

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

9:47 a.m.

[Chairman: Dr. Carter]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members. We'll now come to order. The reason for the delay, especially for those who are not able to climb the stairs to come and sit in the gallery and to listen firsthand to what's transpiring here, is that Legislative Assembly staff were working till just before midnight last night trying to make the adjustments that were passed yesterday, most of which, as you recall, were reductions. Again this morning some last-minute wrinkles were discovered, so the binders are being incorporated and being brought over as soon as possible.

Before I go to our first item of business – and you've now had distributed to you revised estimates for the committee on parliamentary reform – as chairman but also as Speaker I am saddened to announce that Blake McDougall has chosen to take advantage of the retirement package and will be leaving the employ of the Assembly officially as of the last day of June this year. Blake has been an exemplary employee and has been a fine librarian in this last number of years. Recognizing his many skills, we then had him appointed to the rank of assistant deputy minister to help the Clerk. I must also state for those of you who perhaps do not know Blake as many of us have come to know him, especially at the managers' meetings with the Legislative Assembly, that he has an incredible sense of humour. The other thing that's hidden away in his background is that like some other people I know, he comes from near Moose Jaw. He comes from Boharm. While we will indeed have a suitable farewell for this fine employee and my dear friend, I wanted to mention today to members of the Members' Services Committee, because you have worked closely with Blake over the years, that he is leaving, and we hope to bigger and better things. Thank you.

The chairman of the committee on parliamentary reform is with us, and he's about to convene the meeting of his committee at 10 o'clock in the Confederation Room. So, Mr. Gogo, would you be kind enough to lead us through the revised budget, please.

MR. GOGO: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. Following the government's motion last year to do something meaningful about parliamentary reform, a committee was constructed. As I mentioned yesterday, it was reduced to nine members to effect a reduction in costs. The committee had planned various activities.

Following yesterday's meeting where the Government House Leader had indicated that indeed the Assembly may sit the week of April 19th to the 22nd and from then on not knowing how long – I think he mentioned perhaps even July – I took that back to the committee following the meeting here, Mr. Chairman, and indicated that. The committee in its wisdom felt that, well, if the Legislature is going to be sitting during that period, then it's probably not likely that committee members would be able to travel. The committee may recall that yesterday I had indicated that the plans of the committee were to send perhaps two members to Victoria, two to Ottawa, two to the maritimes, and so on, traveling on economy fares to seek the views of other people. In view of the Government House Leader's comments yesterday, the committee has reconsidered the budget, which has now been distributed, and the travel of members of the committee to those jurisdictions has now been eliminated.

The travel expense of \$15,000 in the revised budget which members have is there, Mr. Chairman, to pay for presenters, if any, that may come to the committee. I mentioned yesterday that the plans of the committee were to advertise, which has now been

contracted to, and I'll speak to that in a moment. Letters have been written, and we anticipate that by May 14, which is the deadline, we'll receive many, many presentations.

The Government House Leader also raised the question, under the item Travel by Presenters, how that would be decided. The way that will be decided by the committee on parliamentary reform, Mr. Chairman, is that depending on what those briefs read, the committee then may invite individuals who have made submissions from across Alberta. Perhaps I could remind the committee that the proposal was four from Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, Peace River, and so on. We don't know that that will occur, but the committee on parliamentary reform, which takes its job very seriously, is of the view that depending on the content of those presentations, rather than the committee traveling to those areas – although that has not been ruled out, because in the resolution it authorizes the committee really to travel anywhere to seek the views of people on parliamentary reform. However, that budget's been reduced substantially, and as members see, the travel budget is now down to \$15,000. The total committee budget presented, Mr. Chairman, has been reduced some \$20,000-odd to \$101,000.

Speaking to the advertising, the committee felt very strongly, and that was why the decision was made to advertise the role of the Parliamentary Reform Committee. That contract has been placed with the various newspapers. The publication of that ad provincewide in dailies and weeklies will be on April 14. Because that contract is in place, if the contract were to be canceled, there would still be a cost of some \$22,000. The committee felt very strongly that not only the government but the Legislative Assembly, by virtue of the government motion that was passed by the House, is very sincere in seeking the views of Albertans and others on the whole question of parliamentary reform.

So there, Mr. Chairman, is the revised budget for hon. members, and I would answer or attempt to answer any questions that members may put.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

MR. BOGLE: First, on the cancellation of the contract, could we have some clarification on this matter? I'm assuming this work is done through Leg. Assembly.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, we contracted with Parallel Strategies to co-ordinate and produce the ad. That's been done at a cost of some \$900. The delivery cost throughout Alberta would be \$1,200. The cost for that consultant to come and spend a day and a half with the committee was \$850. The cancellation charge for the daily newspapers, because they've now had the makeup of the ad and so on, is \$1,200, 15 percent of the total advertising. The largest portion of the cost is with the weekly newspapers. They've now commenced printing the ad for the April 12 release, so the cancellation charge there would be 50 percent of the total, some \$18,000. So the total cancellation cost would be \$22,736.25 to the best of our knowledge.

MR. BOGLE: Well, I am again extremely distressed that a committee would authorize an expenditure that had not been approved. That has not been customary for select special committees of the Assembly. I'll wait and see if there are any other questions on advertising, and then we'll deal with other elements in the budget.

MR. McINNIS: Well, I think I share the concern of the Member for Taber-Warner. If the parliamentary process works at all, it works to gain popular approval for expenditure before it's made. We're kind of on the horns of a dilemma with cancellation costs of \$22,000,

which would essentially amount to nothing, so I'm sure the chair appreciates that this committee is in an awkward position.

I would just like to say as well that I appreciate that the travel by the committee has been axed. As I think I said yesterday, our caucus reviewed this matter at some length and considered that we would not take any part in travel by this committee because the nature of the agenda items that are before them is such that we have plenty of material on hand, easily accessible, which can be used to make a decision. What's needed in most of these areas is that decisions have to be made.

Those would be my comments.

9:57

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: No, I'll pass right now, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional comments? Thank you. Additional questions with respect to the budget of this select special committee?

Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Yesterday discussed meetings held by the committee: it's my understanding a meeting was held yesterday?

MR. GOGO: Yes.

MR. BOGLE: How many were in attendance at that meeting, please?

MR. GOGO: I would have to check the minutes, but we had five, followed by four, followed by three.

MR. BOGLE: Out of nine?

MR. GOGO: Of the nine; yes.

MR. BOGLE: I'd like to suggest that we take a short break.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We'll stand adjourned until 2 minutes past 10.

[The committee adjourned from 9:58 a.m. to 10:04 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members. Now, at the time of adjournment the chair had recognized the Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: I concluded my comments, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
The Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I listened intently to the chairman of the committee's overview this morning, and I accept that \$50,000 has been spent to advise Albertans. They'll be well informed. Therefore, I don't think that it's necessary for us to travel too extensively. I don't think that's necessary because we've now informed them that they have the mechanism to reply, make their submissions, and make a worthwhile contribution to the process. Therefore, I don't think that we need that \$15,326 that is allocated for travel. I'll make a motion
that that \$15,326 be deleted from the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

We now have a motion by the Member for Lacombe to delete that item, so it will now be members wishing to speak to that motion on that specific item. The chair did have a note here – Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the first question: is the Member for Lacombe referring to the revised budget that's been presented this morning, or is he referring to the previous budget? There is some confusion if he's referring to the new budget, because the travel for committee members in the new budget is eliminated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member for Lacombe, would you like to clarify it for Edmonton-Whitemud, please.

MR. MOORE: I was referring to the revised one that we were given this morning, and I do not see the need for that travel. I can't put it any more clearly to the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. With the extensive advertising we have, we have advised the public, Albertans right across this province, of the process and the due course they can take to submit any input they want to the committee for consideration. I just say that there is no need for travel and that to follow up. That additional expense is not necessary because Albertans generally – well, right across the board – have that opportunity and access to the process.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, we went through a process dealing with travel yesterday where we showed significant reductions, eliminated basically spousal travel in the major one, and the other spousal travel will go. I think we've headed in the right direction when we recognize that the need for travel by Members of the Legislative Assembly is not an essential item. It is one of those things that can go. I guess we should have gone just a bit further yesterday in the House services committee when we talked in terms of travel. I read comments in the paper about travel this morning. The difficulty I have is with the inconsistency, when I read about objections to the travel that was approved and then I read about a member going on a mission for \$10,000. I read about a member in Japan right now. I read about a member that's been over to Japan, over then to Britain and all over, all being sent over by the Premier of the province, who is objecting to what we're doing here without knowing the facts.

Mr. Chairman, we made a dramatic move in the right direction yesterday, and we've made another dramatic move here by eliminating this travel by committee members. But let's not go too far, to the Member for Lacombe. This is travel by presenters. We want this to be a fair process so that Albertans are entitled to come and make a presentation. Now, the public may object to me traveling, to you traveling, but they're not going to object to somebody who is informed coming to Edmonton to make a presentation that will allow for parliamentary reform to occur. So I think the member has gone off in the wrong direction on this particular one, and we've got to tackle it from a more sensible type approach. When we get back to travel for committee members, we can deal with that, but I guess I'm a little frustrated this morning, Mr. Chairman, because having read the *Edmonton Sun* and reading the comments of our Premier, who maybe isn't getting enough sleep lately, there's something there bothering me deeply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sure most of us here aren't getting enough sleep. Thank you.

Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I'm a little confused by the tack that the hon. Liberal member is taking this morning in the committee. He's railing against MLAs traveling, but he appears to be speaking in favour of a fund to allow numerous Albertans to travel at taxpayers' expense in connection with the work of the Parliamentary Reform Committee. I'm having a little trouble figuring out the path that the Liberals are taking in terms of how Legislature committees are to function.

Yesterday the leader of the Liberal Party produced the grand plan to solve the problems of Alberta. He produced a document called *Mandate for Change*, and it appears to me that the whole substance of their direction on budget policy is to make more powerful committees of this Legislative Assembly, of which there are four: human services and the environment, economic planning, education and careers, and protection services and government affairs. These committees are going to meet day and night during the legislative session to somehow solve the budget problems of the province of Alberta. I would have thought the leader of the Liberal Party himself might come forward and present his solutions to the budget problems of Alberta rather than suggesting more committees.

It seems to me that we also learned yesterday that Liberal members of this Legislature are today collecting per diems from the taxpayers while the Legislative Assembly is in session, lining their own pockets beyond the sums that we pay them in terms of indemnity and expense allowance. Now they come along saying that they're going to have more of these committees meeting more of the time; presumably it means more per diems for more Liberal members. So I really think we'd better have out on the table where we're heading with this.

I'm going to support the motion because I think travel is a problem. I don't care how you do it; I don't see anybody picking and choosing, among presenters to a committee, who gets funded and who doesn't get funded. I think the only way I know that that could be done would be to have some kind of modified spoil system where various caucuses get to choose their witnesses and the funding provided. In the absence of any policy and procedure in terms of how we dole out this kind of funding, I'm going to support the motion to eliminate it, and I'm a little surprised that the Liberals are in favour of providing this kind of funding at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Additional comments on the motion? Call for the question? Does the mover wish to sum up?

MR. MOORE: Yeah, I would. I just find it difficult to follow the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. I wonder where he's been for the last few months. He goes back and says: all these trips. Has he not been listening to the Premier of this province talking about trips? He quoted the *Sun*. Surely he should read the *Sun* and see where the Premier of this province has set a policy about travel and is very strong in it. Now that we try to implement what the Premier said, he is against it, saying that we are depriving someone of their entitlement, saying, if I go back to his words: "Albertans are entitled to come." He apparently didn't even listen to the chairman of the committee across there. He explained fully how he had gone out, his advertising program, how Albertans are informed and how they can come in. Nobody has been deprived of their entitlement as Albertans. It's wide open, and a very accessible process is in place, Mr. Chairman. The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, I don't know where he's coming from. I have no idea.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The matter before us is the elimination of the budget item of \$15,326. All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

The Member for Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a motion on Other Expenditures, Pay to Members of the Legislative Assembly. I want to my motion to read

that payment would be \$9,500.

The reason I say that is because all members are busy. We're going to be coming into the House here very shortly, and I think this is justifiable in that amount.

10:14

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Is there discussion on that motion by the Member for Lloydminster?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

Additional comments or questions with respect to the committee as a whole? The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I want to get back to the advertising, the \$50,000, and speak generally on the sheet we have here in front of us. It's an unfortunate situation that we have entered into a buy-out contract of \$22,000. It's unfortunate that the committee did overstep its bounds, but knowing the member seated over here, he is one of those that I have had respect for in the House, and I'm sure that he didn't do something to be deceptive. I just hear some tones over there: it's sort of like when the fork's in, you twist it a bit, and a little bit of hurt is what the member is going through.

Putting all that aside, if we look at the \$22,000 that it would cost to cancel and then look at the difference between the remaining amount of \$28,000, and then we talk in terms now where even the opportunity for presenters to come forward to be questioned – if they have some real expertise to offer, that opportunity is denied them. If we don't allow for some advertising, some communication, what type of public participation process are we getting ourselves into? I've become extremely concerned with the priorities that are being established and citizens being deprived of opportunity to participate fully in these really important issues. Again, Mr. Chairman, I state that I don't think it's necessary for committee members to travel all over, but give Albertans the opportunity to participate to the fullest extent. I don't think, under the circumstances, we now have any choice but to allow for a reasonable advertising budget. I guess my question now would become: if we cancel the contract for that \$22,000 buy-out or penalty, do we at least get \$22,000 worth of advertising?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chairman of the committee.

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Chairman, perhaps I didn't explain it clearly enough earlier. The committee committed itself in the last fiscal year, March 31, not this fiscal year, to an expenditure to live up to the resolution, the government motion passed by this Assembly last July. That was to seek the views of Albertans, and one of the ways of doing that was to advertise to request their views, something that government has done as a consistent practice. Because of that contract, and I explained earlier, the total cost to get that request out for seeking the views of Albertans was \$50,000. To cancel it would be \$22,000. The only publicity, if that's the question by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, I assume would be headlines in the press if it's canceled. That would probably be a lot of publicity.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, under the circumstances I think we have very little choice but to approve the expenditure, and I'm

inclined to do that. I heard the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud say that he doesn't favour MLAs traveling all around the province. The paper that his leader presented yesterday said these new committees

will hold public, scheduled meetings throughout Alberta to discuss the departments within their 'envelope.' Persons or groups with interest in these departments would be encouraged to attend and make submissions.

I'm just wondering who speaks for the Liberal Party. I also am quite serious about the concern that we continue to have a loophole where members can collect per diem allowances during legislative sessions, and as I said, the other part of this proposal is a considerable number of meetings and hearings during the legislative session. So I'd like to give notice of motion that at the next meeting of this committee I will move to change the Members Services orders so that there is no longer a provision to collect per diem when the House is in session. I'll work with Parliamentary Counsel to get the appropriately worded order to the table at the next meeting.

MR. WICKMAN: I was going to wait till the appropriate time so that the Clerk could explain what happened there to one of our members, but the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place has now brought that up twice.

Just to refresh everybody's memory, we were talking in terms of \$7,200 being paid to Members of the Legislative Assembly. That \$7,200 was being disputed because all those meetings occurred during the actual session. If I recall correctly, the gentleman's agreement called for no payment. My understanding of that \$7,200 is that I believe \$4,200 went for the chairman of the committee, a colleague of the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. That brings it down to \$3,000. Of that \$3,000 I believe \$2,600 went to pay per diems for MLAs out traveling to Australia. That brought it down to the \$400 that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon took. He filled out the wrong forms. He was claiming his per diem that he is entitled to under the rules of this committee when he is in this House for more than nine hours.

Some of those members laughing over there get that housing subsistence on an honour system. Those within a certain radius by these rules, of course, have to fill out forms to claim it, and it has to be based on more than nine hours a day. That's what the expenditure of \$400 was for, and it has been paid back.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member. The chair is a bit concerned that you indeed did identify which particular member it was when the committee as a whole chose not to do that.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, it was obvious when the Liberal . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, no. Thank you.
All right. Is there a motion? Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, I'll move
that the revised estimates for the Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform be approved so that that is based on what was presented to us this morning minus Travel Expenses of \$15,326 and reducing Pay to Members of the Legislative Assembly to \$9,500.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Further discussion? A call for the question.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

Thank you, Member for Lethbridge-West. Sorry to delay the meeting of your committee.

MR. GOGO: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe the next item that we have in the carryover from various committee budgets was the heritage savings trust fund, and that chairman is unable to be with us today. However, a letter was sent to the whole committee, so we now have the revised estimates within your estimate binder. At the beginning of that book you'll see blue-coloured sheets which show you the revised estimates.

The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

10:24

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, the chair of the heritage fund committee has written to us suggesting that he considers a 50 percent reduction in travel and payments to MLAs to be appropriate for this committee. I take the chair's word for it, and I would move

a 50 percent reduction in travel expenditure and in payments to MLAs.

I note a second comment by the member. In response to my request that the committee consider the recommendation of the Alberta Financial Review Commission to transfer the assets of the heritage fund into general revenue and what the implications of that would be for this committee, the chair says:

I have reviewed the commission report and do not find it possible to make recommendations in this regard without knowing what other steps may be taken by Government as a result of the report's findings.

I would like the Premier of this province to know that there are a lot of people paying attention to what's in the review commission report, and I'm one of them. I think a very serious issue has been raised in terms of the future of the heritage trust fund. There are many different kinds of assets in that fund, and at this point no one knows who will administer those assets. The official response by the government to the recommendation of the heritage fund is, and again I quote: "The government is committed to reviewing the Fund and will take this recommendation as input to the review." Now, that implies to me that there is yet another review of the heritage fund going on somewhere within the government. What we have is a Legislature committee with a task to do and an uncertain mandate as to how they proceed with that task and apparently another review on the other hand by another branch of the government, the shape and scope of which is not known to the public beyond the recommendation here. I just would observe that that's about the furthest thing that you can get from a financial plan for the future of the province of Alberta.

I would fight pretty hard to make sure that any review of the assets of the fund is conducted in the open by democratically elected members of the public, members of this Assembly, but I take the chair's word for it that they can do the job that needs to be done with the 50 percent reduction. That's why I've moved that. I simply observe that there are a lot of loose ends here, and I don't think that the government has provided any answers at all yet in terms of the future of the heritage savings trust fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Taber Warner, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. BOGLE: Yesterday when we considered the budget estimates for the heritage savings trust fund committee, a question was asked that while the estimate for 1992-93 was \$48,900, the actual forecast for the year is \$9,000. I asked if administration could check back on the actual for 1991-92 and whether the Travel Expenses estimate for '93-94 could not be at a lower sum. Have we been able to do that?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The actual expenditure for travel for 1991-92 for the heritage committee was \$15,510.10.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, first of all, a question on when these budgets are prepared. We have 712AOO, Travel Expenses, \$26,146; and we have 715AOO, Pay to Members of the Legislative Assembly, \$43,000. Now, when it relates to these trips outside the city, of course, members are allowed to claim a per diem equivalent to committee pay. If claimed, does that per diem show up as Pay to Members of the Legislative Assembly or does it show up under Travel Expenses?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The members claiming for attendance at committee meetings shows up under the payment portion.

MR. WICKMAN: So in other words, the amounts related directly to travel are substantially more than the \$26,000, because if you didn't have that travel, you of course wouldn't have that per diem.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's correct. I'd like to point out, if I may, committee members, that in 1991-92 the heritage committee had planned to go to Prince Rupert and budgeted funds for that particular trip. However, there were some labour difficulties encountered at the grain terminal at the time, so the trip was canceled. Hence the reason for the low expenditure for that fiscal year.

MR. WICKMAN: My other point, Mr. Chairman, is that when we look at the \$26,146 plus whatever per diems would be utilized to go along with that, what does that travel buy us? The trip to Prince Rupert?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Prince Rupert would include the airline, the hotel, the meals.

MR. WICKMAN: For how many members?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: If the whole committee goes and staff, it's 17 people.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I can understand there might be a need for a couple of people to go out there. Again we went through a similar process yesterday cutting back on numbers of delegates all over, but 17 people – this is where we've got to start getting tough. If you want to send two or three, that's fine, but 17 members: no, I do not support it. In fact, I will make a motion that we reduce the \$26,146 to 50 percent of that amount.

That will allow for the trip to Prince Rupert by a reasonable number, and it will also allow for one other trip that I understand is planned.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Chairman, is there not a motion on the floor?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Mr. Chairman, if I may. The budget estimates for . . .

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: In my remarks I moved a 50 percent reduction in Travel Expenses and a 50 percent reduction in Pay to MLAs. That's

what I did. I read the recommendation from the chair of the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know you were reading from the letter.

MR. McINNIS: And I so moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, you were in agreement. I was not aware that it had been made as a motion, and the secretary doesn't seem to have that either. All right; if that was the understanding. Okay.

This then changes a lot of the discussion too. Fifty percent on the travel . . .

MR. BOGLE: I think there should be clarification on the actual number for both travel and payment. A 50 percent reduction from what, John, please?

MR. McINNIS: There are two sets of figures. I was moving a 50 percent reduction from the figures presented yesterday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the blue sheet that's here today. It's easy enough to get confused when we're all trying to be . . .

MR. McINNIS: That's what this is?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

Let's adjourn for five minutes.

[The committee adjourned from 10:31 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. We have checked the record; we did not have a prior motion. What we do have is a motion as moved by Edmonton-Whitemud, and it reads thusly:

With respect to the revised estimates for the heritage savings trust fund, the Travel Expenses of \$26,146 be reduced by 50 percent to result in a figure of \$13,073 and, further, Pay to Members of the Legislative Assembly, which is shown in the record as \$43,708, be reduced by 50 percent to \$21,854.

That is the motion before us on the floor.

Speaking to that particular motion, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I do have a question. The revised estimates were presented this morning. I take it that when we go through these, those are taken as moved by somebody in the committee, and then we proceed with motions using that as a base hence in support.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Generally, what we've done – because the chairmen, even if they are here, do not have the right to move it within this committee – is take amendments as they come along. As in the case of Parliamentary Reform we had two separate motions which amended the revised estimates, and then the motion to approve was basically approving the revisions as amendments having been passed. So we can take this motion now, pass it or reject it, and then go on to other motions to pass or reject. When we think we've worked our way through the whole estimate, then we will have one motion to accept the whole budget for this committee as approved.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I just have a question for the mover of the motion and the amendment that we're discussing. The amount that he put in for Travel Expenses appears to be an average somewhere between what was spent last year and what was spent

two years ago, so I understand that to be kind of a ballpark in terms of the past performance of the committee.

The figure for Pay to MLAs, \$21,854: how does he structure that? I'm just curious, because the original budget estimate was \$77,000 and last year's actual \$40,000. I just wondered what he's proposing in terms of the operation of the committee in the coming year. What does he propose that they do for the \$21,854?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, you've spoken moving your motion. I need to see if there are some other people interested in speaking to this.

Additional comments at this stage? Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, I think it's unfortunate we got both of that in one motion. I think it would simplify it if it were split into two motions, because some of us may agree on the one and not agree on the other. I hate to vote against it, and then somebody else just puts another motion to do the same thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it agreeable to the committee to split the motion? The chair can do it certainly.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Then we'll be dealing with the first part only at this stage as moved by Edmonton-Whitemud.

The question as raised by Edmonton-Jasper Place was with respect to the pay to the members; correct?

MR. McINNIS: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. The first motion before us is with respect to reducing Travel Expenses 50 percent from this figure of \$26,146 to \$13,073. A call for the question on that particular one?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, do you wish to sum up on that motion?

MR. WICKMAN: No, except that by the time we get finished with this travel I may not even be able to get back to the south side.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I see. A call for the question. For those persons who are listening to this but are not present to see the figures: all those in favour of the motion with respect to a 50 percent reduction in Travel Expenses as published on today's version? Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

The chair takes it that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud then moves a 50 percent reduction on this figure of the revised estimates, which would result in the change from \$43,708 to \$21,854. Hon. member.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, speaking to it. The 50 percent reduction may be a difficult figure to relate to the earlier motion. The intent is that when you reduce the travel expenditures by 50 percent, then it's going to reduce substantially the pay to members because that per diem is no longer payable to those persons doing that traveling, but as to whether it's going to be 50 percent, it's very, very unlikely to have the support of the committee. Possibly if the motion was reworded – except then we're not going to have the final figure at this time. If the motion was worded:

and a reduction in pay to members corresponding to the savings as a result of the reduction in Travel Expenses.

I'm not sure if Dr. McNeil can give us that figure right now. For example, is 50 percent a fair figure?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The reduction of 50 percent in Pay to MLAs: the chairman's salary of \$4,200 still has to be taken into consideration. That is part of the \$21,854. So the balance of that will be for payment for members to attend committee meetings when they come to the capital. If there is any travel to be done to visit irrigation districts or the Prince Rupert grain terminal or any of the other projects that are funded by the heritage committee, it will have to come out of the balance of that.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if the member will find this helpful or not, but the forecast for the year just concluded has \$9,000 in Travel Expenses and \$38,800 in Pay to Members of the Legislative Assembly. It may be that he could structure a motion along those lines, relating the actual last year to what he's put this year. I don't think there'd be any difficulty in the committee living with the actual amount last year. What's happened, though, is that overnight \$30,753 was cut. He's proposing a further cut of another \$20,000, and at some point these things become quite arbitrary. You might look to last year's actual as a guide.

MR. BOGLE: I'm on the same point John was. There's quite a difference between reducing the travel expenditures of a committee and paralyzing the committee from doing its committee work here in the capital. Do we have by chance an actual cost for 1991-92 for payment to members?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The payment to members for 1991-92 was \$41,847.83, \$4,200 of which was the chairman's salary.

MR. BOGLE: So I think a case can be made that a figure either as presented by the chairman of the committee, \$43,708, or a figure very close to that would be in order based on the actual for 1991-92 and the forecast for 1992-93.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: So I would request that the member withdraw his motion.

MR. WICKMAN: I'll withdraw it or, if the member prefers, make an amendment to the \$38,800. I think the suggestion from the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is good. I think that will equate more closely to the meetings that are held and take into account at the same time the reduction in travel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon member, perhaps for the operation of the committee, would you be good enough to withdraw the motion? Is there agreement for the member to withdraw the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed. Carried unanimously. Thank you.
Now a new motion and a specific figure.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'll move
that the figure be reduced to the \$38,800.

10:55

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's the motion before us.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A call for the question. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you, hon. members: \$38,800.

Are there further motions to be dealt with here or is there an approval motion for this budget as amended?

A call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the revised budget for heritage savings trust fund? Opposed? Carried unanimously.

In addition, for the record the chairman's letter to us as the Members' Services Committee will be placed as an addendum to the minutes. Thank you.

Legislative Offices.

MR. BOGLE: Sorry. The chairman of Members' Services?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The chairman of Members' Services, Mr. Anderson.

MR. BOGLE: Members' Services? Heritage savings trust fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry; yes, the letter from him. Thank you very much. He's welcome to be chairman of the Members' Services Committee, though I must admit that it's a very stimulating part of my life. Thank you.

Legislative Offices Committee. Mr. Lund, the Member for Rocky Mountain House, is not able to be with us. We have a revised estimate in the book, it's my understanding.

Hon. members, I'll read quickly into the record, and then we'll get copies made immediately. From the chairman of the Select Standing Committee on Legislative Offices to myself as chairman of this committee. Mr. Lund says:

I make the following recommendations:

1. All guest costs for conferences within our budget be paid by some one other than the government.
2. We include in our 1993/94 budget sufficient funds for 1 delegate to attend;
 - a) Canadian Council of Public Accounts in Toronto
 - b) Government Ethics Laws in St. Paul, Minn.
 - c) Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation in Ottawa
 - d) Canadian Ombudsman Conference in Toronto.

If these recommendations are accepted then the total expenditures would be approximately \$50,460.00. This would be a reduction of [approximately] 43 percent.

A copy of this letter should be available in about two minutes' time.

MR. BOGLE: I'd like to speak to one issue first. The element will apply when we get to House Services in terms of travel to conferences as well, and that is that we should eliminate travel by members of the Assembly to conferences outside of Canada. There is one conference under the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices, and that is the COGEL conference scheduled for St. Paul, Minnesota. When I make my motion, the first part of the motion will be to eliminate our attendance at that conference and the associated dollars with it. The second part of the motion, then, would be to approve the revised budget as per the request of the chairman with the amendment being the Minnesota conference.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion before us is:

to eliminate attendance at the conference in St. Paul, Minnesota. Speaking to that motion, the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to support the motion as presented by the Member for Taber-Warner. Again I want to stress some comments that I touched on briefly earlier.

When we talk in terms of these types of expenditures, I would hope that the message that there has to be consistency is delivered back, to eliminate global or international or outside of the country travel on these particular committees. Meanwhile, see what's happening with travel in these other areas being directed obviously, apparently, by the Premier of this province: Japan, Britain, New York, L.A., on and on and on. Now, where is the consistency? It's fine to pick up the *Edmonton Sun* and say, "Eliminate it," but don't just eliminate it here. Let's eliminate it in all those departments. If there is a solid, solid need for some type of business mission that is going to bring forward some type of concrete results, that's one thing. But junkets? No. These obviously are being classified by the Premier as junkets. I would submit that he's responsible for a lot of junkets, and he should be looking at those as well.

On that note, I'm going to support the Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm glad we're all sticking to the point. Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I'm in support of the motion as well, although I'm a little confused at the comments by the member. Are there trips funded by this committee other than the ones that were named?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes. Exactly.

MR. McINNIS: Okay. So this is something altogether outside of the purview of this committee.

MR. WICKMAN: We're talking about traveling. It's all taxpayers' money.

MR. McINNIS: Well, sometimes it's difficult, Percy, to focus on the issue at hand if you're throwing other issues on the table. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. McINNIS: I'm in support of the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is:

to do away with representation by the Committee on Legislative Offices at the Governmental Ethics Laws conference in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Those in favour of that, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously. Passage of that makes for some other slight modifications. It reduces a couple of other figures: wages and so forth.

The other motion from Taber-Warner is with respect to adopting the budget as revised.

MR. McINNIS: This amounts to, in effect, a 50 percent reduction in the budget of this committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A 50 percent reduction, yes. Thank you, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Speaking to this, Lacombe?

MR. MOORE: Just one point before we move on. I'd like to talk about another conference that wasn't included in the original motion which I supported. They also go to the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, on which we have representatives coming

from Public Accounts here. They're charged with that responsibility. I find it difficult in these times to have one representative from Legislative Offices sit in at the Public Accounts, that is already covered by a duly appointed representative of this Legislature. So I'm finding that in that particular case, in the economic times that we're in, we cannot enjoy this type of exposure for our members from Legislative Offices. I would like to make a motion

that we delete the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees from the travel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, hon. Member for Lacombe, the chair needs the committee's concurrence then to request the Member for Taber-Warner to withdraw temporarily the motion to confirm the budget. If the committee is agreeable to that, then we can deal with your further motion. Is there agreement of the committee?

MR. BOGLE: I'll withdraw it so that it can be debated, but I do want to raise a caution with the member's motion when we get to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it agreed by the committee to have the motion withdrawn for the moment? Thank you.

Now then, the motion before us as moved by the Member for Lacombe is:

to do away with the representation at the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees.

Is that the one? The one in Toronto? Member for Lacombe? [interjection] Or was it A?

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I just have a comment that might have some bearing on the way the member phrases his motion. In discussing this matter with the chair of the Public Accounts Committee yesterday, he indicated that the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees is not a single conference but rather more than one conference that happen simultaneously, which would make it impossible for one person to cover. In fact, there are two different functions that are involved in our systems between the Public Accounts Committee, which supervises audit matters and policy matters in relation to public accounts, compared with this committee, Leg. Offices, which performs an audit function for the office and also a supervisory function. The chair of Public Accounts did observe that there's another conference, Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation, which is in fact one conference and is on both committees' agendas. So perhaps as a friendly suggestion the member might consider deleting the Comprehensive Auditing Foundation rather than the public accounts conference, because I understand that to be one conference whereas the Council of Public Accounts Committees conference is in fact two, and I think the savings would be quite similar.

11:05

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Lacombe, the request is: would you prefer to do away with conference C instead of conference A?

MR. MOORE: Well, we've dealt with conference B.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, that one's gone.

MR. MOORE: That's gone. We're now dealing with conference A.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The request of the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is that because at conference A there are two simultaneous conferences – it makes it very difficult to cover – perhaps it would be more appropriate to delete conference C instead of A. It's your motion, sir. I'm just clarifying.

Perhaps a five-minute break.

[The committee adjourned from 11:06 a.m. to 11:13 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members.

The Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, Mr. Chairman, has brought up some very valid points, so I'll withdraw my motion if the committee's in concurrence here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee agreed? Thank you. The motion is withdrawn; okay.

MR. MOORE: I would like to make a motion that we cancel the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation conference from this budget.

Inasmuch as they will be down in Toronto at the time of the public accounts and will have a joint meeting, it won't be necessary to go to this other one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. So the motion is: to cancel attendance by a representative of the Legislative Offices Committee at the conference of the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation in Ottawa.

MR. McINNIS: I support the motion of the hon. member, and I note in passing that he saved even more money by canceling that conference than he would have by canceling the other.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A call for the question. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

A motion by someone to approve the revised budget of the Committee on Legislative Offices? Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: I move approval of the budget of the Committee on Legislative Offices as revised.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

Yesterday section 1, Administration, was approved.

Section 2, MLA Administration. I think we need to wait on this one.

Public Accounts. The chairman, the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn, is not able to be present. Do you have a letter from this chairman?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: I'm sorry; we don't, Mr. Chairman. However, the estimates were reduced. Travel was reduced by eliminating the guest portion of conference attendance. The Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation provides for one delegate to attend the conference, in Ottawa, I believe. This has also been reflected in the payment to members because it would automatically reduce conference attendance, pension, and LTDI.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, just in the portion of payments to MLAs, the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud made a comment earlier today. He also made other comments earlier, such as that some of the Liberals didn't take the 30 percent increase, which he knows to be untrue. He also made a comment today that the member who had expensed the Public Accounts attendance during sessions paid it back. I wonder, just out of curiosity, if as an administrative matter we can find out if that's true or not.

DR. McNEIL: I have no knowledge of any payment at this point in time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Any other comments with respect to this budget? The Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: Not on that particular subject but on the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the whole Public Accounts budget, as the vice-chairman?

MR. MOORE: Well, Mr. Chairman, back on the conference setup. I look at the revised budget. Comprehensive Auditing Foundation, Ottawa, has been cut from two to one – was it? – I understand, on the recommendation. This has been in the budget year after year. We've never sent anybody, so I don't see the purpose of even keeping one delegate if we haven't sent anybody. If we look at past history, we put it in and it's not utilized. It's not utilized for one reason: the committee members themselves as a committee reject it. That should be in itself a message to us in the budgeting process. So I would say

that we should delete even the one delegate for that Comprehensive Auditing Foundation conference in Ottawa in November.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a motion of the vice-chairman of that particular committee.

Further discussion?

MR. McINNIS: I've never been to this conference. I don't know that it's accurate that we've never sent anybody, because I think I have heard tell of people having gone to the conference. Again, my thinking about this is that we've got two committees. We took the Comprehensive Auditing Foundation conference out of the Leg. Offices Committee and left them with one delegate to the Council of Public Accounts. I see we have two delegates plus a staff member, whom I presume is the Auditor General, attending the Canadian Council of Public Accounts. My suggestion would be to take one out of the Public Accounts Committee budget for the Council of Public Accounts Committees conference and leave the Comprehensive Auditing Foundation in. That's just my suggestion. That would give us one each from the two committees going to the Council of Public Accounts Committees conference and one only going to the Comprehensive Auditing Foundation.

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

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, rather than us trying to decide which delegates to send, why don't we just say to the Public Accounts Committee – we have the Deputy Chairman here; he can maybe comment – that they can have two delegates who can either go to the same convention or split them up? It's something that the committee decides, not us. The amount of money is very close to the same amount.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for the comment. The hon. Member for Lacombe is indeed the vice-chairman of that committee. Has collective wisdom accumulated in that committee?

All right. Additional comments with respect to the motion? The motion does read:

to do away with the delegate from the Committee on Public Accounts to the Comprehensive Auditing Foundation conference.

Further discussion? Call for the question.

The Member for Lacombe, in summation.

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

On page 2 of Public Accounts, delete the delegate going to Comprehensive Auditing Foundation, and again on 3.

MR. McINNIS: If I understand the net effect of what we've done, we have now three delegates going to the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees plus one staff and nobody going to the Comprehensive Auditing Foundation.

I wonder if it might be possible to move a motion to leave with the committee how they spend the funds that we've now allocated, bearing in mind the reduction that's just been moved and accepted by the committee, if we could leave it up to the Public Accounts Committee how they budget their remaining conference funds. Okay. I move

that the Public Accounts Committee be given authority to budget conference fees and expenses according to their priorities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Within their fiscal envelope. Thank you.
Is there a call for the question on that?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

We think we have this correct: that the Members' Services Committee is the only other committee to be dealt with.

MR. WICKMAN: That vote on Public Accounts: did that not only pertain to the travel aspect?

11:23

MR. McINNIS: My motion was for conference fees and travel expenses.

MR. WICKMAN: But you're now moving on to Members' Services. I still have a question on Public Accounts.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we had just passed that envelope, but fine. What is the question?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I understood you only passed the portion dealing with the travel and such, not the entire budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps you were not yet back in the room. We passed the whole budget as revised, and then this was giving extra leeway to the committee to rearrange.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. My question relates to information I requested yesterday that isn't here, and that's to show a specific breakdown of that pay to Members of the Legislative Assembly in the 1992-93 forecast of \$7,855. I believe, Mr. Chairman, what happened here yesterday – insinuation made and a great deal of delight taken in that error made by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, attempting to mask it like a great, great big deal. In fact,

that error only contributed to \$400 of this particular figure that has been paid. I still think we need a breakdown as to how the rest of that money was spent, who it was paid to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member. I don't know how many times we need to revisit this. I guess you were out of the room, because the question was put: has the money been repaid? The answer was that it has not been repaid as of this date. So there's some clarification.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, in view of the fact that the Clerk has no record of having received repayment, I wonder if the member could indicate when the sums were repaid and for which fiscal years they were repaid. For the fiscal year just concluded or is this going back some period in time?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Taylor met with Dr. McNeil yesterday, got the exact figure, got clarification on it. He phoned me last night. He went back to his papers. He determined what happened, that he had filled out improper forms. It was an honest accident, John. It can happen, eh? It was an honest accident. Under the motion passed by this committee, Nick of course is entitled to his per diem when he's in the city for more than nine hours, and he had filled out . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member. I know you've made that case now three times. I think the members were listening on all three occasions.

First, though, you were asking if a breakdown had been obtained for the committee. Clerk Assistant, do we have that?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes, for the fiscal year 1992-93 the breakdown of payment to members is as follows: Chairman's salary, \$4,200; conference attendance, \$2,600; committee attendance is \$400. The balance of the projected forecast is for the pension and the LTDI payments.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I'm confused about one thing. The member keeps saying that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon filled out the form incorrectly. As I understand it, this is a form that the member has to fill out, physically take to the chair of the committee at the committee meeting, and then it's countersigned by the chair of the committee. Now, how is it possible that he was confused that he was filling a per diem for accommodation, which doesn't go through the chair of the committee at all? I wonder how such an error could happen on the part of a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Having said that, I would also like to say that I appreciate the repayment of the funds. It probably means that the Liberals have now taken a new position on this issue, and I think we should welcome that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

Edmonton-Whitemud, now you have the information as supplied by the Clerk Assistant. It's the committee's understanding that funds are about to be repaid.

MR. WICKMAN: I believe they have been, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We assume that is occurring sometime today. Thank you.

All right. Ladies and gentlemen, we've made arrangements that there will be a quick sandwich lunch available at a quarter to 12, and I'm sure you can eat in about seven minutes and come back.

My understanding – let's check this out as we work our way through the budget – is that the subcommittee on Law and Regulations we have approved because it has a budget of zero. The one on Public Affairs is in a similar condition. We're only too happy to deal with that one. That one has a budget of zero. I hope that some people in other regions of this building are hearing this. Also, heritage savings trust fund, very substantial reductions there especially with regard to travel expenses and payment to members. I'm sure that will be accurately reported by all of the media. That has been passed.

Our next one, then, is Members' Services, where we now are open to comments.

The Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you. We had asked for further clarification on the Travel Expenses. Looking at the forecast for 1992-93 of \$50, do we have the actual cost for 1991-92?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: I'd like to comment on that one, Mr. Chairman. Back in 1986 the Members' Services Committee had established a traveling budget of \$21,250 in the hope and anticipation of being able to meet with other boards of internal economy, probably Ontario. They really hadn't determined which particular provinces. That budget has never been used. Actually, I shouldn't say that. To clarify, the committee did travel to Saskatchewan on a government plane in either the fall of '86 or the spring of '87; I'm not too sure. Since then the committee has never traveled. So over the years the travel budget has dwindled down to what you see now as \$3,650.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us correct that. The time that the Members' Services Committee traveled to Saskatchewan was just prior to doing the renovations to this Chamber, and we were looking at the telecommunications system.

MR. BOGLE: With that information, Mr. Chairman, I'll move that we eliminate the Travel Expenses for the Members' Services Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The motion is to eliminate the figure of \$3,650. Comments? Call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

Additional comments or motions with respect to the committee? Is there a motion to adopt this section as revised? The Member for Cypress-Redcliff. Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A call for the question has been heard. All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you. Another committee with substantial reductions.

Public Accounts. We have dealt with that revised and vastly reduced budget this morning.

The matter of Electoral Boundaries with a zero budget, for information. In light of some media coverage I trust that that's taken into account: a zero budget.

Parliamentary Reform Committee. We have dealt with that committee earlier this morning with a very substantially reduced budget.

MRS. MIROSH: Could you repeat that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I could. A substantially reduced budget. I wonder what kind of media stories can be fabricated from this.

Privileges and Elections is another one of those that has a zero dollar budget. All of us are happy to see that.

Legislative Interns. That group was dealt with yesterday. The program in its present form has been eliminated. That would seem to me to follow under the category of a reduction.

11:33

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, they're working on a point of order. What happened yesterday: we approved a budget of \$22,645. In addition, we had a gentleman's agreement. There was no motion to eliminate the program.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, if you would look at page 1 of legislative interns, section 9, this indeed does away with the present intern program. Yes, indeed there was an agreement. Whether you want to call it a gentleman's or gentlewoman's, it certainly was a gentle and reasonable agreement, an undertaking by all three caucuses that similar positions would be available in each of the three caucuses. That means the program would no longer be administered by the office of the Speaker after the present group of interns complete their period of employment, which is at the end of June.

The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to be unkind about this at all. It's clear to me that the member did not understand that he was voting for the termination of the program at the time. For that reason I think he could move a motion of reconsideration. As I said, I don't think I can because I voted against the motion. I would also observe that if you were considering such a motion, he might point out that the former legislative interns wrote in fairly large numbers in support of the program. A question was raised about whether the former interns would support the program in a financial sense, and I observed simply that nobody has ever asked them. It may very well be that they would, in which case there could be some initiative taken to try to change the funding in order to preserve a legislative intern program in some form for the present time. My hope would be that a future government might have a greater commitment to this type of program, whatever political party that might be. So I again ask the member if he would consider at least providing notice of a motion to reconsider at a later date.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to see the actual wording of the motion, because my recollection is that it did not refer to the elimination of a program. It simply refers to the expenditure that is listed under this particular program. That's a different ball game, John, than eliminating the program. This continues with the existing interns and it allows for the mechanism of a gentleman's agreement.

MR. McINNIS: Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, I could read for the member what he voted for.

The 74.9% decrease in this control group is due to the elimination of the intern program after the first quarter in fiscal 1993-94. Funding is required for the current interns for April, May and June of 1993.

That's what he voted for. Now, the member makes it very clear in his comments that he did not understand that's what he voted for, in which case I think he is entitled to move a motion to reconsider. As I said, I am not because I voted the other way. He voted with the majority, so he can move it.

MR. WICKMAN: Again he's making reference to the overview, not to the budget. There's a difference. He doesn't seem to understand it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, the budget here was approved. If perhaps at the end of all this you'd like to revisit the issue, we might deal with that. In terms of getting through this budget, we do have to make certain we have all the other things in place before revisiting any issue.

Members, forgive me for half a moment. We have some guests in the gallery. We welcome you to your Legislature, if you're a resident of Alberta. If you're a visitor to this great province, we're glad you're here. Given our discussions on budgets this morning, whether you're from Alberta or from somewhere else, we're only too happy that you're here spending money in Edmonton and Alberta. Our fiscal position is an interesting challenge.

The committee right now is meeting in a more relaxed mode; therefore, members are able to bring in glasses of juice or cups of coffee or take off their jackets, if they're gentlemen, as we work through the committee stage. When the House formally sits, things are done in a much more formal manner.

The final comment I do make is this. This is the Members' Services Committee, the only committee that deals with all the accounts of all the members of each of the three political parties here in the House, and it's the only one in the whole country that is conducted in the open. It has always been that way, and some people forget. On rare occasions the committee might go in camera, but that's usually for very, very sensitive personnel issues. Ninety-seven percent of the time this committee is conducted in the open. As a matter of fact, to guarantee that, the committee also supplies free feed in terms of audio feed and also free transcripts and so forth to all members of the media who care to come and listen to it. If they care not to come here to listen to it, they have advantage of every statement that's made in this place. Anyway, welcome.

The public information branch has been approved with a reduction. The Legislature Library has been approved with a reduction. Information systems has also been approved with reductions. The Electoral Boundaries Commission: we've dealt with that, a reduction.

Again I want to thank the staff of the Legislative Assembly for the work they've done in preparation of the estimates and also for the extra work that was done late last night and early this morning, as well as thanking you for the work yet to be done in terms of getting all the fine points tuned here.

The Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, was it your intention to revisit any of the items 1 through 6? I'm specifically interested in House Services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I started with our committees, and I got all enthralled by that. Which item would you prefer to go to now?

MR. BOGLE: I wonder if we should just quickly go through items 1 through 6 to see if others have any concerns. As I'd indicated earlier, I do have a couple of items on travel under House Services, item 3.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right. We have that notice there.

Section 1 has been passed. I believe we should hold on to section 2 for a moment in case there's anything that relates later which impacts backwards on to this. So we would move to section 3, House Services.

Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Okay. This first item relates to the motion passed yesterday whereby we reduced the estimate for travel to various Canadian Parliamentary Association conferences or attendance at conferences by some 40 percent. Is that correct?

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. BOGLE: All right. I would further like to move today that conferences outside of Canada be eliminated from the list of conferences that might be attended by members.

In other words, we would restrict the conferences we are attending to those within Canada, and the Speaker would deem, as is always the case, whether or not attendance is actually necessary at a regional or one of the other conferences of the association. It would be solely within Canada.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is to delete out-of-Canada travel for members. Thank you.
Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I'm prepared to support the motion. I think it's been observed that there are many things in budgets and government accounts which are good things to have under times when we can afford them, but these are not times that we can afford international travel. I take it what the motion effectively deletes is the CPA General Conference in Cyprus, the CPA International Seminar in Australia, the CPA conference in Washington, and the National Conference of State Legislatures in San Diego, California. I support the motion.

I have one further question. With the remaining conferences I note that the bulk of the expenditure is for airfares. I'm just wondering, if we make a decision on these conferences far enough in advance, if there might be some way to engineer savings on airfares by advance booking charters and so forth. I don't know if that's possible or not, but the airfares seem to me to be the most substantial items within those. The dates are more or less set. I appreciate there's some need for flexibility, but I wonder if there isn't any way we could lower those air costs.

11:43

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to support the motion brought forward by the Member for Taber-Warner. It was pointed out yesterday very, very clearly that – I guess it's like one's household – when times get tough, you just start cutting back on the nonessentials, and this is without question a nonessential. We made a great deal of progress yesterday in eliminating the spousal and the guest travel, and I was delighted when members of the legislative committee supported my motion to eliminate that. This is a further reduction that starts to now bring the travel, I believe, from the point of view – the public can say that it reflects more realistically the economic hard times, the economic woes of the province of Alberta.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members.

Yesterday we did reduce the number of delegates that were going to attend these various functions. This particular motion does indeed delete travel outside the country. The chair has announced that he does not intend to run in the next election; therefore in this context I offer the information that because of the parliamentary dues we pay to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the airfare portion and the expenses for the Speaker to attend to represent all the parliamentarians in this Assembly are covered out of those funds in London. Because of our past association we have been able to win the case that the International Commonwealth Parliamentary Association would be hosted in Canada. It will be hosted in Banff

in early October of 1994. When things were in normal times, the new Speaker would be going to Cyprus to help encourage more people to come to visit the conference when it's held in Banff.

In all honesty I must say to you that I really believe that as the motion goes the new Speaker would not be attending that conference. But from a logistical point of view, I think funds would have to be found for the Clerk to go, and we can find that perhaps in the Assembly's, some bits and pieces here and there, because the Clerk is going to be responsible for a great deal of what happens when the conference comes to Banff in '94. The motion is worded with respect to members, so that would be fine.

The other thing I do need to point out: when the conference comes to Alberta, the multiplier effect is regarded to be in the neighbourhood of 4 and half million dollars, you know, generated into businesses in Alberta.

I'm not opposed to the motion at all. I'm just giving this for clarification, because from a staff point of view, for Alberta to host together with Canada, there are certain other aspects which have to be dealt with.

MR. BOGLE: If I may, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday we approved a 40 percent reduction. Earlier today we approved a motion to eliminate out-of-country travel. This motion calls for the same, and I assume with it there's a general concurrence that that applies to all committees. There'd be no travel outside the country in terms of the budgets we've approved either yesterday or today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

A call for the question? All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously. That is a substantial reduction, House Services.

The Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: There was one other item, and I inadvertently thought it was under House Services. It's actually at the very end of item 2, members' administration, next to House Services, and it was an item dealt with yesterday. It was the 1-cent postal increase for the communications allowance. I apologize to the committee as I had slipped out for a brief discussion with a staff member and a minister and missed that item. I believe the communication between myself and the mover of the motion, Alan, broke down, because it was certainly not our intention to increase the Members' Services allowance. Therefore, I would like to move today

that the 1-cent increase to cover postal costs be rolled back and that the figure remain constant with what was in the budget yesterday and that there be no increase in this allocation.

MR. McINNIS: A point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A point of order, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: That is a motion to reconsider a matter decided by the committee, and therefore I think it should be considered as such rather than de novo. Otherwise, I'm sure members would appreciate that the business of the committee could become rather chaotic if any member has an opportunity to revisit any item at any time. I understand there's a certain amount of heat that goes with this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

It's the understanding of the chair that while the motion passed yesterday, the instruction to the committee was to have a Members' Services order prepared. I believe I see the Members' Services order over there on the table. If that were to be brought forward and defeated, then you have the same thing having occurred.

The Member for Taber-Warner. We're on the point of order.

MR. BOGLE: On that narrow point. At the beginning of our discussions yesterday morning I believe there was an understanding by all members of the committee that we would deal with items in two general categories: first, to see if there was concurrence, and in those cases we would not need specific motions. Where there was not general concurrence, then any member of the committee had the opportunity to make a motion, have it debated and either passed or failed. There was also the caveat yesterday that all items could be revisited today. That specific point was made, and that's what I'm doing today, making a motion to revisit an item pursuant to the process not only that we had agreed to yesterday morning but that we have followed in this committee as long as I've been a member of the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If that's the understanding of the committee on the point of order, then the chair will also allow subsequently the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, if he wishes, to revisit the issue of legislative interns.

MR. BOGLE: Yes; that's fair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

All right. Then we are now dealing with this particular issue of postage. If I have this correctly, the substance would be that there would be no increase but that the rate that was in effect two days ago would be the same rate that would be in effect. Thank you.

All right. Edmonton-Jasper Place, then Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Chairman, okay, I accept the ruling. The matter is now on the table, and I would like to speak in favour of retaining the very modest increase that was put in constituency office budgets. I think the matter needs some context. In many communities that I'm aware of the MLA's community office is a beacon of hope for a lot of people who have trouble dealing with the bureaucracy, trouble getting through to people in government, trouble getting the information they need to access services and opportunities they may have. Now, I know there are some members of this Assembly who believe that MLA community offices are an unnecessary expenditure and a frill. I'm not one of those. I think that's one of the access points into the system for people who don't have the voice and the power to reach to the top and to get things done. I think members should be careful not to overreact to the way this issue has been spun in one particular newspaper. It's been presented as if this is a violation of a freeze on MLA pay and benefits, and I'm here to say that the expenditure in community offices is not to the benefit of an individual MLA but to the benefit of the constituents.

11:53

We got ourselves into a bit of a problem here because a year ago it was politically convenient to freeze the constituency office funding. We didn't freeze anything else in the government. The only thing we froze was the constituency offices with the exception of this one item which is formula driven. It's based entirely on the cost of two stamps per voter per year, which is a privilege given to MLAs for the sake of mailing. The move that was made yesterday was simply to recognize the fact that that cost has been increased once again by Canada Post in the coming year. It amounts to a 0.5 percent increase in the constituency office funding, which is modest given that those funds were frozen in the last year. I think we should simply be prepared to say that this is something that's justified because it's needed, because it does something for people who don't

have the ability to be heard in any other way. So I would like to support the decision made by the committee yesterday.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to support the Member for Taber-Warner on this. If we look at the new revised sheet, the blue sheet, the difficulty I have with it – and I tried to point it out yesterday as well. The actual increase in my constituency office as a result of that 1-cent increase in postage is not a 2.2 percent increase in the overall communication allowance, because the overall communication allowance is used not just for stamps, at least not in the Edmonton-Whitemud constituency office. We use portions of it to print material. We use a lot of volunteers to distribute those pamphlets. So the actual amount that may be paid in postal services under communications is not a direct reflection of the overall 2.2 percent. Even if it was, in Edmonton-Whitemud it would cost me \$315. Out of a \$63,000 budget I can manage that, but it isn't going to cost anything close to that, unless there are some constituencies that use every portion of their communication allowance to buy stamps. So I'm going to support the Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Additional comments?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

Any other matters to be dealt with with regard to MLA Administration?

A motion to move the revised estimates of MLA Administration. Edmonton-Jasper Place? No, you didn't.

MR. CHERRY: I so move.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Moved by Lloydminster. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

For clarification, House Services has also been approved with a reduction and Speaker's Office with a reduction. Do we need to revisit the matter of the government members? That one has been passed. The matters of the Official Opposition and the Liberal opposition have all been approved, and then we did Legislative Committees. With Legislative Committees – yes, we're going to recognize that in a moment – what we have here at the moment, even before we factor in today's additional reductions, we're well over a 50 percent reduction.

All right. In this area the chair recognizes Edmonton-Whitemud to revisit the issue of legislative interns.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I do want to revisit the budget for legislative interns. I don't want to get caught up in a situation here that is harmful to the interns. The fear that I have is if I move reconsideration, if that is reconsidered and then I were to turn around and move, let's say, a more global budget to allow for continuation for the entire year and that was voted down, the damage that would be done is to the existing interns. In other words, there would be no money for them from April on. So the program would terminate immediately, and they would be gone. To avoid that, what I would like to do, again going back to the gentleman's agreement because I thought that was a step in the right direction, is leave all that along with the \$22,000 that's in there with the understanding that somehow

we're going to, you know, make this gentleman's agreement work in a reasonable fashion. I'd like to move a motion, if you'd permit me, that the concept of the intern program be continued, that the structure of it be continued.

The basis of that, then, means that this year we're only providing for \$22,000 of the cost from here. Then the caucus budgets on the proportions as stated by the Member for Taber-Warner would offset the remaining amounts, and we'd all be happy. I don't see a problem with that. The interns would be happy.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can suggest a form of a motion that might accomplish what the member is aiming at. If I understand him correctly, he wants to save the program by moving funds from the caucuses into the internship program. If he's thinking along the same lines I am, I would like to suggest that he move that \$40,000 be transferred from the government caucus, \$15,000 from the opposition caucus, and \$15,000 from the Liberal caucus to the intern budget to ensure continuation of the program for another year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members.

The big hand is with the little hand. Let us adjourn for 10 minutes to have a quick bite of lunch in the lobby behind the Chamber in case the Committee on Parliamentary Reform is in the Confederation Room. Then we can reconvene here about 12 minutes past 12, and in the interim perhaps you can get together about what motions would be agreeable.

Thank you.

[The committee adjourned from 12:01 p.m. to 12:32 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members. We have just had the motion given to us, if you would like to write it down. Moved by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud

that \$40,000 be transferred from the Government Members' Services budget, \$15,000 from the Official Opposition Services budget, and \$15,000 from the Liberal Opposition Services budget to the Legislative Interns budget to restore the original program.

I assume, under the office of the Speaker? Thank you. That's what we have here.

The member proposing the motion, Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Speaking to it, I think the only way to ensure that this program is going to be fully on track, that this program is going to fulfill the vital components that it fulfilled is by doing it this way. The other method of the gentleman's agreement: I fear the co-ordination aspect isn't there. There's going to be too much lost, and then it just becomes three components of research, one in each caucus. If I've got to eat a little bit of humble pie here, I'll eat a little bit of humble pie. Let's forget that and say what's good for the interns and what's good for the legislative caucuses. I think the original program now is the only way to go.

MR. BOGLE: Well, I wanted to, and I wondered if I should do it on a point of order. My concern, Mr. Chairman – and I want to express this back to Percy – is that we do have a commitment that we're adjourning today at 1 p.m., which is in 26 minutes, and we do have a very important item under 5(a), Report of Subcommittee on Minister and MLA Job Evaluation Study by Mrs. Mirosh. I would certainly hope that we're able to get to that item and indeed to conclude the agenda today. It would be a shame if this were filibustered out and we went till 1 o'clock and missed that opportunity.

Having said that, I have to advise the committee that I will be voting against this motion. The motion and the explanation

yesterday in my view were clear. There was an honest attempt made to come out of this in a win/win situation: an offer made by the governing caucus which was more generous in dollar terms than if we were following the straight ratio. In other words, we have two of the four interns, so the offer could have been for 50 percent of the \$70,000 shortfall. It wasn't; it was for \$40,000 of the \$70,000 on the condition that the other two caucuses would each find \$15,000 out of their existing budgets.

Let there be no mistake; there was not a suggestion that moneys would then be pooled back into the leg. intern program. That was not the intent; it was not stated. When the hon. member Percy Wickman nodded his head in agreement with what I was saying, it was on the basis of the caucuses from within their existing research component making the necessary moves so that there could indeed be some elements of the intern program. In fact, I have already sat down and met with our director of research, Doug Baynton, along with our executive director, Bob Pritchard, and we are working at this point in time on the understanding that the other two caucuses will indeed be doing the same thing. We're moving in a positive way so that once the internship program winds down, which is three months into the new fiscal year, the end of June, we will be prepared as the governing caucus to carry on with an expanded role for our research component.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I did understand what the Member for Taber-Warner said yesterday when he proposed an alternative to the legislative intern program. He was clear on that occasion; he is clear now. What's being talked about is a program where the caucuses themselves hire students or people at some stage in their training to come and work for a period of time in the Assembly. I think that has some value. I congratulate him for being willing to consider that approach and for taking the next step. It is of some value, because I do believe this institution needs friends. It needs reform, but it also needs friends, and I think that having people travel through life and spend some time in this place finding out what goes on, what members actually do as opposed to what they're reported to do on some occasion is of value.

Having said that, though, the alternative proposed by the member is not a legislative intern program; it's a program to hire researchers on a temporary basis. However valuable that may be, it's not the same thing as recruiting, in effect, the best and the brightest on a nonpartisan basis to spend time in programmed activity. Some members may not understand that the interns do a lot of things besides providing the research help and other help that they do around here. They have an intensive program of seminars throughout the government and with other governments as well.

I'm supporting the motion by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud because I believe that he is motivated to save the program. I'm going to support it for that reason.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ask your patience for a minute to confirm my understanding. Under tab 9 on the first page, first paragraph: "Funding is required for the current interns for April, May and June of 1993." That funding then is in place and protected; is it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is in place by virtue of yesterday's motion.

DR. ELLIOTT: Yes? Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If this particular motion before us now were approved, then it would allow a mechanism for the program to go

beyond June. By virtue of the committee's motion yesterday, the present interns are covered to the end of June.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Additional?
Mover, please.

MR. WICKMAN: Just very briefly, Mr. Chairman. The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is correct: my motivations are in the right place. I do want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to revisit this and to put this motion on the table.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A call for the question. The motion as proposed by Edmonton-Whitemud: those in favour, please signify. Opposed? The matter is defeated. Thank you.

The understanding of the chair is that all items in the budget book have been approved. I would invite one omnibus motion to give blanket approval to the whole booklet, what is contained in there together with the revisions. In that way we have then covered all bases. Would someone be good enough to make that motion?

DR. ELLIOTT: I so move, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Grande Prairie. Thank you.
Is there a call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you, hon. members. It's always an interesting challenge.

Now, back to the sand-covered books. Unless members of the committee have some other understanding, we have now dealt with items 1, 2, 3, 4, all of the subsections on 4 related to the '93-94 Assembly budget estimates.

We would then move on to item 5, Business Arising from the Minutes, and 5(a), Report of Subcommittee on Minister and MLA Job Evaluation Study.

The hon. minister, the Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have released that job evaluation study to all Members of the Legislative Assembly, and it would be my recommendation to Members' Services that the subcommittee meet sometime in the near future to discuss this study and bring back a recommendation to Members' Services.

12:42

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is to refer to the subcommittee of this committee. Hopefully they will meet with some alacrity. Thank you.

Edmonton-Jasper Place, to the motion.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to be difficult. I appreciate that the subcommittee which piloted the study has not had an opportunity to meet to consider the report, so I'm not going to oppose the motion. I again want to put on the record that there is a context to this. The committee has tabled my motion of August 25, 1992, setting up an independent review committee, and I would like the subcommittee to consider that matter along with whatever else

it intends to do in response to the report before it reports back to the next meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, on the motion to refer.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, on the referral from a procedural point of view. Because it is referred to that subcommittee and because the motion that the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place refers to originated from that subcommittee, does that mean that that subcommittee will have the authority to proceed and follow through on that motion, at the very least to lift it from the table? Or are we just going to have to bring it back here again?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, hon. member, I'll have to leave it as a rhetorical question, because as chairman of this committee I can't answer what the subcommittee will decide.

Lacombe, and then Taber-Warner.

MR. MOORE: I support the motion. The committee went out and commissioned the study. The report is out, and that subcommittee has not had the time to look at it and really review it. They are the ones who were given the responsibility in the first place, and I feel that it would be valuable to us as members of this committee to have their evaluation of it and an explanation of various points that are raised throughout. So I support the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Ron has made my points. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Additional members wishing to speak to the motion? If not, a call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion to refer the Peat Marwick report to the subcommittee of the Members' Services Committee, please signify. Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Item 5(b), Report on Historical Biographical Sketch of Members. Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you. Blake has a progress report regarding the MLA book project, and I think it would be appropriate to ask Blake to report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the committee to have this report just quickly read into the record?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

I won't say Darth Vader. The member from Boharm.

MR. McDOUGALL: Mr. Chairman, at the last meeting of the Members' Services Committee there was a fairly extensive report giving the entire background. The project cost and so on was put in the folder, so I'm making a very brief report at this time. You will recall that on December 17 the book subcommittee made the decision to hire someone to complete the biographical entries for the book at a cost of \$10,000. Mr. Robin Hunter was employed to

undertake that work on January 4, and at March 31, 1993, he'd completed 222 of the 630 entries that are required. Consequently, we've included funds in the library budget to complete that work. I indicate that the Assembly office staff are continuing to edit and format and input data for this publication.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any questions or observations? Thank you.

I think earlier on some members were not present when I made the announcement that our good friend and very hard worker Mr. McDougall has decided to take early retirement and will be with us just until the end of June. Again, on behalf of all committee members, Blake, we very much appreciate you in many, many ways.

Item 5(c), the matter of Office Furniture, Official Opposition Office in Calgary.

Edmonton-Jasper Place, perhaps the future Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, in view of the absence of the Member for Edmonton-Highlands and the minister of public works I move this item be tabled until the next meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

A motion to table. All those in favour, please signify. Carried. Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, being, I think, a member of the next committee – I think we were told one day that it was Dr. Elliott, myself, and Ms Barrett. We've never met, so I think we'd better table that one too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

A motion to table by Cypress-Redcliff with respect to the matter of Confederation Room Usage. All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

The next item of business is Other Business: 6(a), advertising appeal matter, the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. Clerk, would you be kind enough to speak to this, please.

DR. McNEIL: This arises out of a concern that an advertisement in a community-type newspaper by Mr. Taylor was done under the title of the Alberta Liberal Party, which contravenes in our view the constituency services order relating to nonpartisan communication. This has been the case with respect to advertisements in the past. Acceptable are references to the Official Opposition, the Liberal opposition, government members, but references to party have not been acceptable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I had the same experience, doing just what the member did, and it ended up that it was at my own expense. So I just wanted to bring that forward.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Chairman, what's so disheartening in this is that we've had several members, I believe from all three caucuses, experience some difficulty, where they've gone ahead with a contract and it does not meet the criteria. We had decided after the last such experience – and I think it was with Mr. Gibeault of the New Democrats – that as the caucus representatives . . . Percy, I hope you're listening, because this affects you. We had decided when Mr.

Gibeault got into similar difficulties that we would go back and inform our caucus members. I'm really disheartened, Percy, that one of your caucus members, Mr. Taylor, has strayed over the line again. It really rests on your shoulders, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, certainly from the point of view of this committee it appears that Mr. Taylor has contravened the guidelines, but in the past there's always been the courtesy extended to allow the member to make a presentation. I can recall that with the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods. I can recall that I believe it was the Member for Redwater-Andrew that was going to come forward then withdrew, the member for Calgary – was it Shaw? They were always given that opportunity to make a presentation, and I think Mr. Taylor should be afforded that same courtesy, and an invitation should be given to him to appear at the next meeting. Let him make his case, and I'll judge, the same as the rest of you.

12:52

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comment made by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. I would like to move

that we table the item to the next meeting and invite Mr. Taylor to attend to present his case.

I'd be quite interested in hearing him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A motion to table. Those in favour, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried.

From a purely administrative point of view, the bills will not be paid by the Legislative Assembly until such time as a decision is made by the committee.

Earlier today the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place wanted to give a notice of motion for the next meeting. Perhaps that could be dealt with just briefly as a notice. Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I've written you a memo, which I'll get typed and sent up. It says: please accept this as written notice of a motion to eliminate the payment of committee allowances to MLAs when the House is in session. I've written Parliamentary Counsel to request the drafting of a formal motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That will then be read into the record and will be present not only in the transcript but in the minutes of the meeting.

Thank you, hon. members. Are there any other items of business? Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: I move that we adjourn, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Date of the next meeting: call of the chair. With that understanding, thank you.

All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Opposed, if any? Carried. Thank you all very much.

[The committee adjourned at 12:54 p.m.]

