Mr. Chairman, that we can do without that traveling, \$42,000. I understand that the members of the committee have their travel expenses later on in the budget, so we aren't doing away with that. Travel of the committee as a whole: I think it's about time we used all our efforts and all our funds to do an in-depth look at the heritage trust fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just before I recognize you, Calgary-Currie. To the group in the gallery, we welcome you to your Legislative Assembly. That's working on the theory that you're students in Alberta. Where is the group from?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Harry Ainlay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good. Thank you.

This is a committee stage of the House, the Members Services' Committee. There are representatives from all three political parties here in the House. We're going through the kind of thing you have to go through whenever you get your allowance or the pay packet when you do your work: we're having to go through budgets. It's a long and perhaps sometimes strange or dry process that occurs here. Nevertheless, in addition to the elected members we also have staff from the Legislative Assembly Office here. This is a more relaxed meeting of the Legislature, and that's why you see various gentlemen without their jackets on and you have coffee cups in the Chamber. We do not allow smoking in the Chamber at any time. When we go back into formal session of the House, then everyone has to put on their jackets or ties and behave in an even more formal manner than we do. Anyway, we welcome you here on a typical Alberta spring day.

The Member for Calgary-Currie, as chairman of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act Committee.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the comments of the last member, I would have a different perspective. I reiterate that the likelihood that I'll be chairman of this committee throughout its

term is not great and I wouldn't want to encumber the new committee's composition with no funds with which to investigate the investments of the heritage savings trust fund. I think the Member for Cypress-Redcliff made some excellent points in that respect. If there are new members of the committee, which is a likelihood as opposed to a possibility, then there may be even more of a need to orient that committee to what it is the fund does and where those expenditures are and whether or not they're being carried out appropriately for the people of the province. Once again, I think there is a case to be made for some reduction beyond the 5 percent reduction that is suggested in the face of the restraints the government faces. I would not recommend to the committee a 100 percent reduction in that, although 20 percent from the overall budget, I think, would allow the committee a fair bit of flexibility, depending on what it needs to do in this next year.

10:57

MR. CHAIRMAN: Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you. We're dealing with a budget today on the assumption that the budget will be presented to the Assembly, will be passed by the Assembly, and that we will carry on our duties recognizing that somewhere between now and March 26, 1994, an election will occur. I don't think we should make decisions here on any assumptions; i.e., that there could be a new committee. If there's a new committee, a new heritage savings trust fund committee, then indeed there'll be a new Members' Services Committee. At that time the budgets can be reviewed, and if there are requests which are necessary, they can be considered.

I think that a pretty solid case has been made by both government and opposition members, based on the actual expenditures during the past fiscal year of some \$9,000, that the budget and indeed the pay to members of the Assembly should be reduced very significantly. In the opening comments by the chairman, I believe the chairman indicated that he thought the figure was based on one hundred percent attendance. I just wanted to ask because I notice there is a 4.9 percent reduction in payment to members, from \$77,700 to \$73,900. I'm not sure if any further clarification needs to be given. I look back at the forecast for 1992-93 of some \$38,800. I'm saying that we've got a huge deficit. Our budgets have to more accurately reflect what we actually need, not the highest case scenario. Over the past year or more we can demonstrate that that hasn't been necessary.

So I think there's a need for significant reductions both in travel and in the pay to members based on the 1992-93 forecast. If we're able to develop a consensus, fine. John has given notice of a motion he wishes to put forward to reduce it by 20 percent. I couldn't support that. I think that's still too rich. I think we need to be down clear to the figure Percy mentioned – Percy's figure was \$9,000 or \$10,000 – and the payment to members needs to more accurately reflect what we've actually needed during the 1992-93 fiscal year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Other comments with respect to this section.

MR. WICKMAN: On procedure, Mr. Chairman, if I could. The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place had indicated making a motion. I anticipated we would go through these and then sort of make some blanket motions that would pertain to the various standing committee budgets; in other words, dealing with the question of spousal travel, dealing with the question of vehicles, and so on and so forth.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, as mentioned before, hon. member, I took the motion which you had floated, if I may use that term, as being

one that would generally apply across the board. I gave notice to you at that time, and I have made the note, that we would come back to that when we were finished meeting especially with the chairmen we've brought from around the province today dealing with these particular issues. So if there's a motion that relates to a specific within a particular budget that we happen to be on, as we are at the moment, the chair would be willing to entertain such motions or await the general advice of the committee. If they want, as with one of the prior committees, to hold over until tomorrow for some more input, that's fine too. So I await the pleasure of the committee. If you wish to make a motion, the chair is certainly willing to entertain it.

Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I do want to make the motion that I made. If it's defeated, fine. We just did a motion in respect of the vehicle that's available for the Private Bills Committee because the chair indicated it wasn't available. I would like to move that motion and speak to it now if I may.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And your motion is?

MR. McINNIS:

To reduce the travel expense budget by 20 percent, which is \$9,250, for the heritage savings trust fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a motion before us. There has been some discussion. The mover can indeed speak.

MR. McINNIS: Well, I would like to speak to it. I appreciate that there is a certain blood lust in the committee when it comes to travel, because we think people want us to reduce unnecessary expenditures and it seems to most of us that travel is the way to go.

The report that was published on Monday indicates we have a budget deficit in the province in the year just concluded of some \$3.2 billion. Nobody knows anything about the budget deficit for the year coming, so there's no question it's a serious situation. The question is: what's the best way to deal with it? I think one substantial recommendation that came out of that budget review process, the Alberta Financial Review Commission, is in effect the transfer of the heritage savings trust fund into the general revenue fund, which may in the end amount to a liquidation of the fund's assets or it may not. As we know, the fund has many assets which by their nature don't earn any type of return at all.

I don't want to argue history today – whether things should have been set up that way or not set up that way – but I do want to make the point that if you're going to transfer assets, it makes a great deal of difference which assets you transfer, how you transfer them, to whom you transfer them, and how they're managed thereafter. If you want to say that the MLAs shouldn't be involved in that process, that the bureaucracy can handle it, well, good luck to you. I think the bureaucracy has as much to do with why we're in this budget situation as anybody else does, and I don't feel at all comfortable saying we're just going to turn this problem over to somebody in the Treasury and they're going to handle it. Whoever is the government in the next 12 months is going to have to make some decisions about the assets of the heritage fund, and I would like members of this Assembly, whoever they are, to play an important role in it.

Now, it happens that if you look at this overall global budget, we have something in the neighbourhood of \$7.2 million in pay to MLAs and a total of \$1.4 million in travel expenses. In committee work the remuneration to MLAs is \$160,000; the total travel budget is about \$83,000, and probably the bulk of the travel is for members of the heritage savings trust fund. I simply say to members of this

committee that the heritage fund committee has a job to do in the next 12 months, and that may involve travel. The committee and the chair of the committee have come and said that they could live with a reduction of 20 percent. Now, if you want to go further and say, "Well, this committee can't travel at all," the end result of that is that the MLAs won't be making the decision; the bureaucracy will. I don't like that very much at all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Speaking to the motion, a reduction of 20 percent in the travel portion.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

Any other motions with respect to this set of estimates? Any other directions to the chairman, perhaps, or queries? Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Well, let me ask if there's any consensus that we slip down to payment to members. If there is, then it avoids a motion. I earlier suggested that we might wish to reduce that figure further so it more accurately reflects the forecast of last year, say a figure of \$40,000 instead of \$73,960.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Forty is being sent as a trial balloon to see if we have consensus on the reduction. That's page 1.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, \$40,000 is based on what? If you look on page 7 of the detailed breakdown, there was an 8 percent reduction in meeting attendance. You know, this is actually an art, estimating what the attendance is going to be, but somebody has made a judgment that there will be 8 percent nonattendance as a factor. The \$40,000 figure is based on what? Fewer meetings, more people not showing up? What?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does page 7 give you these other details?

11:07

MR. BOGLE: I was basing it on the forecast of what was actually used in '92-93, rather than on what was estimated for '92-93.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding that the previous chairman, not knowing what was going to happen in the time period left, tried to create a 5 percent reduction and did so out of meeting attendance primarily. The only point I would make with regard to the suggestion made by the Member for Taber-Warner is: the point's been made to me several times that the committee did not complete what it was supposed to during the past year and that in the coming year there is the potential for both changes and a need for dealing with new members. In that regard, I would have a different perspective from the Member for Taber-Warner. Unless you can correct me, Mr. Chairman, I don't know how a committee would come back for reassessment on a budget that's passed by the Assembly if it requires that. I do think the case is good in terms of the committee never having expended all its dollars because it has never had full attendance, as I suspect is the case with all other committees of the Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The chairman doesn't get the feeling that there's general consensus. Would there then be a motion to do a reduction? That way we can formally test the waters.

MR. BOGLE: Well, before making the motion, do we have the actual expenditure for '91-92? We have the forecast for '92-93, and

it may be that the staff haven't brought that. I just thought that if there's some question of whether the figure is too low, if we have the actual expenditure for '91-92 . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we supply that overnight? The staff indicates that we can.

MR. BOGLE: I'm comfortable if we hold that item for that review.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

MR. BOGLE: Back up under travel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes?

MR. BOGLE: Percy had his hand up. I don't know if it's on this point or something else.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On this particular point, the information coming back tomorrow, Edmonton-Whitemud?

MR. WICKMAN: No. I was going to ask for information related to the travel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you.

Well, Taber-Warner started on travel, then Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. BOGLE: Well, as Percy earlier suggested, the figure of \$9,000, again based on the forecast from '92-93, I'd given some general concurrence. I don't know if the member wishes to make a motion or not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: I would think the most appropriate thing to do at this particular point, if the chairman of the committee can do it before tomorrow, is to do an analysis, a reworking and just see: is that amount sufficient, or can the committee in fact live with that \$9,000 and still accomplish their needs? I think we need some further input from the actual committee itself.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: I was going to point out, Mr. Chairman, that one reason the forecast was so low was that the committee was able to go to Prince Rupert and use government planes. So there were no charges made against the committee for that, whereas normally the expenditure for that flight would have been \$1,000 per committee member. So \$9,000 is a little misleading. Wherever savings can be done, we will do it, but we cannot always count on a government plane being used.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. BOGLE: Normally, I think the committee plans one trip to Prince Rupert in a four-year legislative cycle. I'm still on the assumption that the existing committee will be in place for the better part of the year. If they are not, there's a four-year cycle to plan that trip, which is a major expenditure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. I take it that comments on this section are complete for today, that additional information will be sought in the course of the late afternoon and come back for tomorrow morning. If the chairman is able to be back, that would be great, but if not, perhaps you could give us a written update.



MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, could I clarify what is required? There has not been established a travel schedule for the coming year. The previous chairman made assumptions based on the previous item, and the heritage trust fund hasn't met since the change in chair. My suggestion, which the committee may wish to consider tomorrow – I will be unable to attend tomorrow – would be that the committee be given a global amount and then come back with the specifics within that amount. You know, a 20 percent reduction overall or a 25 percent or a 15 would then allow us to work out how that would affect both the members' attendance and the travel budgets, which I understand to be the committee's primary concerns and which I think can both be adjusted.

MR. BOGLE: I think we'd welcome the chairman coming back and giving us some suggestions. If he's not able to be here tomorrow, if he'd give a note that could come through the chairman of this committee.

MR. ANDERSON: On the suggestion, Mr. Chairman: was there other data that the committee wanted as well?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It seems not.

MR. BOGLE: We want to check, through the office, on the actuals for '91-92 just to see what they were. We'd add that under travel. David and Louise, if you could indicate where the travel was during '91-92, that gives us another indication.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Members' Services Committee has been working on the general direction of previous years that we need to have the budget documents in before the House is convened, and not knowing what is in the minds of Executive Council, we have certain pressures on us to get all this examination of the budget completed before the House comes in. So there is a time constraint that's involved.

MR. McINNIS: Since we are asking the chair of the heritage fund committee to review information and make recommendations, I would ask the chair to look at the Alberta Financial Review Commission recommendations dealing with the heritage fund and also the government response to those recommendations to see whether he sees a role for this committee in relation to those two matters as well in the coming year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

With respect to the agenda, members of the Members' Services Committee, I think we should leap over our own budget for the time being because we have two guests waiting. We'll go to Public Accounts and then Parliamentary Reform. The chair has made provision for a sandwich lunch to be available about a quarter to 12, so we probably could adjourn briefly to deal with that and then come right back in and work on through, whatever the committee decides.

First, though, the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I assume all members have a copy of our proposed budget. I guess I'd just be prepared to answer any questions members might have of myself. The co-chair of the committee, Mr. Moore, is also available.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Public Accounts.

MR. BOGLE: A question: as chairman, do you take the car, Barry?

MR. PASHAK: Yes.

MR. BOGLE: Okay. The reason I asked that is because we dealt with the issue earlier. Where some committee chairmen aren't taking the car, we've reduced it to zero, and if they are taking the car, of course it stays in.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, again, Mr. Chairman, I just want to flag page 3, travel to Toronto and travel to Ottawa. My understanding was that in the previous year Public Accounts was involved in a more global type of conference; were they not?

11:17

MR. PASHAK: Through the chair, yes. Two members of the Public Accounts Committee and two members from Legislative Offices traveled to a meeting of the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees that was held in Australia.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Mr. Chairman, there isn't that type of global travel in the budget here this year. I don't understand. I'll direct a question: why would the travel be estimated to be so high in the '93-94 budget, \$13,340, and the actual forecast for last year was roughly half of that despite the fact that there was a more international type trip? Can that \$13,000 not come down substantially?

MR. PASHAK: Well, we budgeted for that total amount last year, and the Members' Services Committee approved it. In order to complete the approval process for travel, the Public Accounts Committee itself has to approve attendance at these two conferences, and the members of the Public Accounts Committee did not approve travel to the Comprehensive Auditing Foundation conference last year, so there was no expense incurred there. I don't know what decision the future Public Accounts Committee would make with respect to attendance at the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation conference.

MR. WICKMAN: I think, Mr. Chairman, the last comment I would have to the chairman of Public Accounts is that again we're in a situation where we've got to recognize that with the new flow of information that appears to be coming out, the financial order of the province of Alberta is a lot worse than anyone anticipated. Some of these moves may seem very small in terms of the global picture, but they're very, very symbolic. When we're going through these committees, I think we've got to look at blanket motions that deal with spousal travel, the number of delegates attending a convention, the question of cars for committee chairmen, and so on and so forth. The picture has changed dramatically in the last couple of years.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I don't fully understand the respective roles of Public Accounts versus Legislative Offices. Legislative Offices performs a supervisory role over the office of the Auditor General in an administrative sense, whereas Public Accounts does more policy supervision of the work of the Auditor General's office. Is that roughly it?

MR. PASHAK: Well, is your question related to attendance at these two conferences basically?

MR. McINNIS: Sure.

MR. PASHAK: Then I could explain just what the two roles would be, and they differ with respect to each of the two.

MR. McINNIS: Okay. That is my question.

MR. PASHAK: Well, representatives go from the Public Accounts Committee to the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees. Now, at the same time that the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees meets, the Auditor Generals meet as well, and two representatives go to the Auditor Generals' conference.

Now, with respect to comprehensive auditing, essentially Members' Services does appoint the Auditor General, so they attend that. I've asked and built it into the budget. I've always believed that there's much for the Public Accounts Committee to learn from the proceedings of the Comprehensive Auditing Foundation conference, so I've always strongly recommended and supported that. I've not always been able to secure the agreement of the rest of the committee with respect to attendance at that conference.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's an inadvertent mistake there. The Members' Services Committee does not appoint the Auditor General.

MR. PASHAK: I meant Leg. Offices. May I enter that correction? I meant Legislative Offices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Jasper Place, Lloydminster, and Lacombe.

MR. CHERRY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to say . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry; he's just finishing his point and you're next. Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: It sounds like the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees is in fact more than one conference, that there's the Auditor Generals' conference as well as some other conference, so there is an argument for having representation from each of the committees separately.

MR. PASHAK: Right.

MR. McINNIS: Is comprehensive auditing in fact one conference?

MR. PASHAK: That's one conference.

MR. McINNIS: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Lloydminster, followed by Lacombe.

MR. CHERRY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Just regarding the travel to these conferences, again, as I indicated to the chairman of Legislative Offices, I think there has to be a serious look at these conferences, the numbers traveling to them or cutting down the number of conferences we participate in, one or the other.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. MOORE: To get back to when we were dealing with the Auditor General, I think it relates to this one too. I think that in our economic times, even though it's good to have both groups together, we can't afford it. I do not think we should be going to the comprehensive auditing one. Just as I said about the Auditor Generals' conference, I don't think they should be going to the Public

Accounts one. So I feel that we could delete the comprehensive auditing from the budget. As the chairman has indicated, it hasn't been used in the past, and I think we should make that deletion in this budget.

I do support going to the Public Accounts because that's what we're involved with, meeting with our counterparts across Canada. That's a worthwhile conference to go to, and we can get some productive information back. It's nice to go to the other one, but we can't afford it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional comments with respect to Public Accounts?

MR. BOGLE: It's on Public Accounts, but it's almost sort of general. It's again on travel and on payment to members. I would ask if there's some concurrence that on all the committees we more accurately estimate for '93-94 based on the past forecast. Unless there's some glitch the administration knows of on why the forecast is lower than it has been traditionally, I still don't understand. If the forecast from '92-93 is \$7,600, why would we be budgeting \$23,037 in the '93-94 fiscal year? It's an inflated figure, unless there's some information we don't have.

That's not meant as a criticism. It's meant as a question to other committee members as to whether or not we have some concurrence with the caveat that if the administration comes back with a reason as to why the forecast is quite low for '92-93, we've got the opportunity to adjust it upward.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clerk Assistant.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: I'm sorry, Mr. Bogle. I didn't catch the figure that you were referring to on the forecast.

MR. BOGLE: I was looking on page 1 under Public Accounts, Payment to Members of the Legislative Assembly.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes.

MR. BOGLE: The '92-93 forecast, \$7,600.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Right.

MR. BOGLE: And the '93-94 estimate of \$23,037.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Right. I can answer that right away if you wish.

MR. BOGLE: Okay.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The payment to Members of the Legislative Assembly is based on committee attendance at the meetings. The Public Accounts committee meets on Wednesday. The members are entitled to claim for committee attendance. Because these meetings are held during session, the majority of the members do not claim. However, we have no way of anticipating whether they'll claim or not, so we have left the figure in.

MR. BOGLE: I understand what you're doing, and if I were sitting in your shoes, I'd do the same thing so as not to get caught short. But based on the historical practice since we initiated the payment to committees, I would suggest that as all Public Accounts meetings occur when the House is sitting . . . [interjection] Go ahead. If there's a correction, I'd welcome it.

MR. PASHAK: That's true, but there's also an expense for attendance at the conferences too though. It's not a meeting of the committee, but . . . I see. I'm sorry.

MR. BOGLE: I understand. I'm just saying that if the forecast for '92-93 is \$7,600 and if the actual for '91-92 is below \$10,000 – and I assume it is – clearly the estimate for '93-94 should be \$10,000 or less, not \$23,000. That's all I'm saying. Let's get the figure in a position where it more accurately reflects what we expect to need in '93-94.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Edmonton-Jasper Place, Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. McINNIS: I would like to hear from the chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

11:27

MR. PASHAK: With all due respect, Mr. Chairman, although you can anticipate that, there is in fact one member who did claim during the year. There could be more members in the future; I don't know. I think it would be easier if Members' Services adopted a policy, if I may be so bold, with respect to claiming an indemnity when we're in session or not.

MR. BOGLE: If I may respond, Mr. Chairman, one of the reasons we put in the forecast and sometimes an actual from the year before is so we can more accurately project. If we made all our forecasts for our 1993-94 estimates on the highest possible cost, our budget would be much larger overall than it is. We try to be realistic.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I think the chair of the Public Accounts Committee has identified the central dilemma. We continue to have a policy on the books that you can receive payment as a member of a committee meeting while you're in session, and most members don't do that. I think it would simplify life for everyone if we were to simply adjust that policy. I think there is a case that can be made for payment outside of session, but during session there's definitely consensus in my opinion that payment shouldn't be made under those circumstances.

If we make that change in the remuneration policy, it would make it a lot easier to budget. Then we won't have to budget for things that aren't collected as a matter of routine. Prudent budgeting consists of more than just guesswork. It consists of doing things in a way that the position is covered. I would suggest that we take that action somewhere in the course of these two days so that the budget can be adjusted accordingly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A comment, then a question. I think that in a lot of the budgeting we've done through the years, we've built on what's happened in previous years. We now have a number of years. The one that I think of is air travel and mileage. At one time we used to have a maximum per kilometre in our budget, and we used to have a maximum in air miles just in case they were both used. We slowly started going towards what is actually used over a period of years, averaging it out. I don't think we've been caught very much short in that time period because things are pretty much the same as time goes on. I think we could do that through the rest. We have a history now of what's there. We have a history of who's collected and who hasn't.

When I initially put my hand up, the chairman was answering the question, and then he said that one member collects. I wonder if it's possible to find out if it's just one or a group, who it is. I was under the understanding that nobody had collected under that program.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Just one member, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just one member. Thank you.

MR. HYLAND: Could we ask who that is, or is that privileged?

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is a public meeting, freedom of information. Does the committee wish the name of the member who's collecting? The committee has to decide that. If the committee would like to adjourn for a moment or two to have a little consultation, we will reconvene in three minutes.

[The committee adjourned from 11:30 a.m. to 11:35 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. We've now reconvened.

The question before we left was: do members wish to have the identity of an individual revealed?

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, maybe I can reveal why I asked the question. It was simply that our members of government caucus have a gentlemen's agreement related to this. If it is one of ours – and I suppose the only way to say it isn't is to give the person's name – I as deputy Whip would like to go and talk to that person and find out what happened to our agreement. That's the reason I put it out.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, the Official Opposition is in the same boat exactly. We've discussed the matter in caucus, and as far as I know, we don't collect for committee meetings during the times that we're in session. So if something's happening, we would like to be aware.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.  
The chairman of that committee then.

MR. PASHAK: Just to reveal the name?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I think you need to reveal the caucus at any rate.

MR. PASHAK: Okay; it's a member of the Liberal caucus that has been claiming.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Name him.

MR. PASHAK: First of all, I should probably make it clear that as chair of the committee, of course, I sign any claims that are brought forward. One member of the committee has made a claim on more than one occasion for an allowance to which he's entitled under Members' Services orders.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members. I think that's the best way to have solved it, to have identified in that manner.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I didn't mean to put any shadow on the chairman, because whatever somebody gives to him, he's bound to sign. My question was in no way meant, Barry, to . . .

MR. PASHAK: No, I didn't . . .

MR. HYLAND: Okay. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there additional comments or concerns with respect to the budget estimates of Public Accounts?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, when we come back tomorrow, we'll look at the revised figure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll revise the figure for tomorrow.

MR. McINNIS: We have a member of the Liberal caucus here. I would simply like to inquire whether it is the case that no agreement does exist on the collection of per diem sums for committee work when the House is in session, and if that's the case, I think perhaps we should do something about that tomorrow. Is that the case, Percy? Is there no agreement?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, it's this particular committee that sets certain policies, and I wasn't sure if the member was referring to committee pay being drawn while the session is in place or committee pay being drawn during different times of the year. I just have to speculate myself that one Liberal member did not collect \$7,600, that they may have collected a small portion of that while the House was in session. I'm not sure if the intent is to try and leave the impression that the only member of the committee drawing committee pay is a Liberal member. That's not the way I understand it.

Mr. Chairman, I think we have an obligation to recognize, as I've said before, that we're now operating under a different economic climate, and we've got to go back and revisit a whole bunch of these policies and have them apply to all members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: For clarification, I didn't want to be misleading in my question. The dilemma of this committee is to produce a budget figure for the coming year. The difficulty appears to be that the Public Accounts Committee does much of its work when the House is in session, the Wednesday morning meetings. In trying to assess the budget figure, we need to know who is collecting per diem sums for that. My question was whether Liberal members have permission to collect those during session. If they do, then my consideration is that perhaps we should close that loophole.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I've never taken that matter specifically to the Liberal caucus. My recollection is that this particular body changed the policy four years ago that allowed members to draw during 12 months of the year. That's my recollection. So that policy is there, and the policy that is there is to guide the individual member.

There are members of our caucus that refused the 30 percent. That was an individual decision they made despite the fact . . .

MR. HYLAND: That's not right, Percy. You can't prove that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, hon. members, aside from waxing over a vast range of areas, we are dealing with this particular issue with this particular committee.

Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: That's true, sir, but the *Hansard* records of previous meetings of this committee clearly show that each and every one of the 83 members of the Assembly took the increases approved in 1989. Some chose to contribute dollars back to the charity of their

choice or to the party of their choice, as stated by Percy, but every member took the increase. That needs to be clear.

Secondly, on this specific point there was a gentleman's agreement, and I must remind Percy that he was part of that. While the motions passed allowed members to claim for certain committee work while the House was sitting, the decision was reached collectively by members of this committee that we would pass on to our respective caucuses a request that they not claim, and that request, to my knowledge, has been honoured by both the government and the Official Opposition and, I thought, the third party. Now it is clear that that is not the case.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, let's be specific here. I'm not aware of the number of meetings or if Public Accounts meets while the session is on. What are we talking in terms of? How many meetings are we talking in terms of? I'm sorry, I'm not clear. I'm not part of Public Accounts; I'm not familiar with how you operate. I just know that Members' Services doesn't meet when the session is on, so it's never come before us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Chair of Public Accounts, would you like to clarify, please?

MR. PASHAK: I'll try to clarify that, if I may, Mr. Chairman. The Public Accounts Committee by direction of its membership meets only while we're in session. There is a forecasted figure of \$7,600. That includes remuneration for the chair of the committee as well as per diems that are drawn by one member. It also includes per diems that are part of attendance at conventions as well by members of the committee.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, because of the direction of the questions, could I ask for a specific breakdown tomorrow? Of that \$7,600, how much may have gone to a Liberal member, how much may have gone to the chairman of the committee, and how much may have gone in per diems when members have traveled to conferences? I think it's incorrect here to cast a distortion that a Liberal member has drawn the \$7,600, being the only member that has drawn. That is not correct, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, no one has made that statement.

MR. WICKMAN: It's the impression.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, hon. member. It is a far different matter. If you look at the transcript, you'll see it's quite different. Your request for additional information: we will try to get that information for you overnight.

Now, I understand the Clerk Assistant needs to raise a question as to what specific additional information is required for this meeting tomorrow with regard to this. Was it something to do with attendance at conferences as well as pay to members based on the fact of actual?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: My question would be: is the committee directing me to rework the budget estimates based on one delegate and one guest at the various conferences, and are there any conferences that have been deleted?

MR. BOGLE: It's my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that we gave some flexibility to the chairmen of the respective committees to come back but did give them a suggested guideline that they look at one delegate plus the spouse/guest. If there was some reason they felt more than one needed to be at a particular conference and they

wished to drop attendance at another, they would have that flexibility.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Chairman of that committee, are you available to be with us tomorrow morning?

11:45

MR. PASHAK: No, unfortunately I can't, but I could meet with . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you could meet with the Clerk Assistant later in the day. Also, we have the vice-chairman of your committee on this committee, so you could brief that individual for tomorrow.

All right. Any additional questions with respect to Public Accounts?

Thank you very much, Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee, a question to you all: do you wish to adjourn briefly for a quick sandwich at this time, or do you wish to carry on with Parliamentary Reform and then have the sandwich?

MR. BOGLE: Let's carry on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Carry on? Thank you.

The Member for Lethbridge-West with regard to the estimates on the Parliamentary Reform Committee.

MR. GOGO: I thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps for the benefit of the committee I could give a quick overview of the mandate of the committee, what the committee has done and plans to do, and then a brief explanation of the budget, sir, if that is in order.

As members know, Mr. Chairman, the all-party committee, the Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform, was authorized by the Assembly last fall. It was

established to consider the current functioning status of the Assembly and review ways of making it more responsive to the needs and values of the citizens of Alberta and elected members within the context of our parliamentary system and traditions,

with the order that the committee would report back to the Assembly. I would point out there are nine members of the committee as opposed to the normal maximum provided by Standing Orders of 11. That was done, as members may recall, in the debate of the motion to keep expenses down. So it consists of six government members, two ND members, and a member of the Liberal caucus.

The committee in its wisdom has drafted an agenda as to what it should be doing. Items considered for review number some 37, sir, with a priority being set at about 10. I would very quickly point out to members that that would consist of the following items. It's not exclusive, nor is it inclusive, but it would cover such items as election of the Speaker by secret ballot, a precedent already established in this Assembly; access to information; free votes or voting procedures, rewriting of Standing Orders, for which you, sir, have submitted a rather extensive document; a fixed schedule for opening and closing of the Assembly; whistle blower protection, what it is; and a review of how the legislative process is presented to the public.

Several meetings have been held, Mr. Chairman, and the plan – and I now wish to speak to the budget, the document which members have – is for another 10 meetings in fiscal '93-94. I draw your attention, sir, to the budget document supplied. If I could go through that now, travel expenses of some \$29,000 are based on the following. We would first of all have, as I say, 10 meetings of a

duration of two hours. The attendance of those members: the plan had been – and this is tentative – two members to Victoria for two days; two members to Ottawa, Toronto for four days; two members to Quebec City, Halifax, Charlottetown, and Fredericton, which would take perhaps seven days. I'll explain in a moment how we arrived at that. The reciprocal arrangement could well be that we will have people come here rather than members go there. That's an option the committee has asked to hold in abeyance as to how we would deal with it.

Mr. Chairman, we've also provided for the possibility of having people come to the capital city as opposed to public hearings; for example, four from Medicine Hat, four from Lethbridge, eight from Calgary, four from Grande Prairie, four from Peace River, four from Fort McMurray, and some provision, \$2,000, from other areas. In other words, what we're saying is that it may be following an action we've undertaken now, which is item 2 on the agenda, Advertising. We're placing an ad on parliamentary reform in every daily and each weekly paper on the 14th day of the month. The ad has been approved, and it says: "Parliamentary Reform. We need your views." Each member of the Assembly has been mailed a copy of this. The cost of that is \$50,000. Freight and Postage: the postage would be \$500. No rental of property, equipment, or goods. Telephone and Communications, \$200. Professional, tech, and labour services would be primarily the writing of the report, which would be perhaps an interim report followed by a final report to the Assembly, sir. As well, we've budgeted *Hansard* at \$400 per hour, two hours per meeting, which is one of the major, major items in the budget. So essentially we're talking about \$8,200 for the writing of a report, \$500 to print it, \$8,000 for *Hansard*, and \$200 for telephone communications.

A minor item: we provide coffee and juice at our meetings, which is \$150. We budgeted \$300 for gifts in the event that members of the committee do travel to other jurisdictions, which probably would involve purchasing a suitable gift from Leg. Assembly supplies. Other charges which apply to the budget would be those which are mandatory, such as 10 percent on pensions, LTDI, which is mandatory, \$150. The aggregate, Mr. Chairman, is \$123,000, which would include payment to members assuming maximum attendance at the 10 meetings for \$26,000.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I would answer any questions hon. members have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The Deputy Premier, the Member for Barrhead, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. To Mr. Gogo. John, when this motion was approved and passed by the Legislative Assembly, was there a time frame for the reporting of this Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform? When is it anticipated the report will come to the Legislative Assembly?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, in the motion, the order to the committee – "and may make recommendations . . . the Committee shall report to the [Legislative] Assembly" – there is no date. To Mr. Kowalski: the intent of the committee would be an interim report at some time after April 22 this year, and then a final report would be based on what we have received by way of briefs and presentations presented by people we've solicited opinions from. We've had a mail-out now of some 800 letters to community groups throughout Alberta, to chambers of commerce, to Members of Parliament, in total about 800.

To specifically answer the question, it's anticipated we would provide an interim report. Mr. Chairman, I would make the following comment. Probably, although the committee will decide

this and not its chairman, as an interim report it would deal with the following three items: election of a Speaker by secret ballot, a voting procedure or free votes, and access to information. They're the matters the committee has already discussed, not formulated decisions on but discussed.

MR. KOWALSKI: Again, do you anticipate or have any idea when the final report will come? It will motivate my next question in terms of the budget.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, in the budget document we've proposed that the budget be for four months – April, May, June, and July – with a final report ending up at the end of July or early in August.

11:55

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, perhaps this might help, and I echo these views as Government House Leader. I've publicly stated and informed other members that this Assembly will reconvene sometime during the week of April 19 to 23. I anticipate we're going to be here for four months, into July. It's also customary that when MLAs sit on these committees, they do not receive a per diem when the House is sitting. So my question is: what would be the basis of the payment to MLAs of \$26,000? I'm looking at the payment to the Members of the Legislative Assembly of \$26,000. Travel Expenses, \$29,000. Certainly one of the intents in the instruction that will be provided by the Government House Leader to his own Whip, whether or not the Whip even hears it, is a minimum of travel when the House is sitting. So I really focus these things on what would be the basis for the travel and what would be the basis for the payment to Members of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Chairman, both the travel and the payment to members were based on the number of meetings the committee felt were necessary to complete its task, not knowing what the legislative agenda of the government was on either calling the House . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: I appreciate that. I'm just trying to be helpful this morning; that's all.

MR. GOGO: Yeah. If the House is sitting and members don't travel, that will not come about. The payment to members is based on the policies set by the Members' Services Committee. It would be my anticipation, Mr. Chairman, that if we have meetings during the sitting of the House, members would not make claims. I can speak only as a member of the government caucus and not the opposition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: My first question is: what was the date the resolution was passed in the Assembly?

MR. GOGO: I think it was July 2.

MR. McINNIS: Yeah. I thought it was in the summer, not in the fall. So it's been in place for quite a few months now, I guess around nine months or so, admittedly without a budget. Just a few observations about this. One is that our caucus has discussed this matter and decided that we don't think Parliamentary Reform requires a tremendous amount of travel at the present time. As I look at the items on the A and B list of priorities for the committee, these are already issues members of the Assembly are seized of. In

fact, the government has made some steps toward changing the election procedures for the office of Speaker. There are at least two freedom of information Bills I'm aware of presently on the Order Paper and a throne speech commitment of a year ago that the government would bring in access to information legislation, which may or may not be the same thing as freedom of information. I think the question of a free vote comes up quite frequently. It was mentioned that the chair of our committee has presented detailed recommendations on Standing Orders, and I believe the House leaders meet frequently to discuss that matter. The other item is whistle blowers' protection. There is legislation on the Order Paper at the present time as well to accomplish just that.

I'm even more strongly of the view that I don't think we have to travel all across this country in order to establish a reform agenda. In fact, while there are things happening in the other jurisdictions mentioned – Victoria, Ottawa, Toronto, Halifax, Charlottetown, and Fredericton – I would suggest that in a matter of a few days a legislative intern could gather information that is available from those jurisdictions for the use of the committee. So I'm not a fan of this travel budget at all.

MR. GOGO: Could I respond, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sure.

MR. GOGO: On two points. The Member for Jasper-Place says there's legislation on the Order Paper. I believe this proposed legislation is a private member's Bill, which may be discussed in 1998. I've no idea when that may come to pass. A member of the committee – it happens to be the member's caucus – felt whistle blower protection was important. In showing the democratic nature of the committee, Mr. Chairman, it was decided to include that as an item for discussion.

Based on the observation of the hon. member that you could send an intern to gather information, Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member has read the McGrath report from Ottawa, I would think – and the Member for Clover Bar made it a condition that the committee travel. The committee can travel and meet only when other Legislatures are in session. I think it's very important that one does not go exclusively by written reports but actually interviews the equivalent to this committee in other jurisdictions to see whether something is in practice as opposed to proposed. As I say, the final decision has not been made about travel as opposed to having other members come to this jurisdiction, but we felt the cost would be the same in terms of the travel budget.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, two questions. In the interim from July 2 to the end of the '92-93 fiscal period, in a reference to postage and such – I imagine there must have been some other costs – the budget shows zero. How was the committee being supported to that date for its expenses?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, there were postage costs. However, it's been the practice that unless postage is substantial or significant, it has not been charged to a committee of the House. I think it comes out of the Legislative Assembly budget. I say that in deference to the hon. chairman, who may think it should have been charged directly to a committee. There were no committee meetings I had other than organizational meetings, so there were no charges based in fiscal '92-93.

MR. WICKMAN: So there haven't really been any costs occurring.

My second question, Mr. Chairman, relates to the question from the Member for Barrhead about the time frame and an indication the

chairman of the Parliamentary Reform Committee has given that it's anticipated, to his best ability, I guess, that within four months we should have the final report. Now, looking at this budget and looking at it covering one-third of a fiscal period, four months, it seems like a very, very rich budget, \$26,000 being paid to Members of the Legislative Assembly and such, travel, the advertising and that. When I look at the amount of material available on parliamentary reform, there's just dozens and dozens of it. The freedom of information that was referred to: the government obviously must have done a great deal of research on that matter in the past in that they had clearly committed themselves to introducing a Bill. I would hope this budget could be reworked to refine it considerably to recognize, first of all, that it should be done at a lower cost and, secondly, gather as much information locally that can be done through libraries and such, through other techniques, and through the telephone, and the time frame could be shortened to get this report to us as soon as possible. So rather than just make a blanket motion to reduce the budget by X number of dollars or a certain percentage, I'd like to have the chairman take another look at it and see what he can do and come back.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I'm in the hands of this committee. I would point out, sir, that Dr. McNeil, the Clerk of the House, and your staff have been extremely helpful to our committee in providing information. They've done a tremendous amount of research, which is extremely helpful to the committee. However, members of the committee felt it was equally important to visit other jurisdictions. As members may notice here, only two members of the committee would be going to any one place. That was kept in mind to keep the costs down. Whether or not that will occur, Mr. Chairman, I can't predict. I'm in the hands of the committee. It may well be we have visitors from other jurisdictions coming here. I assure the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud that in my view the budget is extremely frugal, as planned, and it would be the intent to use to the greatest extent possible the services of Dr. McNeil and your staff, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: A couple of questions first of all, Mr. Chairman. The first one is really triggered by something John said a few moments ago or a question John asked and the response given. It relates to whistle blowers' protection as an example. While that may have been raised by a member of the Parliamentary Reform Committee as an item that should be dealt with, have you, John, discussed that with other appropriate chairmen of committees who might be dealing with the same issue? I'm thinking specifically of Leg. Offices, because Legislative Offices does deal with the four officials who report to the Legislature, not to the government. That is a matter which has been dealt with to some length as a result of both the Ombudsman's and the Auditor General's discussions with the committee. So that's the first question. Before agreeing to add an item for discussion, are you consulting with other chairmen of committees to see if there is an overlap?

12:05

MR. GOGO: I've not done that, Mr. Chairman, other than we've had a request from the Ombudsman of Alberta to make a presentation to the committee. By saying that item would be discussed, I am not indicating whether it would be discussed beyond 30 seconds in a meeting or 30 hours. As I say, there were 37 items proposed by members of the committee; we then reduced that to eight to 10 items, one of which was included based on the arguments of an hon. member. I have not talked to other committee chairmen, Mr. Bogle.

MR. BOGLE: Of course, I'm not the chairman now, and that's why I asked the question the way I did. I thought you might have discussed the matter with Ty Lund.

Then I would make a specific request that both the A and the B items you have on your list be reviewed carefully to determine whether or not there is overlap with other committees and, if so, consult with those committees. It's quite possible that the Ombudsman was advised either formally or informally that you're going to deal with the item, that the Ombudsman would assume the matter is being transferred from Leg. Offices to Parliamentary Reform, and that's not the case.

Secondly, I want to come back to the workings of the committee. John, you mentioned that you have 10 meetings scheduled. Do you have a list of the schedule? Can you share that with us briefly?

MR. GOGO: That has not been confirmed, Mr. Chairman, mainly because two of the members on the committee are now members of Executive Council and they must meet their schedules. So we've simply projected there would be an additional 10 meetings, and in fairness to those members of cabinet, it's very awkward.

MR. BOGLE: So are any meetings scheduled for the remainder of this week and all of next week?

MR. GOGO: Yes, Mr. Chairman. There's a meeting scheduled for today, Mr. Bogle, and a meeting scheduled for tomorrow, Thursday, from 2 to 4 each afternoon, and it's based . . . I'm sorry; tomorrow morning from 10 to 1 and 1 to 3.

MR. BOGLE: And the following week?

MR. GOGO: The following week has been scheduled for each day other than the caucus day. The government is having a caucus on, I believe, the 15th. We've scheduled meetings for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday next week.

MR. BOGLE: So you have five meetings scheduled to date.

MR. GOGO: Yes, sir.

MR. BOGLE: One other question before I come back to you, and that's with advertising. You mentioned, John, that the \$50,000 figure in the advertising budget had been approved. Who approved that?

MR. GOGO: The committee . . .

MR. BOGLE: Without a budget.

MR. GOGO: . . . but without a budget. It was determined before the new fiscal year, but we've not expended the funds.

MR. BOGLE: The reason I asked – and I go back to my experiences on Electoral Boundaries. We came back as a committee, a select special committee as yours is, to Members' Services with a request for global budget figures, and it received approval. I'm just wondering why that route wasn't taken, because we're now into a new fiscal year. You have a figure. You advise us that an ad will appear next week. What happens if the committee turns down the request for \$50,000?

MR. GOGO: Embarrassment, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BOGLE: Yeah.

The last question relates to \$16,750 under Professional, Technical and Labour. You mentioned that part of this was to get the necessary expertise to write the report. What portion is that, John, please?

MR. GOGO: About half, Mr. Chairman; \$8,000 would be *Hansard's* charge at \$400 per hour, and the writing of a report – we've not made the decision as to who it would be – is guesstimated at \$8,250.

MR. BOGLE: Well, my understanding is that when the committee was originally struck – and we had some discussions in Members' Services – it was the Legislative Assembly that would provide the necessary expertise for the writing of the report through its staff. Is that not the case?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, we had anticipated the services of your office, but recognizing two factors, one, certainly one of the Parliamentary Counsels has now left and I have to use the advice of Louise and Dr. McNeil. I think there are great strains on Legislative Assembly staff.

MR. BOGLE: No, but again I think back to . . .

MR. GOGO: Originally.

MR. BOGLE: If I may use the example of Electoral Boundaries, we were able to second Bob Pritchard from social services, but that secondment came through Leg. Assembly. The contract was with Leg. Assembly, because in that particular time frame there was no one in-house. Now, whether there is anyone in-house who can do it today or not I don't know, but I'm assuming the same would occur. Mr. Chairman, I look for your guidance on this matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A problem in this is that if we were in the position of still having two Parliamentary Counsels and in particular still having the services of Mr. Ritter, who had been trained at the British House of Lords, we then would have the ability to be able to do the writing of the report. If indeed the committee is going to last for four months, that puts a different kind of time frame here. I mean, if the committee's going to last for four months and if the House is going to be meeting, perhaps even with the pressures of the House there might be some way to be able to give some further assistance in the preparation of the report. But given the other pressures of the House and now being one Table officer shorter in terms of staff, it does indeed put extra pressures on the Table and the Chair.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I've been asking the Clerk Assistant to shop around. We've talked to FIGA and some others. Perhaps the committee could hear from Louise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Assistant Clerk.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two items. The preparation of the report would not be the only item addressed by this individual. The individual would also be summarizing the submissions received by the committee. Yes, I am still in the process of shopping to see if we can second someone from another department. So far I've heard from the Department of Justice that they have no one they can release. I have yet to hear from two individuals that I'm hoping to hear from any day now.

MR. BOGLE: I'd just like to conclude, then, with a recommendation, based on the projection of five meetings this week and next

week and with the advice from the Government House Leader that we'll be going in sometime during the week of the 19th, that for tomorrow's meeting John do the same as the other chairmen of committees are doing: go back and revise his budget for payment to members based on five meetings rather than on 10 and also for the travel. As there won't be travel when the House is sitting, that matter can be eliminated. I do believe some consideration needs to be given to the advertising budget of \$50,000, as to whether it's too late to cancel that or whether it may be totally necessary. We haven't had that explanation. Normally, we provide the approval before the dollars are spent and committed, but I think those things need to be further addressed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The minister on this point, or on another.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, on the point of the advertising. These dollars have now been expended?

MR. GOGO: No. The commitment – well, I'm going to have to ask Louise. We've not spent the money. We were planning to advertise. We had the production cost addressed re the ad, and it was to be published on April 14. We presumably could cancel that ad.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, it's just a point of principle with me. This is a Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform, and before it has approval from the Legislative Assembly to expend dollars, it has made a decision to expend dollars. I hope that's not the direction the Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform is taking: to waive the protocols we have in terms of decision-making. I hope that's not going to be one of the directions.

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Chairman, the decision to do it, to place the ad in fiscal 1993, was done in fiscal 1992.

MR. KOWALSKI: The point is that it hasn't been expended yet; right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Lacombe, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. MOORE: Yes, Mr. Chairman. When you look at the \$50,000 for advertising which is going ahead – I understand it has gone or is going into papers right across the province – that gives us a pretty good coverage of the province. So anybody who's interested in this should have full knowledge of the process we're going through. Now, people know that they can come here as a presenter, but can they write in submissions to the committee too? You accept submissions and that's in the advertising, that they may submit written submissions? Is that part of the communication that's going out to the public?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, if I can respond. The ad advises all citizens who read it that all submissions sent in will be considered by the committee in formulating its recommendations and requests; "Please ensure your submission is received on or before . . . May 14, 1993." In addition to the ad, Mr. Moore, some 800 letters have gone out to various groups in every community in Alberta, elected people primarily. If they have views, they're requested to submit written submissions.

12:15

MR. MOORE: Well, I think if everything goes normally, most of your submissions will come from things like chambers of commerce, municipal governments, and so on. We can anticipate that.



Individuals will be in the minority. Then why do we have to pay presenters \$15,326 for travel? Why can't they come in on their own? If they don't want to pay to come in on their own, they can send their submission by mail for 43 cents.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, we discussed this at some length in the committee. We didn't know what requests would be coming in. For example, would people want to appear before the committee in the capital city? One of our members had suggested a symposium be held and that people be invited to come in. The feeling was that there should be some provision in the budget in the event that the committee wished to pay. This is not a commitment to do it. If the four from Medicine Hat, four from Lethbridge, eight from Calgary, four from Grande Prairie, four from Peace River, and four from Fort McMurray were paid, either the airfare or the mileage, as I recall, would amount in the aggregate to the \$15,000.

MR. MOORE: Uh huh. Well, just what you said – you had said that before. You say four from Lethbridge. What about four from Medicine Hat? You're basing on that in getting to a figure. Is that your thinking, that you would just take four from that area?

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Chairman, I apologize for the confusion. The committee felt originally that committee members would travel to those locations. They felt that if the House were sitting, perhaps they wouldn't travel but people from that community could come in. We were in the process of building a budget for this committee, trying to determine the scope of our activities. In every case we've made provision that if the committee does not do something, the option is that members from the community would come to the capital.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Jasper Place. Then, after the response by the chairman, perhaps we should take a brief break for lunch.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question was about the bringing of witnesses to the capital city. It's an unusual precedent in terms of the way the Assembly presently operates, although I don't think it's unheard of. I think in the House of Commons there is provision with their committee proceedings to provide funding for witnesses to come to Ottawa. My knowledge of that is limited, but as I recall, each party is given a certain number of witnesses that they can budget for, and they call their witnesses. Is that the model that's planned here, or what means had the committee thought of to select people to involve? That could see potentially a very large number of people interested in the whole subject of parliamentary reform, and some of those would be on the 10 priority items chosen by the committee; some wouldn't. What process would the committee use to select the witnesses who would be reimbursed for their costs?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, the advocate of having people come here to a symposium was the Member for Calgary-Mountain View. That member was submitting a list of potential witnesses to the committee, but we've not dealt with that yet. The Member for Calgary-Mountain View was going to provide us with a list of expert witnesses from other jurisdictions. The committee has not accepted that in any final way because it was not determined whether or not they would travel. It would depend almost directly on the intention of the Assembly, whether or not it was sitting.

MR. McINNIS: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View has excellent judgment, but I'm surprised that he would select them all. So that's yet under consideration by the committee. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any additional comments?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Chairman, I was going to make one on this point, but I know that you want to adjourn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Make the one on this point, because my understanding is that . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. I think this committee would be making a terrible, terrible decision if it got into the business of providing, quote, intervenor status or compensation or something for people to come and make a presentation to a public committee. The parameters of that are just horrendous as to who would select who should come, what would be the criteria of who should come, how many people could come. All the other parameters from a technical point of view would drive somebody bananas. You'd have to have five or six administrators sorting all this out.

Secondly, it could also be inferred that some people would accept that to come to Edmonton for a freebie trip and show up for five minutes, make a submission to this particular committee, and get a day's shopping in Edmonton. Who'd select all those things? Who would make that kind of decision? I know it's the philosophy of certain political ideologues that you should provide intervenor status for anybody and everybody on all occasions, but I think we'd be setting a terrible precedent for any select standing committee of the Legislative Assembly to start getting involved in that business. I mean, there are 2.6 million people in the province of Alberta who should have a visit to Edmonton periodically, and under that rule they'd all be filing for it.

MR. GOGO: I appreciate the comments, Mr. Chairman. As the House leader knows, it's not without precedent in this Assembly. We've done that in the past on a matter of privilege. The committee in its wisdom may indeed make a list of all those who are interested and in fact, perhaps in accordance with the hon. minister's criteria, have a lottery.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it the understanding of the committee that the chairman of the committee on parliamentary reform has had certain comments made and therefore is going to take consultation and bring back a revised budget tomorrow? Or do you wish the hon. member to stay with us over lunch, which he's welcome to do anyway, and then come back to this issue after lunch?

Okay. I take it that we could have input from you tomorrow whether you're able to be present or not.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, the Parliamentary Reform Committee has a meeting scheduled for 10 a.m. Could I ask you, sir, what hour this committee meets?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're meeting at 9:30, and I'll advise another chairman, of Legislative Offices, to come a bit later if you could come at 9:30.

MR. GOGO: I could provide that requested information at 9:30, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

We stand adjourned until a quarter to 1. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned from 12:23 p.m. to 12:55 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Members of the committee, the morning has been very useful. My understanding is that tomorrow we will revisit the budgets of Legislative Offices, Heritage Savings Trust Fund, Public Accounts, and Parliamentary Reform. Of course, there are other sections in our budget binder where committees have zero budgets, and that's always an interesting thing, to turn the page and discover that. I think our next item, then, is Members' Services Committee. We have prepared a budget there, so we just leave it open to you to make comments with regard to that.

Members' Services: Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: I'd like to apply the same to Travel Expenses here that we did to the other committees, please. I see that payment to members is very close – in fact, it's \$934 over the forecast for '92-93 – but our travel expenses are significantly different. Of course, under Professional, Technical, and Labour Services the \$125,000 is the Peat Marwick study, which we didn't know when we set the budget but it came in later.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hosting at meetings: we've not been doing very much of that. Any other comments for that section? I think we've been keeping that fairly well in line all the way through the last few years. Agreed.

What is your pleasure, then, with respect to all the other elements of the budget? We have made certain adjustments from prior discussion, but I suppose we might just as well start from the estimates, page 1, and work our way through this process.

MR. McINNIS: Members' Services went rather quickly. The suggestion was to reduce the Travel Expenses in line with the forecast for last year, which was a grand total of \$50?

MR. BOGLE: I just asked the question that we apply the same principle so that the administration will look at that. I don't know what the actual was for the year before, John. So I just said would you take a look at that, please, and when we come back tomorrow we're consistent with all the committees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right then, ladies and gentlemen. The executive summary of the estimates gives us the various definitions which are applied throughout together with the codes. I think perhaps we could start at page 1, after the definitions.

Clerk, do you have any comments, please?

DR. McNEIL: The budget that you see before you now reflects the direction provided at the last meeting to reduce the elements under the control of the Legislative Assembly Office by at least 5 percent. Some of those are 5 and some are even greater than 5. The overall forecast, based on incorporating all the money allocated last year compared to what we're proposing for this year, is a decrease of 1.1 percent in the overall budget expenditure for 1993-94.

The increases with respect to Government Members Services, Liberal Opposition Services and the decrease in the Official Opposition Services are strictly a reflection of the number of members in each of those caucuses at the present time. That's at the set rate, the same as last year, the allocation of \$45,100 per member plus a leader's allowance in the case of the two opposition parties.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 1, of course, is subject to change after we get through today and tomorrow with the various revisions and, of course, with the matter of committees as we're working through them.

DR. McNEIL: The next page is an estimate total by control group just in terms of the breakdown, the allocation of the proposed budget among manpower, Supplies and Services, grants payments, and fixed assets, totaling the bottom line of \$22,711,247.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. May we move on to the administration section to go through this. Mr. McDougall.

MR. McDOUGALL: The administration budget: that's our office on the eighth floor of the Legislature Annex. We've projected a decrease of 5 percent. As indicated on the summary page, the 4.1 % decrease in this control group is due [primarily] to transfers of wage staff to non-permanent salary and an overall reduced staff hours in the General Administration and Personnel branches.

Now, to meet the minus 5 percent requirement, the number of hours worked by staff that are only employed on a part-time basis then has been reduced. So that's the effect.

Supplies and Services. The reduction there, 16.5 percent, is due to reduced use of supplies and services that the office provides to the Assembly.

Finally, in Purchase of Fixed Assets there is a 100 percent decrease, and because of fiscal restraint no new equipment will be purchased for the office during the next fiscal year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you in that regard. The administration budget submission is minus 5 percent on that A budget. That's a very significant comment, the fact that because of fiscal restraint, "no new purchases nor replacement of existing office equipment in the current fiscal year." Do you wish to go through this section page by page?

MR. KOWALSKI: Just a question on administration. I'm looking at page 1. This 5 percent is a response to the '92-93 estimate. It's a reduction of the estimate, not the forecast. Is that correct?

MR. McDOUGALL: Yes.

MR. KOWALSKI: The methodology you used was the estimate rather than the forecast, and the forecast obviously is closer to reality than the estimate was. Is this correct? Were there lapsed dollars out of the whole Legislative Assembly budget at March 31?

MR. BOGLE: Excuse me. You're under estimate summary, Ken?

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes, on page 1, Estimate Comparison by Summary Centre Code.

DR. McNEIL: The overall estimate of lapsed dollars for 1992-93 that was presented at the last meeting was I think \$550,000, most of that being in the MLA administration budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's where the speeded up program was done on the fixed asset base for the library.

1:05

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, just a couple of questions on page 1 here that will also apply to some of the other budgets. On the salaries, could we get an indication as to what method was used to attempt to determine the level of increases, decreases, freezes, whatever may be pertinent to those employees that are affected in these types of departments.

DR. McNEIL: With respect to managers, the only increases that are provided to managers relate to an increase in responsibilities. With

respect to nonmanagement people, adjustments that are provided to them relate to merit increases related to their equivalents in the public sector. In other words, there are no range adjustments available to either management or nonmanagement. There are merit adjustments available to nonmanagement staff in line with what happens in their equivalent groups in the Alberta public service. With respect to management, the only adjustments that are available to them are reclassification adjustments, which are reflective of increased responsibilities.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, on the nonmanagement portion, what average is used in terms of budgeting for merit increases?

DR. McNEIL: In my recall of this, the average merit increase in the bargaining unit is about 3.5 percent, but this overall 1.7 percent would reflect the fact that some people are probably at the maximum of their range while others are projected to get a merit adjustment in 1993-94.

MR. WICKMAN: The other area I have a question on, Mr. Chairman, possibly the Deputy Premier may be able to respond to as well. When the downsizing program was announced, the incentive program – I'm now learning that it only applies to certain departments, and not all employees were able to take advantage of it even if they chose to. Contract employees, of course, were not given that opportunity. I can understand that fully. But in these particular areas like the library and administration, was that same option provided in there for employees to take that incentive package and take voluntary retirement?

DR. McNEIL: Yes, and two portions of the budget will address that specifically as we go through the budget.

MR. BOGLE: I just wanted to comment and compliment the staff through you, Mr. Chairman, in that we asked you at our last meeting when we dealt with the budget to come back with a minus 5 percent for reductions unless there was some extraordinary reason why you couldn't reach that target. I note in just looking at the estimates summary that you've certainly complied with that request. I think we should be able to move along if you highlight for us things that need to be highlighted, but you've certainly complied with the general thrust we've requested.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I'm sure the staff appreciate it, and they're the ones who put in the long, grinding time on it.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I guess I'm just echoing what the Member for Taber-Warner said. I've looked at this documentation, and I think that what was requested at the last Members' Services meeting has been dealt with in terms of both Administration and the Speaker's Office. If it's appropriate, I'd like to move that we accept both the budgets, \$537,596 for Administration and \$326,917 for the Speaker's Office, and move on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Administration, section 1. Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: I'd like to know what's happening here. Is the motion that we proceed without questions or what? I have some questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is to give approval to section 1 and I understand also section 4 and possibly section 2. Is that correct, Member for Barrhead?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, you've got a page 1 under the section tab called Administration. We dealt with it at the last Members' Services meeting; instruction was given. You've returned today, fulfilled the instruction, and you've met with the 5 percent reduction as far as I'm concerned. My motion said weigh that in and include it. The same thing for the other one, the Speaker's Office. Instruction was given the last time for a 5 percent reduction. You fulfilled that, \$326,917.

We could be here for a long time. We've got a \$12 billion, \$13 billion budget in the province of Alberta, and we're going to probably spend three hours looking at this. You've already fulfilled what you were supposed to do. My motion is: let's wrap it and go on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion would be to approve section 1 and section 4. The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: On the motion. I do appreciate that the hon. Deputy Premier has other things to do and other places he'd like to be, but I fail to see how that means that other members of the committee shouldn't be able to ask questions about what's in the budget estimates. This is our responsibility.

The motion that was moved and passed at the last meeting was that new estimates be prepared at minus 5 percent, and that's been done. We foreswore the opportunity to ask questions at that time so the work could be done, but I think members of the committee should be entitled to ask questions about what's in the budget, what makes it up, and also how the 5 percent was achieved. So I'm opposed to the motion to cut off any discussion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Initial discussion with regard to the motion. The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, in fairness to the comments by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, I think he is correct. In view of the time restraint that obviously is here, in view of uncertain impending circumstances in the next few weeks, next few months, this becomes, I guess, just more and more general. I would suggest as a compromise that we at least deal with page 1 of each of those sections. That would then allow members to ask questions without going through each program detail by detail. It would allow members to flag a particular program that they may want to ask questions on. So I would be prepared to deal with it on that basis. In other words, we move all items on page 1 of section 1.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps one other approach would be, if the mover was willing in light of this, that we might move approval of just section 1 and then we can go on from there.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, all I'm trying to do is just move it forward. If people want to talk about every \$4 item, that's fine with me too. I'm not going to ram something through the committee. I'm just trying to spear it ahead so we don't waste our time talking about \$4 items. There are more important things to talk about.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Might we take it, then, as a friendly amendment that the one at the moment is the motion to approve section 1 on Administration, Member for Barrhead?

MR. KOWALSKI: I would move, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. All those in favour of the approval of the budget for section 1?

MR. McINNIS: I thought I heard the mover say that the intent was not to cut off the ability to ask questions about what's in the estimates. I have some questions with regard to section 1. I'd like to put them now, if I may.

1:15

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I realize people in the real world think that I'm overly legalistic, but I have this problem. When we had a motion made, I got it reduced to section 1 rather than two being done as an omnibus. Then the Member for Barrhead agreed, and technically that was the end of speaking to the motion. Now, if it's the will of the committee to allow questioning to continue on this section, then those in favour of allowing further questioning on section 1, give me a show of hands, please. Other than that, I'll call the question.

MR. McINNIS: Do we get to ask questions or not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: With regard to section 1 that's what I'm asking. Technically we've had the motion. He's spoken to the end of the motion; the motion should be put.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry. I'll withdraw the motion if it's appropriate. The intent is not to prohibit any member from asking a question. I can't believe that this many Members of the Legislative Assembly are spending 20 minutes talking about \$4 items. The public of this province . . .

MR. McINNIS: Where's the \$4 item, please?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I'm trying to get you the opportunity to speak, so let's not get back into this. The hon. member has withdrawn it to allow everybody the chance to speak, and that's very gracious of him. [interjections] Order please, hon. member.

The chair now recognizes Edmonton-Jasper Place speaking to this whole section.

MR. McINNIS: I would like to ask about the question of staffing under the administration of the Legislative Assembly Office. There does appear to be a change in the level of staffing between last year's estimate and this year's estimate. I'm looking at page 3: 3.5 full-time staff last year compared to 5.1 this year. The 5.1 appears to be under six different positions. I assume that what's happening is that some people have gone from contract to full-time positions. Perhaps just to make it easier, the Clerk could explain how many full-time staff we have and how that staffing level was arrived at.

DR. McNEIL: Yes. We have, in effect, 12.1 full-time staff this year, including both permanent and nonpermanent. We had a total of 12.5 staff last year. So we're going from 12.5 to 12.1. There are a number of individuals who are now part-time, nonpermanent people who will be working less hours, and that's where the overall reduction of 4.1 percent in the Salaries, Wages, and Employee Benefits comes from.

MR. McINNIS: The other question I had is about the rental of equipment. There's a difference in explanation between the cover page and the detail estimate. It says on page 10 that we're talking about photocopiers, and I'd like to know if that's correct and what the effect is of reducing rental of photocopiers from \$26,000 to \$22,500

— it strikes me as a lot of money for renting photocopiers — and how that's achieved. Are we getting rid of some equipment in some areas of the Assembly?

DR. McNEIL: No, but we're negotiating better rates for the equipment that we do have.

MR. McINNIS: Is that photocopiers?

DR. McNEIL: That's photocopiers.

MR. McINNIS: But not throughout the Assembly.

DR. McNEIL: No. In administration, so the photocopiers are available to personnel and administration.

MR. McINNIS: It does occur to me — and this is not a \$4 item — that if it's possible to reduce rental rates and keep the equipment in this one area, then it might be possible in other areas as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe in the caucuses.

Okay. Additional comments or questions?

DR. McNEIL: Some of these rates are lower because usually they're leased on a three-year basis, so when we come to the end of a lease, we have to make a decision as to whether or not we want to lease the same equipment or get another piece of equipment. That's part of the decision-making: can we get something that provides the same capability at a lesser rate? It's not necessarily from the same company.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional comments?

Perhaps someone would be good enough to make a motion to approve the estimate for Administration.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, I would move that we approve the estimates put forward for Administration.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

Item 2, MLA Administration. Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: The projected change in this budget is an increase of 1.2 percent. This is primarily due to an increase in the estimate for air travel costs. In 1992 and previous years we were able to reduce our air travel costs by approximately 15 percent due to bulk travel discounts. Those discounts are no longer available. Therefore, we've had to reflect that in our estimate.

Increases in employer benefit rates: the most significant one is the increase from 7 and a half to 10 percent of the contribution rate on the MLA pension plan as well as smaller increases in the benefit rates for the various benefits provided to members. The leaders' indemnities have been reduced by 5 percent, and that's also reflected in the budget estimate for MLA Administration.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, one of the questions I asked last time — and I'm not sure exactly what happened to it, but I don't see it here — involves the relocation allowance. I thought it was under

Legislative Assembly, MLA Administration in the previous budget that we saw. Am I correct?

DR. McNEIL: That's correct. We were also directed by the committee, since when it would occur was unknown, not to put that in this estimate.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the difficulty I have is that there are vast numbers of Members of the Legislative Assembly that won't be back. Unless that policy is changed prior to an election, we're going to find ourselves in a situation where we're going to be short somewhere between \$1.2 million and \$1.5 million, possibly even more, in terms of paying out those relocation costs that technically members leaving would be entitled to collect. That money's got to come from somewhere; you've got to account for it someplace.

DR. McNEIL: In 1989, faced with the same situation, the money was appropriated by special warrant, and that would be the expectation in the year ahead, I would assume.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the only other point I make on that – and I guess it's up to the committee to make a determination. I would like to see us include something in the budget anticipating what the cost may be unless there's indication that we're going to see changes occur as a result of this review of remuneration and such. I'm not clear on that. My concern is, though, that a great deal has been made out of trying to eliminate the use of special spending warrants, and here we're inviting a situation where there is no choice but to do that. I think it would be appropriate to include an appropriate amount, and if things change between now and an election, then that simply becomes surplus. I think it's more honest in terms of bookkeeping procedure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Some comments? Edmonton-Jasper Place.

1:25

MR. McINNIS: Well, I do think the member makes a good point. It's possible to produce any kind of a budget you want and show any kind of bottom line you want for a coming year if you hedge your bet in terms of expenses. I think what the member is saying is that the expenditure should be somewhere near what we realistically expect to have to make. It is a matter of record that there are some 20 or more members of the Assembly who are not running again, and under the current situation they're entitled to a relocation allowance. So unless there is a proposal on this table to do something to the allowance, I think it is dishonest of us to budget as if it didn't exist.

We did have a budget presented to this Assembly a couple of years ago which was a balanced budget, but in fact it didn't work out that way. I think in this particular era, it would be a mistake for any of us to sit back and agree to the presentation of budget estimates which we know are not correct. So I think we have to do something.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, if I'm not mistaken, part of the basis for this decision in one of our previous meetings was that we didn't know when the election would be called, and if indeed the government would go the full mandate. This is very similar to discussions held in the Legislative Offices Committee over the holding of a general enumeration, and that's why I'll draw the parallel. If we do, indeed, run our full five-year mandate, then the claim for members who either have chosen not to run again or are not successful in the general election would be made in the next fiscal year.

In Legislative Offices twice the government members were forced to beat back attempts by both the Official Opposition members and the Liberal member to include several millions of dollars for a general enumeration. Because we were going through electoral redistribution, the feeling that the majority of members in the committee had was that it would be wasted money. So we saved the taxpayers approximately \$5 million by not conducting two general enumerations, which would have been totally worthless with new boundaries in place.

So I believe it's important that members focus a bit and not get too anxious. We may be here, as the Government House Leader has said, for four months during a spring/summer sitting. Indeed, we may be discussing the next fiscal year budget, as the current committee is composed, which of course would be turned over to new members sometime in April or May of 1994.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any comments on the whole section? Do any other members wish to be recognized or ask questions with respect to section 2?

MR. McINNIS: I have a question. I'd like to make it clear that I'm not voting for estimates which do not accurately reflect the expenditures for the coming year. There are figures put in at zero for MLA constituency office allowances. I take it that means that we're now off the formula system for calculating allowances. Those are based on population and related expenditures. For example, I think the communication allowance is based on costs of two first-class stamps per registered voter or something like that. The system we're going to is just a sort of straight budgeting system.

DR. McNEIL: No. If you look on page 17 of this section, you'll see the basis of calculation of these allowances, and it reflects no change in any of those three.

MR. McINNIS: That means that the postal rates have not changed.

DR. McNEIL: No. It means that the committee has not passed an order to change the communication allowance calculation to this point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Do we have to pass an order every time postage rates change, or did we have one that said: if they change by more than two cents or something?

DR. McNEIL: No. An order is required each time to change the formula. So in terms of the postal rate increase on January 1, that formula would then become .94 times those numbers. It's .92 now and it would become .94.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's on . . .

DR. McNEIL: Page 17.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I have some difficulty with this page, in the manner it's presented. For that reason, I can't vote yes. I have some difficulty in the sense that there are a number of things that would have been preferable had they occurred; for example, if we had an indication as to what the process was going to be with the Peat Marwick report, whether it is going to go to an independent authority or whatever.

This budget clearly does not identify what realistically should be in there, and that is the relocation allowance. If I move an amendment to include it, then I have a fear that the Premier of the province, as he has been doing at several meetings, will accuse Wickman of being the driving force behind relocation allowances. I am not the driving force behind relocation allowances. So I fear even having that on record because it can be misused. So I'm going to simply vote against this particular section.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional comments? Motion to approve or reject this budget, section 2, MLA Administration?

Cypress-Redcliff, are you making a motion?

MR. HYLAND: Have we, every other time that postage rates have gone up, to keep track, increased and changed the Members' Services order to those amounts? [interjection] So if we don't do it now, we're setting a precedent of not doing it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many new precedents get established day by day, though?

MR. HYLAND: Well, I wonder if we should look at that part. Mr. Chairman, if it would help us on that particular issue, if the Clerk would bring us back some numbers on how it would affect the total budget if we put that into place, then we can have a look at it and see if we want to stop that automatically happening or not stop it happening, seeing as we've done it every other year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. A request for additional information. It could be ready by . . .

DR. McNEIL: We can have that in five minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

DR. McNEIL: If you want to go on to another section or more questions on this one, that's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions? Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: The precedent has been that the committee has had to make an order every time it changes, and that's all that we have in the way of precedent. If we were to establish it in a formula, then it would be adjusted automatically. I guess that's a decision we should make. The precedents are all involved with whether we make the order or we don't make the order. That's all. There's no precedent involved in not making an order. Otherwise, you'd never be able to do anything for the first time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the other issue of course is, ladies and gentlemen, if you'll reflect on your little green booklet, *Members' Guide*, that after enumeration takes place, then people will have a far better idea of how many constituents, residents are within their constituency. That, then, will shift formula. Then the budget would have to reflect the increased population in the whole province as well. So there are a number of factors.

Do we have two figures already worked out here?

1:35

DR. McNEIL: The estimate is that the communication allowance for '93-94 would be increased by \$20,678, so it would be \$971,900 roughly.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I can understand the problem with the population, because even after enumeration now our lines won't match. I mean, the increase in postage rate is a reality. I think we should put it in.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I wonder, hon. members, we seem to have bumped into a bit of a logjam or situation. Is your pleasure to keep working on this now, or would you rather reflect on it overnight and come back to this section tomorrow?

The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Just a question here, Mr. Chairman. We're talking in terms of the Communication Allowances under Members' Services; right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under MLA Administration, yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. In terms of that particular budget, if we look at each constituency office being held to \$1,200, which it is as a result of an order of Members' Services, if we talk in terms of postage increasing a little less than 3 percent – it went up from 42 to 43 cents, if I recall correctly. When you start talking in terms of the actual cost to the constituency office, Mr. Chairman, you're looking at each constituency office having to chew up maybe \$25 or \$30. I don't see that as being a problem. I don't see why we should be concerned as to whether that \$25 or \$30 is added in there. It's not a great deal of money. It's a very small portion, because the communication allowance includes a great deal more than postage.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Forgive me, hon. members. I hope I'm not out of line, but I think now we're on to a 2-cent item as opposed to a \$4 one when you boil it down to the individual instance.

Cypress-Redcliff, then the Clerk.

MR. HYLAND: I would move

that we ask Parliamentary Counsel to draft an order putting in place a new postal rate as it would affect our communication allowance and thus instructing the Clerk to change the appropriate number in the budget estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Further discussion. Nodding of heads. Call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

On the basis of that, that one adjustment will be made in this section or other adjustments will be made with respect to MLA Administration. All right. We'll work on the theory that that would be prepared for tomorrow and that the necessary adjustment to the figures in the estimates book will take place. At that time we can decide whether to accept or reject section 2.

We will take a five-minute break and come back then to deal with section 3, House Services.

[The committee adjourned from 1:40 p.m. to 1:49 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, hon. members. We've moved on from section 2. We're going to await further information on the Members' Services order.

So we're now on section 3, which is House Services, minus 5 percent.

Clerk, please.

DR. McNEIL: The budget projection for House Services is based on a 4.1 percent decrease in Salaries, Wages and Employee Benefits due to the reduction in the Clerk's salary, reduced funding for legal services as a result of staff turnover, and slightly lower wage costs for security staff due to a reduction in the contract minimum for sessional security staff.

Supply and Services is projected to decrease by 9.4 percent due to a further reduction in expenses for staff and members as well as reductions in professional service fees, Materials and Supplies.

Other Expenditures: a reduction in payments to members following from a slight reduction in member travel.

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Chairman, I so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lloydminster has moved adoption of section 3 on House Services.

Cypress-Redcliff, speaking to the motion.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to make a comment on the travel expenses part, but if we have a motion, can I change that without amending the motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. HYLAND: Can I amend the motion, then, to say that we would accept all the other items except code 712A and that the number of members that would attend conferences be cut in half. Just to clarify, there's one exception, the Sergeant-at-Arms. Obviously, you can't send half a Sergeant-at-Arms to a conference.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I see. Then this is with respect to pages 8 and 9.

MR. HYLAND: Sorry; there are two. There's another one there, the international seminar in Australia. You can't, obviously, send half a person.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On page 8, at the top, the conference in Ottawa would be two members plus their guests; the same thing with Yellowknife, presiding officers. One would then assume it would be the Speaker plus either the Deputy Speaker or the Deputy Chairman of Committees, to knock it down to two. CPA Regional Council in Ottawa: from two down to one. The conference in Cypress: from two down to one. The Australian one would stay at one, and the CPA Regional Seminar in Ottawa would come from two down to one. On page 9 Washington would be reduced by 50 percent. San Diego, the National Conference on State Legislatures, I assume then would come down to two instead of three. The Clerks' conference in Charlottetown: just one of them would go. The Annual Parliamentary Counsel Conference in St. John's: that would become one. Sergeant-at-Arms stays as one. Is that the intent, Cypress-Redcliff?

MR. HYLAND: Yes, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, if you would permit an amendment to that amendment at this time or deal with that separately and allow me to make another motion that would deal with the spousal travel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would be a separate item.

Member for Lloydminster, would you be good enough to withdraw your motion at this time so that we might deal with these separate ancillary motions and then go back.

MR. CHERRY: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I thought that we had made a policy earlier that we were going to cut back. I withdraw my motion then.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member.

The first one, then, is the motion by the Member for Cypress-Redcliff, which we have just enumerated, which basically is to cut in half the representation to the conferences as noted on pages 8 and 9. That's the substance of it, Cypress-Redcliff? Thank you.

Call for the question on that matter?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? It's carried unanimously. Those amendments will be made, and therefore that will be taken into account for tomorrow's revisitation of this estimate. Because of that, then, the original motion that was put forward by Lloydminster would be appropriate tomorrow.

All right. Edmonton-Whitemud has another one, a motion with respect to this item.

MR. WICKMAN: My motion is to eliminate the spousal travel that's attached to these various conferences in this particular budget of House Services.

Just speaking to it, Mr. Chairman, again I kind of emphasize an earlier point that I made. I guess it's no different than one running their own household. There can be a period of time when budgets aren't too tight, so there are certain luxuries that one may be able to afford themselves, such as having two cars instead of one or whatever. But when the crunch comes, when the debt starts to pile up so that it is no longer manageable or it becomes questionable whether it's manageable, then a different set of rules has to apply. We've reached that point here in Alberta where a whole different set of rules now have to apply. Something that may have been acceptable two or three years ago I don't believe is any longer acceptable, particularly as new information continues to come out that paints the fiscal picture of this province even gloomier. So on that basis we talk in terms of nonessential. As nice as it may be viewed by some, spousal travel is not essential.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Others wishing to speak for or against the motion? Is there a call for the question then?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? The matter carries.

For clarification, hon. members, that applies to this section only. It is not an across-the-board policy until such time as you make it so.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I have a question. I was confused about the time we adjourned, so I missed something. There was a motion already passed to halve the number of people attending conferences and then a second motion that no spouses travel. So basically it's been halved and then halved again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For the record, where it says "spousal," it also includes the word "guest," for absolute clarification.

Thank you, hon. members, for that. That's with regard to section 3. We will revisit this section tomorrow when we'll have the revised figures.

MR. McINNIS: In the event that we have a single delegate, how do we cut that in half?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We decided that it would be one. That revised sheet will be before you tomorrow.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Member for Barrhead.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, on the motion we just passed to eliminate spousal travel or guest travel, I wonder if it would be appropriate just to have a blanket motion that would apply to all elements of the Legislative Assembly. We wouldn't have to come back to it all the time and say, well, in one committee one thing happened; in another committee something else happened. Do you think that would be in order, sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's certainly in order, but I drew it to the attention of the group so that we could have it as a separate motion that would apply to all sections. That then would make for retroactive consideration, if you passed the motion, with respect to the various committees that came before us this morning and their travel. So that would be the matter before the committee. I assume that the Member for Barrhead is moving the motion that henceforth all spousal, guest travel will be eliminated.

MR. HYLAND: Did you say henceforth or for this fiscal year?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, all right. For the fiscal year which we are considering at the moment, the '93-94 fiscal year. Does that sum it up, Member for Barrhead?

MR. KOWALSKI: Indeed, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Edmonton-Jasper Place, speaking to the motion.

1:59

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I support the intent of the motion. The observation was made by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud that in tough economic times you have to make sacrifices, and I think it seems to most of us appropriate to do that. What we're in the process of doing is building a budget. I think we've sent all of the travel budgets for the Leg. committees back to their chairs to be revised. I'm just not sure if we're proceeding in the right fashion. We're getting all these budgets back tomorrow. It would seem to me that that would be the time to make motions in respect of those budgets, although I don't really care. I'll vote for it either way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Grande Prairie is next on the list.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, my concern with the motion that was just made by the previous speaker is that there would seem to be a change of approach here in that we aren't following quite the same format with this section of the meeting as we'd followed earlier today. I'm concerned about where this is taking us as we go into the meeting tomorrow.

I might also point out that the way the words "spouse travel" are being used here today, Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if that is going to also refer to all spouse travel involving Assembly members. That would mean bringing spouses to the Assembly for things like opening the House and so on and special occasions. So I would ask that we have the opportunity to bring this back tomorrow, like some of the other sections we're being requested to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The understanding of the chair on the matter that you just raised, spousal travel and the number of trips to Edmonton in a year or throughout the province, is that that would have to be a separate motion, but I'm pleased that you raised that.

MR. BOGLE: Well, I'm somewhat concerned, Mr. Chairman, in terms of consistency. We've asked the chairmen of other committees to come back tomorrow morning with suggestions. We've given them latitude in terms of recommendations re who should go and what conferences, if any, should be attended. I'd like to move that this motion be tabled so there would be further discussion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion to table until tomorrow. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you. Section 3 will be revisited tomorrow.

Section 4, the Office of the Speaker. Mr. Day.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, in order to effect the 5 percent decrease, if members of the committee will look at page 1, there was a 50 percent reduction in the salary of a nonpermanent staff which effected a 16.7 percent decrease in Allowances and Supplementary Benefits, for a 3.4 percent decrease under salaries and wages.

Travel; Hosting; Freight and Postage; Telephone and Communications; and Professional, Technical, and Labour Services were all reduced under the Supplies and Services category, with the most significant decrease coming in Hosting. That effected a 13.4 percent decrease in that section.

Other Expenditures, which is Pay to Members of the Legislative Assembly. This is the salaries of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, and the Deputy Chairman of Committees, and all those took a 5 percent decrease March 1. Consequently, when that is annualized over '93-94, it comes out to a 2.8 percent decrease, for a net effective decrease of 5 percent in the Speaker's Office budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions, comments in this regard? Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I understand that the bulk of the reduction is effected by making a clerical support person half-time instead of full-time. Is that right?

There's insurance listed for three vehicles. I'm just confused. To whom are the three vehicles issued?

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, those vehicles are for the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, and the Deputy Chairman of Committees.

MR. McINNIS: Okay; thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional comments or questions with respect to the Speaker's Office?

MR. HYLAND: Do all three people have cars, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do all three have cars? The Deputy Speaker does. Does the Deputy Chairman of Committees, the new one? Yes. Thank you.



Any additional questions with regard to the Speaker's Office? Perhaps one of you would be gracious enough to move the approval of the budget for the Speaker's Office.

MR. KOWALSKI: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Deputy Premier.

All those in favour of the adoption of the proposed budget for the office of the Speaker, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you, all. Thank you, Mr. Day.

The next I have here is section 5, Government Members' Services. Member for Taber-Warner, would you be speaking to this section?

MR. BOGLE: Well, it's pretty straightforward, Mr. Chairman, in that we do apply a formula for all of the members of the Assembly who are not members of Executive Council, and for the purpose of this discussion I'd include the Speaker. So we have 41 private government members out of our 59-member caucus, and the allocation is based on the formula. The reason for the increase is straightforward. Our cabinet was reduced from 26 to 17. There were seven private members who joined Executive Council. There were 10 former members of Executive Council who left, and we've had one of the existing members of the Assembly join our caucus. So we've gone from 32 private members at this time last year to 41 at the current time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Questions or comments? The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, for the purposes of these numbers, are members of the four committees that were set up by the Premier included?

MR. BOGLE: They are private members. They are not members of Executive Council.

MR. WICKMAN: So they are considered for these purposes?

MR. BOGLE: Just as the Leader of the Official Opposition and the leader of the third party receive additional dollars for their duties. That is correct.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah. I'm just asking about it. That's fine.

MR. BOGLE: I'm sure it is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd be happy to call the question, but I haven't had a motion to adopt. I understand that the Member for Taber-Warner is moving . . .

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'll move acceptance of the government members' budget.

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

Next section, the Official Opposition. Mr. McInnis, the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, once again the Official Opposition is leading the way and showing the government on spending restraint, albeit we did accomplish this by getting rid of some baggage from our caucus. Anyway, this is formula funding. It's essentially the same budget as last year with an appropriate

reduction to account for the fact that the Member for Stony Plain has gone back from whence he came politically.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Discussion? Questions? Are you prepared to vote on the motion as proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, giving your imprimatur to the budget of the Official Opposition? All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried.

Item 7, the Liberal opposition. The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

2:09

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'll move the budget identified as Liberal Opposition Services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's a call for the question. All those in favour of the budget as proposed for the Liberal opposition, please signify. Opposed? Carried.

Legislative Committees. Well, I think we're caught there until we have the report from various groups that are meeting overnight.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I've just noticed what I think may be a typographical error in the Liberal caucus budget. It shows the membership going from seven to nine. In fact, I think it was eight a year ago. There was a period of time in which a vacancy existed, although for our accounting purposes the budget stays the same in the event of a vacancy until such time as a change is made. So I think that probably should show eight and nine to reflect that there has been a change of only one member in the Liberal caucus and not two.

DR. McNEIL: The committee last year asked for the creation of a suspense account, if you will, when the budget was created. So the budget for the Liberal caucus last year was based on seven members, there being one vacancy at the time. There was another component for a one-member suspense account, and those funds were transferred to the Liberal caucus budget once the Member for Calgary-Buffalo was elected.

MR. KOWALSKI: That then would be the explanation for this very significant 17.1 percent increase to the Liberal caucus for fiscal '93-94?

DR. McNEIL: Correct.

MR. KOWALSKI: Okay.

MR. WICKMAN: I say seven, nine, or 63; it doesn't matter how many members you want to show for us.

MR. McINNIS: Well, let's leave that up to the voters, shall we?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next section, then, is item 9, Legislative Interns. A decision was made at our last meeting. I'd ask Mr. Day to speak to this since he's the prime co-ordinator with the interns.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, per the committee's request not to carry any program on into fiscal '93-94, this budget reflects that request. There is money under Salaries, Wages and Employee Benefits. Our interns are with us for three months in the new fiscal year, and that amount, although reduced 75 percent, reflects payment to our four

interns for April, May, and June, along with the employer contributions required. There will be some minimal expenses for travel incurred over the next three months, as there will be for Telephone and Communications. Hosting is the annual reception that we do at the end of the year for the interns and the members of the Assembly, and a very minor amount again in Materials and Supplies. Consequently, a 75.7 percent reduction.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It should be noted that we have been in receipt of seventeen letters in support of the program. The letters are here and available. If members would like copies, we can have them run off.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, if there has been correspondence received which has an impact on the future of the program, I think the committee should be apprised of the contents of those, if at all possible, before we make a decision.

What's happened, it's my impression, is that a budget estimate was tabled which included an estimate predicated on winding up the program at the end of this year. I've been out of town the last couple of days, but I've received a half dozen or so letters, certainly not 17. Some of them express some fairly profound thoughts about the role of the internship program in relation to a problem which we all share, which is the regard for this institution and the members of it held by the general public. So I would like to request before we vote on this estimate proposal that if it's not practical to copy the letters, at least some sense of what's in them be conveyed to the members of the committee. If we're bound and determined to axe the program irrespective of how people feel about it, that's one thing, but I think that at least those thoughts should be conveyed to the members of the committee.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I agree with John completely. If we've got 17 groups or individuals who are writing and offering financial support to continue this program, then I think that certainly has to be taken into account. Is that indeed the case?

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, the 17 letters received to date have covered the gambit from our first graduates in '74-75, some who have gone on to great distinction as members of society, right up to last year's graduates. The majority echo the comments made by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. In no cases were cheques enclosed, although there are numerous suggestions that the corporate community be solicited in support of the program.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, they cover the country; we've got interns spread from Ottawa, Toronto, Alberta, British Columbia, and elsewhere.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Taber-Warner on that point, then Lacombe.

MR. BOGLE: Just to finish up, then, I am indeed disappointed. There's a new fiscal reality out there. It's being accepted by residents of all of the provinces, by governments of all of the provinces. Indeed, we look at what's happening in Ontario today under Premier Rae and we see dramatic downsizing taking place. That's not different from what's happening in our sister province of Saskatchewan or in the Liberal administration in Newfoundland. There's a new realism that's taken hold.

If indeed individuals who have benefited from this program in the past really believe in it, then I'd urge them to look to ways to establish an endowment fund through not only former graduates but others in the community and to come back. We just cannot continue to provide the same level of services with the same costs to the

taxpayer that we have in the past. The intern program over a period of time has been reduced. This is not something that would be a shock or new to anyone. I think there are ample resources provided to our various caucuses. We have research components in them, and we'll just have to continue to learn how to do more with less as time goes on.

2:19

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Taber-Warner said exactly what I was going to say. It's only natural, though, that the recipients that have benefited from this program will certainly write in. It was a very worthwhile program for them as individuals, and I'm sure they've benefited very much from it.

However, we're facing economic realities. It may be just one of these things where we've led the way up to this point, and if there are corporate bodies out there wanting to take it up, maybe this is the time to pass that responsibility over to the private sector. Certainly they may be able to fund it. It's nice having 17 people write in, but I'll guarantee you that the 17 didn't offer financial support of any amount to keep it going. It's nice to say, "It's a good program; I benefited; keep it going," but we have to look at the situation we're in today. I think that the move we're making is a responsible one. It's regrettable that we have to do it, but it's a responsible move.

MR. McINNIS: Whether former interns are interested in financially supporting the program or not, I don't know, but if we're going to form a judgment about whether they are or they aren't, somebody should ask them. I don't think you can make a judgment about that without having asked them, and that might also apply potentially to other avenues of support for the program. I understand that part of the reason we have this recommendation from the Speaker's office is that some of the support that was provided in recent years was withdrawn from the program, and I appreciate that has a major financial impact on the program.

I for one don't advocate increasing the public contribution to make up for the lack of sponsorship. I might advocate preserving some element of the program in some form, because of financial restraints, at a reduced level, but my request is simply that I would like the members of this committee to receive copies of the letters before they take a final vote on it. Then they can decide for themselves what they're voting on. I'm listening very carefully to the arguments being made about who benefits from programs and how we have to reduce benefits at a time of financial hardship. I'm listening very closely to what's said, and I hope that's applied in a number of areas and not just this one. My request to the chair is simply that the letters that were sent in be made available to the committee members prior to our final vote on this matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the chair had mentioned that we're quite prepared to make the letters available. In fact, we'll have it done within the next 20 minutes.

Indeed, the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is correct: we've lost two of our three sponsors. Over the years that I've been involved, we've tried to solicit other sources of corporate support, and it's been to no avail because indeed the sponsors are facing very difficult times as well. The suggestion to send letters to these people to see if they've either got other suggestions or can make donations to a program themselves I'd be only too happy to follow up on. All members of my staff as well as myself deeply regret that this appears to be the point in time where we are, but I cannot, nor can my staff, create Utopia.

Taber-Warner, and then Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. BOGLE: Well, just for clarification as well. I wasn't suggesting that we solicit others. I merely asked: if people were

writing in support, were they offering to help in some way, either by donations or the establishment of an endowment or some other means? If they have not, I'm not suggesting for a moment that we go back and ask them to do so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll have copies of the letters run off for all members so they do have them.

Before I recognize Edmonton-Whitemud, to those of you who are in the gallery, this is the Members' Services Committee of the Alberta Legislature. It's made up of elected members who represent all three political parties together with staff of the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly acts on behalf of all the parties together, and the Legislative Assembly is not the government. The government is an important part of a Legislature, but so are the opposition members.

You might be interested to know that this is the only Members' Services Committee in the whole country, including the Parliament of Canada, which conducts its business in public. You might gain other impressions from what you read in the media, but this is the only one in the whole country that conducts its business in public so that all members like yourselves who care to join us for even a portion of time during the day do indeed get to listen to what's happening with your elected people. It is indeed a very accountable position no matter what the public perception may be.

We welcome you to your Legislature and hope you come back many times, and thank you for paying taxes so that we can be here, just as we pay taxes too.

Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, from this angle I can't see who's back there in the members' gallery. I've been contacted by former interns who've taken a great deal of interest in this and wanted to attend and hear the discussion, but I'm not sure if there are former interns back there or not. When they asked me as to when I anticipated it would be dealt with, I said that my best guess was that the first day we'd be going through discussions and that the second day we'd be starting to finalize the budget. So I think a number of them may show up tomorrow to listen to our arguments. Also based on what the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place has said, I'm going to move that this be tabled till tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. A motion to table. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? It fails.

The next speaker is Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I would move that we accept the budget as presented for legislative interns.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyone speaking to the motion? Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I understand the new fiscal reality, and we see what is happening throughout various provinces. We see the difficult times, and I guess it becomes a question of weighing priorities and looking at what's important in terms of achievement, what's important in terms of future generations and such. When we talk in terms of the various programs that we're going through here today, we're dealing with budgets. We talked in terms earlier of a relocation allowance that could run \$1.5 million. Who knows? Here we're talking in terms of a figure that is less than a hundred thousand dollars that not only provides a great deal of benefit to the three caucuses but is an invaluable experience for those persons that have had the opportunity to be interns.

I believe the practice and experience they achieve lend a great deal to their achievements later on in life. Those letters the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place referred to indicate very, very substantially that this program can be one of those programs that can be very productive in terms of final outcome not only on an immediate basis but also on a future basis. I guess in a way it's almost like the pages and the pagettes that we have in the Legislative Assembly. What they get out of it is unbelievable from their point of view in terms of future benefit, and I don't think we can really measure those types of things in terms of dollars.

When we talk in terms of priorities, I think this has to be given a higher priority. To just phase it out, bang: no, I can't support that. If there's an attempt made to try and work hand in hand with corporations to see the program continue, fine, but just to say that the program's going to come to an end I think is a bit too harsh.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Speaking to the motion, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: I'm a bit confused. I thought we had agreement that the letters were going to be made available to and read by the members of the committee before we voted, but we just voted against tabling the matter, and now a motion has been moved. So I presume this is it, that the government intends to vote on the matter now. I'm quite sure that there's not a whole lot I can do to convince them otherwise, although I'll make the observation that what amounts to a \$71,000 reduction in government estimates is not a tremendous amount of money in the scheme of things. I would bet that we could quite easily find that amount of money elsewhere in the budget were we so motivated, so I don't think that budget considerations are necessarily what's happening here.

I'd just like to refer to some of the comments. I haven't got 17 letters; I've only got a half dozen or so, but there are some insightful comments. I don't want to get anybody in trouble here, but one comes from somebody who's currently employed by the government and has been from the time since he was an intern. He says:

In my own case, I have worked in the Alberta Government since completing the internship and the experience I gained during the program has benefitted not only myself, but many of my colleagues.

He feels sure that's true of most of the other interns.

2:29

Here's somebody who is on another side of the fence after having spent some time in this place, responsible for liaison between the members of the Assembly and government departments, suggesting that interns perhaps play a role in educating other government officials about the role of MLAs and the role of this place in the Assembly. Maybe that has some value for people in government, to have people in the public service of the province who understand the pressures that MLAs are under and the relationship they have.

I received one from a colleague of mine in the time that I was a legislative intern, who is a lawyer in another province. He says:

Disrespect for social and political leaders is becoming rampant in Canada, and I can assure you that the internship program is a small, relatively inexpensive, but extremely effective tool for battling this trend. I would . . . suggest that this is a good reason to reinstate the system of having each intern work for both the government and opposition sides of the House.

Actually, that latter issue is not necessarily on the table right now, but I think we are aware that there is a problem in terms of the perception of what people in public life do. How do we combat impressions that may be incorrect about people in public life? I think we do that by exposing more people to what actually goes on. That's an observation from a former intern.

Another suggests that the internship program

has given me a unique perspective on public events as they unfold, a perspective I have tried to share with others who may be overly cynical regarding their governance.

I think a lot of people are cynical because they make incorrect assumptions about what the life of a member actually consists of.

Two former interns, who I gather are involved in charitable fund-raising, suggest that some of the experiences they've had have enabled them to direct some \$16 and a half million to charitable causes in Alberta and nationally.

I assume probably the other letters are similar to this, that the people who have been involved with the program see a positive benefit to society. I don't necessarily see that they have anything to gain personally by having the program continue. The suggestion was made by the Member for Lacombe that they feel they should personally get something that other people are not entitled to. So I just think that for the sake of \$70,000 we're probably throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, the government members who are members of this committee have been going through an extremely exciting process over the past three months through our standing policy committee process whereby we bring together cabinet ministers and private government members on committees. Each of those committees, of course, is chaired by a private member. Those committees have been reviewing the budgets for the various departments. Each committee deals with four departments. The key element is that there's an exposure to all of the members in this committee who are government members on some of the tough realities that face us. We have to make difficult choices, and they will continue to be made in the future as we tackle our deficit. I ask members of the opposition parties who are dealing with this one specific item just to keep that in mind.

I do believe that John has pointed out a very valuable aspect of the intern program. I think there is a way around this, a win/win situation. We're talking about approximately a \$70,000 shortfall. Why don't we make a commitment here in terms of our own respective caucus budgets? If we as the government caucus were to commit \$40,000 of the \$70,000 – that's close to 60 percent of the total amount – out of our existing funds to enhance our research, enhance the activities that we perform, and if the two opposition parties were to split the mere \$30,000 left at \$15,000 apiece . . . Percy, out of your budget that we just approved, a 17 percent increase, I'm sure you can find \$15,000 you can earmark for activities related to research and things that some of the interns are involved in and, John, if you can do the same with your caucus and we can do that with ours, we come out of it a win/win. Wouldn't that be great for everybody? I'm glad you're nodding in agreement, Percy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Whitemud, you're in a very peculiar position here because you've already spoken on the motion.

Lacombe, you're next.

MR. MOORE: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Well, I agree with what John has said. He quoted from letters. It's a credit to these past interns that they take the time to write and let us know the benefits they've received from it. I feel that that's a credit to them, and we very much appreciate hearing that. I would think we should take note of it, and I'm glad he has read into the records very well that they are appreciated, that they know the value they got from it.

When we look at our economic realities today, however, there are four people in Alberta that would benefit from this, four interns or whatever we had on it this year. You say it's not much, but I'm sure that any four out there – and we don't know what it would be in

another year – are very responsible people. Don't say that they're sitting out there waiting for us to have this program for them, because I think that they, like all citizens, realize the economic times we're in. The young people know that too. They remind us every day that we're leaving them a legacy of debt. You've all heard that. I'm sure they're saying, "We don't want to create more." They're responsible people just like the ones who had it before were responsible and wrote these letters back to us. They told us that it was beneficial; they enjoyed it and were better people because of it. By the same token, the young people out there will accept the economic reality like we around this Legislature have to, and regrettably – and I say regrettably – we must look at these areas and say that for now we cannot entertain going forward with this.

I support the motion from the Member for Cypress-Redcliff for the acceptance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The chair can stretch the bounds here. If the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud wishes to make an observation in response to the question as raised by Taber-Warner, the chair will allow that but not discussion going further around the whole topic of the motion.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I was going to move a motion specific to his discussion if you would permit me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it would have to be an amendment, because what we have here is to approve the budget which is here, which is strictly dealing with the legislative interns.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, for clarification.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clarification, Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: There's no motion necessary, Percy. We've already approved the budget for the Liberal caucus, the Official Opposition, and the government caucuses. What I'm talking about is earmarking internally from that budget. That's what you were nodding agreement to.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, but I want to see it being formalized in that all three caucuses do it.

MR. BOGLE: Well, I trust you, Percy. Don't worry; we'll take care of ours. I'm sure you'll take care of yours.

MR. WICKMAN: Do you have an agreement from the others? Mr. Chairman, I'd be more comfortable to have it on the record.

The other thing it would do, too, if the chairman is going to allow me to make the motion . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not at this moment. The chair has another procedural problem. The procedural problem, aside from how many times we speak to it, is the fact that the motion is here to approve the budget as proposed. If you approve the budget as proposed, the program finishes.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I believe the Member for Taber-Warner has made a generous offer on how the program could be saved with the indication of a desire, at least, to co-operate on the part of the Liberal caucus. I would like to indicate a desire on the part of the New Democrats to do the same. So what we're looking for is a way we can bring effect to this proposal brought forward. I'm doing so without a specific mandate from my colleagues, but we'll just take it to them really fast. We have a second problem

because of the reduction that's already there in the budget, but I'm quite sure that we could make this work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, in terms of the procedural issue now the chair must direct it to the Member for Cypress-Redcliff to see whether or not that member wishes to withdraw the motion. Then you can do an undertaking after that. [interjections]

2:39

MR. BOGLE: Is there a misunderstanding, Mr. Chairman? Well, let's be clear. The motion before the committee is that the program be terminated, and it's going to take you – what? – three months in the new fiscal year to do that. My suggestion on the win/win was that out of the existing budgets, global budgets approved, each caucus can tackle a portion of that. There's been verbal agreement from all three caucuses now that that indeed can be done. So that's something we do internally.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. But we then do it beyond three months. It was that three-month thing. This budget would look after the first three months.

MR. BOGLE: That's right; it's past the three months. The way I described it is that we would handle that through our research component. We'll find other activities. I know our executive director is imaginative. He can work on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have some other issues that come out of this. It's great that there is this consensus that the program will continue beyond June.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, then. I don't know what you're talking about.

We have other problems with this. The budget that's prepared makes no provision to do any kind of advertising to get a new batch.

MR. BOGLE: You don't have to. Nobody's asking you to. This program dies according to this motion. What we are trying to develop is an ad hoc way that internally, within our respective budgets, we can carry – we've all got research components, so we use a little imagination. But your official intern program ceases to exist at the end of the three months in the new fiscal year as per this motion. There's no continuation of the intern program.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Then each one of your caucuses will be running an intern program.

MR. BOGLE: I'm not putting words in anybody else's mouth. I said that we could expand our research component in our caucus, and we've got concurrence from the other two caucuses that within our existing resources – no new dollars – we will have within our research component an element that resembles what you have in your internship.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Each caucus will supervise its own persons.

MR. BOGLE: They'll be our staff; they won't be your staff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. That's very useful from our point of view.

Is this further clarification before I call the question, which is to approve this present budget?

MR. WICKMAN: On the point made by the Member for Taber-Warner, I think his offer is more than generous when one looks at the figures that are being quoted, \$40,000 and then the \$30,000 split between the other two, because traditionally – and I assume it would continue – the Conservative caucus has gotten two interns, we've gotten one, and the New Democrats have gotten one. So I have no problems with the figures that are being used. The only regret I have in what he's done – and certainly I go along with what he's saying – is that we lose the formality of the intern program. In other words, in the budget a year down the road that won't even be part of budget preparation, so we would have to start all over. But in anticipation of, let's say, some substantial changes within the membership of this Legislative Assembly, maybe things will be somewhat different and there'll be different points of view, and maybe it'll be viewed differently. So on an ad hoc basis, yes, this is good. I guess it's the best we're going to get.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The question is before us. One more point of clarification.

MR. McINNIS: I had the same confusion as you did, Mr. Chairman. I thought what we were talking about was transferring funds from the caucus offices into the internship program to keep it going. What is being talked about is, for example, the Conservative caucus running some kind of a temporary research program where they bring people in for a brief period of time rather than continuation of the internship program.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion before us is to approve the budget as proposed, section 9, Legislative Interns. All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed?

MR. McINNIS: May I have a recorded vote, please?

MR. CHAIRMAN: A recorded vote. Thank you. All those in favour of the motion, please signify. The Member for Lloydminster, the Member for Lacombe, Grande Prairie, Taber-Warner . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. What are you doing now? Are you just recording the vote?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's a recorded vote on our last motion, which was to approve . . .

MR. BOGLE: Are you switching your vote, Percy?

MR. WICKMAN: No, no, but this is clearly with the understanding that we've made a commitment to what the Member for Taber-Warner has said.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Then we'll deal with the budget, bringing it back next year. At least this gives us room.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. All right; for purposes of the record we have . . .

MRS. SHUMYLA: Lloydminster, Lacombe, Grande Prairie, Taber-Warner.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And Edmonton-Whitemud and Cypress-Redcliff.

Opposed, the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. Thank you.

Hon. members, I think we'll take just a five-minute break. We'll reconvene at 10 minutes to 3.

[The committee adjourned from 2:47 p.m. to 2:53 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we have a quorum. Public Information Branch, Dr. Garrison.

DR. GARRISON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In case anybody wondered what the name of this branch was and where it came from, it used to be two branches. Last year's budget was actually two budgets, incorporating the old *Hansard* budget and the visitor services budget. Diane has circulated to everybody, I believe, a chart that looks like this, a functional organization chart.

At a previous meeting when the budget first came up, one of the members asked about a sectional breakdown: how much is designated out of this amount for visitor services and how much for *Hansard*. As you can see from the sectional breakdown that's behind page 1 – it's about four pages into this section – it's not a simple split between *Hansard* and visitor services. The branch actually is now split five different ways, and the reason I circulated this functional organization chart to everybody was to give you a general idea of how the new public information branch is split up and what all the duties are that are covered by each area.

Mr. Chairman, did you wish me to go through page by page, or how would you like us to go through it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, certainly start with that overview page. There might be questions raised there. Then we can start to work on through.

DR. GARRISON: Okay. One thing I should note is that one new responsibility that this branch has is the funds for subscriptions to sessional documents: votes, Bills, and *Journals* in particular. That used to be covered by the MLA Administration budget. It's now being transferred to our budget. We have had the responsibility for distributing all these items and for handling the printing for some time anyway.

Other items that are being transferred from MLA Admin include the MLA school photographs and copies of the Budget Address and the estimates, which the Assembly pays for, that are supplied to all the members and to members of the public who request it.

Under the manpower portion, because of the reorganization we were able to leave two nonpermanent full-time positions unfilled. Some of that work was covered by additional wage dollars, but basically if you compare the manpower allocations, you'll see that we've gone down by about 1.3 staff-years.

One other point I should make is that the *Hansard* budget in recent years has been based on budgeting for 90 sitting days, but in this current budget, because we're looking at a 5 percent decrease, we decided to budget for 85 sitting days. I should mention just as a footnote that since I've been in this job, since 1985, only one time has the House sat more than 80 days in a fiscal year.

Under Supplies and Services, at the committee's request we went to a number of teachers' conferences in the last year. We also had an exhibit at several trade shows and exhibitions. That is now being budgeted for a smaller number than was in the budget last year.

We also include advertising. One ad that we put in at the end of last session was simply a notification to the public of all the Bills the Assembly passed in the session and an invitation to them to call us or to call their MLAs for information.

Basically, I think that covers the main highlights, but if anybody has any questions, I'd be glad to try to answer them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Are there any questions or comments on that opening section? Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I would move that we accept Public Information Branch as presented.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Edmonton-Whitemud, speaking to the motion for approval of the whole budget.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. Just one question, though, directed to page 1, if I could. Mr. Chairman, on page 1 I'm trying to identify specifically the portion that is related to visitor services, the tours throughout the Leg. and so on and so forth. What impact, if any, has there been in that area?

DR. GARRISON: You mean: is the tourist service somehow being reduced as a result of this budget?

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. Is there any impact on the level of service in terms of visitors coming to the Legislative Assembly? Will they see the same fine, courteous hosting and such that they've received in the past?

DR. GARRISON: That level of service won't be affected by this budget.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional comments? Call for the question with respect to the motion of approval? All those in favour of the adoption of the budget proposed, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously.

Thank you, Dr. Garrison, and thanks to your staff.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I'd just observe that on one particular estimate I really appreciate the way the information was provided and broken down in several different ways between functions. It was well presented, and I thank the Clerk, especially, for my request that it be done. It was done well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Section 11, Legislature Library.

MR. McDOUGALL: Mr. Chairman, the Legislature Library is projecting a '93-94 budget which will result in a 9.7 percent decrease from the previous fiscal year. The Salaries, Wages and Employee Benefits manpower control group is a 7.7 percent decrease, which is a result of abolishing one of the management positions under the voluntary separation allowance program and reassigning the duties through reclassification. What we're doing there is forming a team: the two remaining managers and one of the technicians to assume the leadership role and management role in the library.

Supplies and Services. There's a 13.6 percent decrease in this control group. That's as a consequence of transferring the remaining cost of the MLA book project – the biographical entries, which haven't been completed – to Wages, we've reduced the allowance for Hosting, and there'll be fewer printing requirements in 1993-94. So those savings result in an overall decrease of 13.6 percent in that control group.

Finally, in Purchase of Fixed Assets we are reducing that control group by 75 percent. We've budgeted for some microfilm storage cabinets but no major office equipment items.

So the overall decrease in the library's budget, as outlined here, would be 9.7 percent.

3:03

MR. CHAIRMAN: Questions or comments with respect to that overview of the library? Thank you. The Member for Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Chairman, I move  
the sum of \$912,344 as the Legislature Library 1993-1994 budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.  
Further discussion?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A call for the question. All those in favour of the option of the budget as proposed, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously.

Thank you, Mr. McDougall, with thanks to your staff. There are a lot of unsung heroines there.

Information Systems, number 12 in your book. Mr. Gano.

MR. GANO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Going to the overview for Information Systems Services, we're projecting an 18.4 percent reduction in the budget over the '92-93 levels. That reduction is due mainly to a 45.9 percent decrease under fixed assets, and that is a result of the completion of the integrated library system. We've managed to complete that this year.

As well, looking under salaries and wages we notice a 1.5 percent increase. This is due mainly to an increase in rates for Alberta health care and Blue Cross. However, those increases are partially offset by a voluntary reduction of one person's time by 10 percent.

That about covers the overview. If there are any questions, I'll be glad to entertain them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any questions?

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I'd be prepared to move the acceptance of it. All I understand is the dollar figure. I don't understand what all the words mean the way it's put together, but I understand that the proposal is down 18 percent, and I'd be prepared to move that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. A motion to approve the budget as proposed.

MR. McINNIS: Well, I understand that we're working on a long-term plan to provide computing services and equipment to the Legislative Assembly and its various offices. I'm very pleased that we do have a computer in my constituency office, which aids the work there considerably and makes the office considerably more productive, but with respect to the plan, I still don't have access to a machine in the Assembly. I'd like to know when I could reasonably expect that I would have access to a computer in the Legislative Assembly.

DR. McNEIL: Mr. Chairman, this committee set certain allocation levels for each caucus, and there was a certain number of computers allocated per member of the caucus. It's entirely up to the caucus to determine the allocation of the computers that they have allocated to them. As there is already an allocation for members of the caucus – it's not one per member, but it's one for every four members at this point in time.

MR. McINNIS: A supplementary question. So there is to be no further allocation of equipment? The allocations have been made, and that's a formula based on one computer for each four members, plus there are some for staff as well, I presume, within the caucus. This budget doesn't provide any increase in available equipment at all? This is simply to maintain what we have?

DR. McNEIL: Correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Not on this one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional comments with respect to section 12, Information Systems? If not, is there a call for the question with respect to approval of the budget?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

Thank you, Mr. Gano. I appreciate all the efforts, and the Speaker very much appreciates the various bits of software and hardware that you have been able to encourage me to use. Thank you. You may ask Robert Day what his postscript was to that.

Section 13, which should be reasonably easy to deal with, the Electoral Boundaries Commission. Earlier comments today really do cover this, but let's review it. Everybody agrees with the figures on that page?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed. Thank you.  
Edmonton-Whitemud, you have a comment?

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah; just two comments I wanted to make. First of all, I think an excellent job was done over here, and the administration have to be commended.

I do want to make reference again to the intern program. I'm a little concerned that it may be too loosey-goosey, and I would hope that at the appropriate time the three chiefs of staff can go forward and work out the mechanisms to make sure it happens properly, because it has to be done in co-operation with the three caucuses.

MR. BOGLE: No.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah. Yeah, it does, Bob. Come on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's clarify what we are indeed talking about.  
Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, an offer was made in good faith by the government caucus to absorb approximately 60 percent of a cost. That cost was based on some comments made by John that the services could be absorbed and integrated into our caucus budget, the \$40,000 figure, and we would offer to do that on the basis that the two opposition caucuses would split 50-50 the remaining \$30,000. So there's \$15,000, so I don't know what you're talking about, Percy.

There's no formalization. The internship program comes to an end, as we've agreed to. Each of our caucuses has dollars for research work. We all do research work, which was a major component of the intern program. What I've suggested is that in the three caucuses, they on their own, individually, develop this capacity

through their research components. There's nothing that's going to be formalized. You're not going to sit down and do something else, so it's merely an offer made.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I can just respond to that, I accept what's being said. The only thing I'm saying is that in addition to that, to the Member for Taber-Warner, there's a certain aspect of the intern program that differs from the other research staff in that there's a certain comradeship that is developed. There are certain aspects they do jointly, and they learn from each other. Our research staff do not do that type of thing; it's not traditional. There has to be a co-ordinating force, and the three chiefs of staff can simply sit down and agree, "This is the mechanism that we're going to allow for these gatherings, to take place in the Speaker's office, for example," so that they can benefit on an ad hoc basis. I agree that it's an ad hoc basis. The full maximization of the concept: let's not lose that. It's very, very valuable.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, how long has it been since the interns stopped rotating amongst the three caucuses?

MR. CHAIRMAN: About four years, I think.

MR. WICKMAN: They still get together for functions. They get together for a number of activities.

MR. BOGLE: Well, you get together with your researchers and your intern; we'll get together with ours, thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm just thinking that if the chiefs of staff . . .

3:13

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members.  
Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Well, with what's been said, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud voted to terminate the legislative internship program without understanding what he was voting for. He now says, if I heard him correctly, that he didn't vote to terminate the program. So on that basis I would suggest, since he voted with the majority, that he move a motion to reconsider so that we can revisit the matter. I'm in a position where I can't move that motion because I voted against it. But since he is with the majority, perhaps he could move a motion to reconsider, and we can get him back to a position where he understands what he's voting on.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I could respond to that, I understand fully what I'm voting on. What I voted on was not to eliminate a program. I would appreciate if the member did not put words into my mouth. I voted on approving an expenditure of \$22,000 supplemented with the generosity offered by the Member for Taber-Warner, which you agreed to, I agreed to, and which provides for enough program to keep an intern thing going on an ad hoc basis. Next year, hopefully, we can deal with it on a different basis, but this at least keeps it going. There was no motion in this Chamber to eliminate that program, and I resent that type of misleading representation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members.

That gives occasion for me to point out for the record that the various letters which the office of the Speaker has received have been copied and duly handed out to all members for your study.

Also, those letters will be responded to with copies of today's transcript.

One other item. Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: You've got one other item? I was going to make a motion, but it would kill your item.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No; that's quite fine. Go ahead.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I was going to move we adjourn, but if you've got one other item you want to get on, we'd better not do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We do have the item that's with respect to the binders. Clerk, if you'd like to speak to that, please.

DR. McNEIL: My question is as to whether or not the members wish us to collect the binders now and correct them overnight, or we can just provide inserts in the morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's the understanding of the chair that we are about to receive a motion to adjourn. We do have other items on our agenda to be dealt with. We have time tomorrow. Also, for purposes of information, the chairman of the committee on parliamentary reform will be with us at 9:30, followed immediately by the chairman of Legislative Offices Committee. So we'll try to deal with the committee readjustments first.

Motion to adjourn, I understand, by Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the other items, 5(a), (b), (c), (d). We're not going to attempt to deal with those today?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tomorrow.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there a call for the question on the motion to adjourn?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

[The committee adjourned at 3:17 p.m.]



