

## Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

9:05 a.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Schumacher]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it appears that we have a full complement of members. The chair wishes to welcome everybody back this bright and sunshiny morning on our journey towards deficit control.

After our work yesterday I am advised that we are approximately \$200,000 short of a 10 percent reduction in overall spending and that, for example, a change from 5 percent to 7 and a half percent of the per capita allowance for members of \$45,100 initially would result in a \$73,000 contribution towards the \$200,000 still required.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, may I ask: is the \$75,000 on the extended health plan incorporated in these figures?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, because I don't believe that was finalized; was it? That was still left over.

MR. WICKMAN: No. But if we didn't pull that out or didn't have it down to \$150,000, we'd be short about \$50,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, yes, that's correct.

Parliamentary Counsel is in the process of preparing copies of his report regarding legal implications; he should have that with us momentarily. The chair just thought it would be useful to members to have an idea of how much was still required to be finalized.

MRS. MIROSH: So where are we on the agenda, Mr. Chairman? Are we on that issue?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we're still on MLA administration.

Mr. Wickman brought up the matter of extended benefit plan funding for former members. I think members of the committee have now received copies of Parliamentary Counsel's note, which would indicate that there's no legal impediment to making adjustments to a plan. Several options there could be eliminated completely. It could be phased out over a couple of years, or it could be maintained. I believe one of the factors mentioned yesterday was that if it was eliminated, at least the former members should have the opportunity of maintaining membership in the group at their expense.

Mr. Stelmach, followed by Mr. Brassard.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would move that we include the extended benefits plan funding for the moment, except the page as it's here given the changes yesterday. I would just leave it at that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To maintain the existing arrangements?

MR. STELMACH: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any discussion on that motion?

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, again I guess it depends whether we see 10 percent as the magical figure for this year. If we're prepared to settle for, say, a minus 9 and a half percent – if we look at the caucus budgets, for example, if we compromise between the 5 and the 7 and a half, say a 6 and a quarter reduction, we leave this in there, I think we would achieve about the minus 9.5. Then next year I guess we tackle it again and work just a bit harder. I

don't think that the 10 percent is magical, that it's carved in stone, that we have to at all costs receive that. If it means compromising a bit, yeah, we're prepared to do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Brassard.

MR. BRASSARD: The point was made. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Mr. Taylor.

9:15

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, I've maybe taken a harder line than anyone, but I agree that anybody leaving should have health coverage. I think the best thing we can do is protect almost in perpetuity, again, their right as long as they pay for it. I think that's the important part; not whether we're paying for it. It's quite a significant cost saving to us if we knock it out, but I don't think it's a significant cost layout to the individuals. The key is whether they can have it or not. I think that's the important thing. I would vote to take it out, or I would like to take it out but make sure that retirement people, as long as they pay their full cost, could have it in perpetuity. I think that's the important part, not the cost, because certainly your health and everything can be in such a way that you cannot get a plan anywhere else.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, I'm going to try one other pitch here, Mr. Chairman. Actually the Member for Redwater is the one that has stressed this to me many, many times in the past. I'm not arguing with what's happened, because obviously it had to happen in the past, but we see little nips and tucks here at the perks, pay, and pension issue, the pension being eliminated – a 5 percent rollback, et cetera, et cetera – without getting to that ultimate goal of establishing this independent commission that was not only to look at the pay but the perks, and slowly, as we take these things out, that independent commission isn't going to have anything to do. I'd like to see us maybe just leave things untouched in terms of this extended benefit for this year and make a commitment that prior to next year we will have this independent commission in place that will not only look at this but will look at all aspects that affect the MLAs and once and for all get that thing out of the way.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Following your principle, Mr. Wickman, I don't know whether this commission is to look at the Peat Marwick report, but if that's what it looks at, the one that \$150,000 was expended on, then it would also have to look at that whole page. So why don't we just leave that whole page intact? Because we're going to hit here and hit there, and there are some comments that could be taken as guidelines with respect to the page. You made a very valid point: what is the commission going to look at? One of the big issues that Peat Marwick stated was the pensions, and that was solved with elimination. There was a request to do some sort of trade-off between increasing pay and decreasing tax free laws, as I recall in Peat Marwick somewhere, and the end result of that was a 5 percent reduction in our salaries. So perhaps that whole page should just be left the way it is. Some of those savings are rather soft anyhow. If my colleague there would consent to redoing his motion and just move that that page, whatever it is, just remain intact, that whole area can be looked at at a more appropriate time. I think you have a very good point there. It would be more in keeping with what the process has been all about.

MR. WICKMAN: I think that sounds good, Stan, provided we make the commitment that we will set up this independent commission, because what happened after the Peat Marwick report was that the information came forward, we saw what happened with the pension issue, and then, according to the ruling of the chairman, everything that was on the agenda from the last term was dead. In other words, it would take a new motion to initiate the establishment of the independent commission. As long as we have that assurance here, I think that's a good idea.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I think that's a thing we can visit again. For the business of budgeting at this point – and I would have to do just a little bit of research into, for example, what appointments the Premier has made; I mean, I'll have to check with him directly to see exactly where it's at. I do know that that Peat Marwick report was a do-all, end-all. As you quite clearly recall, given the state of the times, we didn't follow it. As a matter of fact, we went down away from it. Perhaps now is the time to say, "Okay; here's that whole area; perhaps it should be revisited," because it appears that even our approach to this is all one-sided. When it comes to individual MLAs, we've got ourselves focused on take away, take away, take away, and according to some calculations that have gone on, although there is a perception that there has been some 30 percent pay raise, in reality in terms of real things when you consider pensions and whatnot, we're 30 percent behind where we were in '89. You know, we've gone with the two spousals and another spousal and travel on another page, and that position is quite defensible. Although this business of the \$75,000 specifically may well be legal – and I'm not surprised and I wouldn't question that interpretation for a moment – perhaps it's not appropriate at this time and maybe to look at it elsewhere.

So I would ask the mover to just take that whole page, move it, accept it as is top to bottom. Could we get an agreement?

MR. BRASSARD: Including the amendment we made yesterday.

MR. WOLOSHYN: We'd take it all off. Just start off from square one; let it go as a clean slate.

MR. BRASSARD: If we're going to look at it, I think that we need to look at the whole page in entirety. I agree we're picking at this piecemeal. I think we've gone through the exercise of evaluating all of the benefits and so on, and it might be a good idea to just put this whole page aside and come back to it.

MR. STELMACH: I agree to withdraw the previous motion I made with respect to the extended benefits funding and put a motion on the table to leave page 15 as submitted.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Page 15 as it is today or yesterday?

MR. WOLOSHYN: As it was at the beginning. You know, we submitted a little bit of adjustments here. Let's just start fresh on the whole thing. What's the difference?

MR. STELMACH: As submitted yesterday.

MR. BRASSARD: Here one item impacts on another.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, the page I had yesterday is now gone, but as I recall, the only change we made yesterday was to the sessional residence; was it not?

MR. N. TAYLOR: The weekends.

MR. BRUSEKER: We eliminated weekends from the formula was all that we changed?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Then we were discussing as to how if they were here or not here. We've got it written up in Members' Services the way it's currently being accessed, and perhaps we should be looking at the orders there. So I would just say just leave it as it is.

MS HALEY: As amended?

MR. WOLOSHYN: No, no. Leave it as originally put forward. There'd be no amendments to that page, period.

MR. BRUSEKER: Does that not put us in some jeopardy, then, with respect to – we wouldn't be at a 9.17 percent reduction then; we would be at 8.5 or 8 or whatever.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Fair enough, but at least then we're following a principle on this whole thing.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I can agree with the principle but still think that what we cut yesterday should come out. We're not affecting a principle there; we're just saying that you shouldn't get paid for weekends while the House is sitting. We got it in for five-day weeks instead of seven-day weeks. That's a case of administration; that's not a case of changing the principle. We're still paying indemnity for everybody. All we're doing is knocking out the weekend pay. Using your own words: we've got to get some cuts in here. That's a substantial one. That was going to knock about \$150,000 out of the \$173,000 I think it was.

DR. McNEIL: It's \$155,000.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It was going to knock out \$155,000. That's a substantial chunk. That's just an administrative thing. I think it doesn't change the principle. The principle you're talking about is still intact, and you get the \$150,000.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, I think there's a motion on the floor to leave the page that was yesterday without touching anything, but if you want to get to reviewing what we did yesterday, I mean, there's still more we could take out of this page.

MR. N. TAYLOR: You mean we're going to go back and do it again?

MRS. MIROSH: Well, we are here on page 15. The motion has been made to leave the bottom line as it was submitted to us yesterday without amendments.

MR. BRUSEKER: The motion is to leave the page as it was submitted to us yesterday.

MRS. MIROSH: The status quo. That's the motion right now on the floor. That's my understanding.

9:25

MR. N. TAYLOR: Wait a minute. The first motion was to leave what we have as it is. You've withdrawn your original motion and made a new motion that you want to leave the old page.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If we want to go back to the beginning, Mr. Stelmach should move that Mr. Taylor's motion of yesterday be rescinded and that the page as it originally appeared be approved.

MR. STELMACH: I'll make that motion, if that's the correct procedure. I seek your advice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would be the best way to do it.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Otherwise we'd never finish.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. I mean, if that's what the intent is.

MR. N. TAYLOR: All I can repeat, then, on debating the thing, is that we made a nice \$155,000 cut. We have to cut anyhow, and it was an area that seemed to be not only just and easy to cut, but I think we're making a mistake.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, there are other cuts. I mean, there's the five trips at \$660,000 we can take out instead.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Oh, my gosh, there are all kinds of other cuts. We can cut all over the place, but I'm just saying that we haven't even discussed it.

MRS. MIROSH: I move for a recess.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. We will recess for seven minutes.

[The committee adjourned from 9:27 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: When the committee recessed, there was a motion before it that Mr. Taylor's motion of yesterday with regard to page 15 would be rescinded and that the committee would approve page 15 as originally printed.

Mr. Stelmach.

MR. STELMACH: I withdraw the motion that I made requesting Mr. Taylor's motion to be rescinded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there agreement of the committee to this withdrawal?

MR. WICKMAN: Which one is he withdrawing now?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He's withdrawing the motion to rescind Mr. Taylor's motion.

MR. WICKMAN: He's withdrawing the motion that he made to withdraw the earlier motion made by Taylor. So we're back to the second phase. Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No opposition to that? It's so ordered.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, I move to just table further discussion on page 15.

MR. WICKMAN: Till when?

MRS. MIROSH: Till we see where we're at.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Till later.

MR. BRUSEKER: Are you suggesting we table till we go through the other budget as well?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did you put it to the bottom of the list?

MRS. MIROSH: Yeah.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Could I ask for a friendly amendment to the tabling? There is a question of extended member benefits for all those who were elected in '89 that will be going out soon. I would like to make a motion that as long as they pay full cost, with no cost to government, that it be extended as long as legally possible, that they continue.

MR. BRASSARD: I disagree with that. I just feel that Mr. Taylor is introducing an element to that whole program that distorts it. That's not the purpose of tabling it. I think the tabling motion is to maintain the status quo.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It's only a friendly one.

MR. BRASSARD: It's not friendly at all. Don't give me that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps all discussion of page 15 can be left until we decide when it's going to come up again.

Ms Haley.

MS HALEY: I just wanted to add a comment about that, if that's acceptable. I think that at some point we need to actually consider the people we're impacting. If they were given, by way of a discussion through letters or whatever, the option of continuing the program at the end of five years – if they paid the full cost or not – maybe when we had a little feedback from them, we could actually make a decision without devastating people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I must confess that this matter has intruded onto the committee's agenda primarily as a result of hearing from some former members. The chair quite frankly disagrees with Mr. Brassard that so long as there's no cost to the taxpayer we should consider their request to stay in a group as long as possible.

MS HALEY: Well, that's what I'm saying. Maybe once we had some feedback, we could make a decision without . . .

MRS. MIROSH: After the five years.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Maybe it's because the chair and myself are old.

MRS. MIROSH: Careful now. It's the white hair.

MR. N. TAYLOR: The point is that . . .

MR. BRASSARD: A lot of people can't get life insurance. People are impacted primarily by life insurance and things of that nature. So after the five-year period if they wanted to carry on, pay for their own, fine, but up to . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: But Roy, that's his motion.

MR. BRASSARD: Okay. I apologize, then, Nick. I misunderstood you.

MR. BRUSEKER: This motion is: once the five years end – right now you get five years. On March 20 of 1994 the five years will end for those who did not run or were defeated in the '89 election. So Mr. Taylor's motion is that after the five-year period is up, if they want to renew it, they're on their own 100 percent.

MR. BRASSARD: I apologize, Nick. I misunderstood what you said.

Okay; I agree with that.

MR. WICKMAN: Call him a coward. Get back at him.

MR. BRASSARD: No, I won't do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman.

MR. WICKMAN: On a procedural point. If the motion of Dianne's is accepted, then it is tabled, taking into consideration that there was a change made to this particular page yesterday in view of the fact that Ed has withdrawn his rescinding motion. So that's what's being tabled, just so you understand that.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I asked for a friendly chance to put this other motion ahead of her tabling motion. It's up to her. Dianne controls it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This page deals with expenditures and budgetary things. Your motion deals with a change of policy and has no budgetary implications. Therefore, we can deal with Mrs. Mirosh's motion and then consider your motion, if the committee wishes to do so.

MRS. MIROSH: On a policy.

MR. WICKMAN: But you've got to do it in writing, Nick.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion before the committee, as I understand it, is that this page 15 budget be dropped to the bottom of the list and the committee move on to other budgetary things.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Dropped until later in the morning.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, whenever we decide to bring it back.

MR. BRUSEKER: It's tabled as we see it here today.

MRS. MIROSH: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Now you're ready for my motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Mr. Taylor wishes to move . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR:

That all those members that have extended benefits that are expiring be allowed to maintain them if they wish as long as it's at 100 percent their own expense.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I would like you to give that some consideration. The intent is very good. However, when you add people onto group plans, the overall cost of the plan can increase. That's something for you to consider.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, that's up to the carrier.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That's right; that's up to the carrier. But if you add this group on and then we get the other aspects of it, the exceptions, it's something – the idea, the principle, I like, Nick, but I'd like you to sort of serve notice as to what you're coming back

with so that we can look at some implications. Because then if you're in business on your own, for example, and doing well, should you still be able to be a part of this plan? Your motion will say yes. If you have a choice, if you go out into the teaching force, for example, as Frank or I would likely go back to when we leave this place, could we then stay with the MLAs' plan and leave the teaching one behind? I think it's got implications like this. The principle is sound, but I think the implication to just put it that way might be beyond what we really want to do at this time. So maybe a notice of an intent to do that would be better.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Correct, but perhaps before leaving it, we could ask Mrs. Scarlett to tell us how she sees this impacting on the administration.

MRS. SCARLETT: In terms of being able to monitor the actual costs incurred by either the extended, the first five-year group, or the extended extended, those who might continue after five years, we have capabilities right now with at least our Blue Cross, and I do believe we could also find out that information on dental coverage in terms of being able to actually monitor and track actual costs incurred for the extended or the extended extended group and make sure that any costs incurred were totally covered by the premiums that would be established by the Leg. Assembly to make sure that it was totally employee paid.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, that's the answer right there: they pay for it actuarially.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I'd still like to give it some thought.

MRS. SCARLETT: There are ways of getting information, monitoring.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I'd like to get some more on it. The principle is sound, however.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So the committee wishes to defer a decision on this motion?

MR. WOLOSHYN: I'd like Mr. Taylor to change that to a notice of intent to bring that kind of a motion, but the motion is good.

MR. N. TAYLOR: For the next meeting?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Whatever.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Sure, I'll give notice of motion.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I appreciate that.

MR. N. TAYLOR: There's no rush, and it gives us time to look at it, but I just take encouragement. I had the advantage, actually, of getting her report before you people came back in.

MR. BRUSEKER: Perhaps administration then could find out if there are any cost implications to the balance of the group.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It doesn't sound like it. See, we're allowed to change the premiums so that actuarially . . .

MRS. SCARLETT: The Legislative Assembly Members' Services sets the premiums for our plans based upon what is required.

MR. N. TAYLOR: So that's notice of motion there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I guess you don't need a . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

What item would the committee like to address now?

MR. WICKMAN: Can we address the caucus budget, Mr. Chairman, and get these things wrapped up?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Caucus? Tabs 10 and 11.

MR. WICKMAN: I think we've got to recognize that we've got a short session on Monday, and we have to have this thing done before February 10.

9:55

MRS. MIROSH: Oh, do we?

MR. WICKMAN: Well, you have to. Otherwise, we don't send you a paycheck, Dianne.

MRS. MIROSH: We? We already know what our paycheck's been reduced to. I'll see if everybody else is taking the hits we've taken here.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Is this 10 and 11?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it's tabs 10 and 11. It's government members and Official Opposition members. That's what we'll pass to, revisit the \$42,845 per capita.

MS HALEY: Excuse me. For clarification, yesterday's number on here was \$45,100.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The original was \$45,100.

MS HALEY: And this reflects a 5 percent drop?

MR. CHAIRMAN: This \$42,845 represents a 5 percent reduction from \$45,100.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to move that we reduce the private member's allowance by 5 percent for each of the members, bringing it down to \$42,845. Now, that's dealing with the government members' services budget. The next one we'll deal with separately.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've done that, Mr. Wickman.

MR. WICKMAN: No, we haven't.

MRS. MIROSH: We didn't vote on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I made the motion, and it was just to have a calculating point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's now been calculated. So Mr. Wickman moves that the figure appearing on our books at this time be confirmed. Any discussion?

MRS. MIROSH: That's just the \$45,100.

MR. WICKMAN: It's \$42,845.

MRS. MIROSH: Just a moment, Mr. Chairman. What was the Clerk going to calculate for us? Yesterday we asked for . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The impact. This figure that appears there now, although it wasn't voted on, appears in the summary as if it had been voted on.

MRS. MIROSH: Yeah, it does. So what's the number? We've reduced from \$45,100 to \$42,845.

MS HALEY: What's the total impact of that in a dollar figure?

MRS. MIROSH: So what was the number you were going to come back with at 7 percent? Did we not ask for that scenario?

MR. WICKMAN: It's in the front of your binder. It's a little over 9 percent: 9.17.

MRS. MIROSH: In actual dollars.

MR. BRUSEKER: Did you do another dollar calculation at the 7 and a half percent? I think Dianne's right. I think we did ask for two calculations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That would produce another \$73,000 overall reduction.

MR. BRUSEKER: Another 2 and a half percent?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. BRUSEKER: So taking the \$45,100 and reducing that by 7.5 percent reduces another \$73,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

MR. BRUSEKER: How much are we short of our target now, Dr. McNeil, an even dollar figure.

DR. McNEIL: A hundred and eighty-nine thousand dollars.

MR. BRUSEKER: A hundred and eighty-nine thousand.

DR. McNEIL: That's with the 5 percent.

MRS. MIROSH: So if it's 7 and a half, we take off . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: A further \$73,000.

MS HALEY: If we raised it to 10, would we be at a zero mark then?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I beg your pardon?

MRS. MIROSH: If we raised it to a 10 percent reduction, would we then be on target with the deficit reduction?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would be \$146,000 out of \$189,000. It'd be very close.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'll give this another try. I think we came to look at these programs in isolation, without looking at the overall picture. The overall picture is this total binder. In this total binder we want to achieve a certain reduction that reflects what government members are doing. That's the way I see it as a member of the opposition. I accept the fact that we've got to have a deficit reduction. I think we all accept that. It's a question of where it comes from. We look at things like constituency funding. We look at caucus. We're prepared to reduce it somewhat. But then there are other frilly things; for example, the committees that have some travel involved. I would sooner see those types of things go.

MS HALEY: They've been reduced by 76 percent.

MR. WICKMAN: Some of the things we did yesterday I thought were steps in the right direction. Cut off the spousal travel. Do those types of things. Caucus research dollars can be very important, and I recognize that there has to be a cut in it. It's a question of how much that cut is. Again, it's in keeping with my philosophy. Most of the staff, at least that we have, are not paid that well. In terms of reductions, I think the reductions have to come at the higher level rather than the lower levels. Compromise: maybe a 6 and a quarter percent reduction.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, you know this one is an interesting one, because it impacts very universally; doesn't it?

MR. N. TAYLOR: It's friends and people we have hired, too, that get cut. I guess that's the only way you're going to . . . I thought 5 percent was enough, but I think 7 and a half – I'm easy.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to suggest that we leave this one for now. We're short \$189,000. We've got other budgets that we haven't looked at yet. Let's have a look at some of those other budgets, and if we need to revisit this one, let's come back to it. I think that 5 percent is a good start. I think we're all in agreement that it's at least 5. It may have to be more than 5. But we've got another bunch of pages that we haven't even looked at, so let's have a look at those.

MR. BRASSARD: Are you suggesting we table this?

MR. BRUSEKER: I'd suggest that we defer it till later on when we've made some headway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's just say that we're going to defer it till later.

MR. BRUSEKER: Defer it? Okay.

Let's move on to the next item on our agenda, I would suggest.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's move to the front of the book to administration: tab 1, administration services. Scott and Cheryl will speak to page 1, if they wish, or maybe committee members would just like to ask questions. Scott, would you like to sort of give an overview?

MR. ELLIS: Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll have a little overview from Mr. Ellis.

MR. ELLIS: The administrative services area combines two branches within the Legislative Assembly Office: personnel and general administration. This area provides the financial and

administrative and personnel, human resource, management services to the Legislative Assembly. You'll note in the statement of purpose the administrative services that are provided and the human resource management services that are provided.

The overview of the budget, which is the next page, highlights some of the changes that we're proposing. The salaries, wages, and employee benefits is one area where we're reducing by 4 percent overall. That encompasses a 5 percent reduction in salary and wages for all staff and a freeze on any merit increases over the planning period. This is being partially offset by increased employer benefits, specifically CPP and UIC.

In addition, we've also proposed an 8 percent decrease in the supply and services area primarily due to the elimination of some travel expenses and a reduction in terms of rental of office equipment, which is the elimination of some photocopying capabilities in our area.

So you can see on the overall summary page that we're showing a 4.2 percent reduction overall.

MR. BRASSARD: Can I just ask a question for clarification?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Certainly, Mr. Brassard.

MR. BRASSARD: In the purchase of fixed assets you mentioned that there'll be no new purchases nor replacement. Is that, in effect, a freeze, or is it just that you don't anticipate any necessity for purchase?

MR. ELLIS: Basically what we're doing is that we're just going to continue to run the equipment we have now.

MR. BRASSARD: So it is a freeze.

MR. ELLIS: Yes.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, I have a question too. Up at the top I notice that you have permanent and nonpermanent salaries. I was wondering if you could just elaborate a little on the nonpermanent salaries, what that really means.

10:05

MR. ELLIS: You're referring to page 3?

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I'm looking at page 1, actually. The second line has salaries, nonpermanent. Is there a need to hire on temps? Is that what it's implying?

MR. ELLIS: No. Those are what they call code 4 positions. Perhaps Cheryl can elaborate.

MRS. SCARLETT: Those positions were set up as what we call project positions, which have been continuing year to year to year, going back five, six years ago when there was at that time a freeze on creating any more permanent positions. Any further acquisition of staff into project positions which allows people to get benefits had to be on a project basis, on a nonperm basis. So, basically, what salary, permanent, and salary, nonpermanent, reflect are full-time equivalent staff that have been around for several years now to perform the basic functions of the two branches.

Under wages is where you would find dollars to hire on a casual, as required, cover-up type basis.

MR. BRASSARD: Just further to that then. There's quite a discrepancy between the reduction to the salaries of permanent

employees as opposed to nonpermanent. Is that less utilization? Is it, in effect, indeed a salary reduction or what?

MR. ELLIS: What's happened is that one of the positions which is a full-time position has been broken up into a part-time, nonpermanent position and a wage position. So there's a shift in dollars, if you will, but no increase in terms of man-hours.

MR. BRASSARD: Oh, okay.

MR. ELLIS: This is something that's in the work force these days, where you have mothers who wish to work only part-time, and we've had to be flexible with our staff in order to accommodate those kinds of requests.

MR. BRASSARD: One further question then. What would you classify as advertising under the administration tab? What would fall into that?

MRS. SCARLETT: The \$1,500 for advertising is an item that covers advertising for recruitment purposes.

MR. BRASSARD: I see. Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I spoke on this yesterday. I'll just speak on it again briefly. I realize we're not here to specifically tell the administration every little detail as to how to do their job, but I would hope that when they put it all together and they look at the reductions in the salary components of 5 percent and no increase in the merit and such, they look at possibly some creative ways of doing it that would minimize the impact, particularly for those at the lower level of the pay scale – time-sharing, job-sharing, whatever – maybe bigger cuts at the top rather than 5 percent across the board.

DR. McNEIL: As I indicated yesterday, those are issues that we haven't made final decisions on with respect to how we're going to do that.

Just to reiterate what I said in my overview yesterday, this area supports all the staff in the constituency offices, all your caucus staff. Because of the stacking, or downloading, as we discussed yesterday, their responsibilities have increased, especially over the past two years. That's why, in order to maintain the services to members and their staff, we're recommending this budget figure.

MR. WICKMAN: Do you want a motion on it, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, yes. I guess if we're going to make progress, we're going to have to get to it.

MR. WICKMAN: I'll move that the Legislative Assembly administration be approved on the basis of the expenditure of \$515,073.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As shown on page 1?

MR. WICKMAN: Right.

MR. BRASSARD: May I ask a question regarding that motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you may.

MR. BRASSARD: Are we voting on a one-year reduction? We have been up to now talking about an overall three-year plan. Is this a one-year reduction we're talking about? That's what's indicated on the page.

MR. CHAIRMAN: These pages, when we refer to page numbers, are for this year as an element of a three-year plan.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion? Opposed? Carried.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Let's take this sheet away and hide it before we change anything.

MR. BRASSARD: In fairness, though, the reason I asked is that when I look at the three-year draft, the rest of the figures are dormant. That's why I wanted to make sure that we're just looking at this year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tab 2, the Speaker's office.

MR. WICKMAN: I've always felt that this is a position that could be eliminated, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Something else worse may come in its place.

MR. WICKMAN: Nick has volunteered to do it for half price.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it does show a minus 17.1 percent.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's pretty good for one year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For one year, yes. I have to say that I'm of the school that feels that you may as well get the misery over with as soon as possible.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, it does change my opinion. I always thought all the fat in the department was above the shoulders, but I guess there was something.

MR. WICKMAN: Just one question. I have no difficulty with the budget here, Mr. Chairman; in fact, I think your office has done a good job in bringing it down. When we talk in terms of the parliamentary conferences and your participation at the parliamentary conferences, are they covered under another category as well?

MR. SAMOIL: Yes, it's under the CPA, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association budget.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. So we can deal with those items when we come to it. That's fine, Mr. Chairman. I move this budget as presented on page 1 of Legislative Assembly Speaker's office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Wickman. Any questions or observations or comments?

MS HALEY: Are you comfortable with these changes?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, but it's there. I'm certainly accepting of it. It has to be done.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour? Opposed? Carried. Thank you very much.

Tab 3, Legislature committees. Is there another one that we can do while Louise is . . .

House services?

DR. McNEIL: Why don't we do House services since I'm here, I think?

MR. BRUSEKER: You are. Are you sure?

House services, where are we?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tab 7.

DR. McNEIL: The overview. Overall this House services budget for this year is projected to decrease by only 5.1 percent. Before you draw any conclusions about that, bear with me. Again, the 5 percent decrease in the salaries and wages resulting in an overall 4.1 percent decrease in the manpower control group; a further 10 percent reduction in travel expenses primarily due to taking advantage of frequent flyer mileage and early booking – flights that we'd booked in the past were rebudgeted for full economy fare and in some instances business class fare, major efforts here to make sure that all the flights we book take advantage of as many discounts as we can possibly do – as well as reducing costs in telecommunications, professional service fees, hosting, and materials and supplies.

We provide grants to a number of associations, youth groups, to foster their knowledge of parliament and so on. We're proposing that those be cut by 20 percent. The other expenditures are reductions in payments to members as a result of, number one, elimination of the MLA pension plan and, number two, reduced travel.

The B budget proposal. As you've been advised, the Legislative Assembly of Alberta along with the Canadian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is hosting the 40th Commonwealth parliamentary conference in Banff in October of 1994. Alberta's share of the cost of that conference is \$48,640. All the other provinces are contributing. The budget is over a million dollars, which will be spent in Alberta, and the conference will bring over 300 elected officials to Alberta from all over the Commonwealth in October. I don't know whether members want to go through page by page.

10:15

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, not page by page, but I have a couple of questions. Some of them are very straightforward. Let's go to page 10 first of all. I'm having some difficulty establishing where the figure of \$24,720 comes up for the travel, because I see two figures that, if added, would be \$15,006. The two subtotals would total \$15,000, not \$24,000.

DR. McNEIL: No. There's a subtotal missing on the first page. This budget was reduced from \$110,000 last year to \$27,000. I'm suggesting another \$3,000, roughly, as a result of taking advantage of early discounts. All out-of-country travel was eliminated last year.

MR. WICKMAN: So there's a figure missing on page 9 is what you're saying, a subtotal.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah.

MR. WICKMAN: When you look specifically at the conferences where there are delegates being sent, the CPA presiding officers, two delegates: who are they?

DR. McNEIL: That would be the Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

MR. WICKMAN: Could we send just one?

MR. CHAIRMAN: These are the presiding officers, so it really . . . Where are we?

DR. McNEIL: Page 9.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 9, two delegates. As a matter of fact, there are three. Oh, that's '95. Oh, we're cutting back from three to two. We're cutting that by a third. Up to now there have been three: the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, and the Deputy Chairman of Committees because they are the presiding officers for this Legislative Assembly.

MR. WICKMAN: I notice there's nobody going to the more exotic type countries like India and that. That's all stuff that was cut last year, if I recall correctly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, out-of-country travel.

MR. WICKMAN: It's totally gone.

Now, on the second page, which is page 10, where you have the question marks in terms of the Clerk's conference, the Parliamentary Counsel conference, what is meant to be plugged in there?

DR. McNEIL: What is meant to be plugged in there is the function of how many dollars there are available to travel. At minimum, one. Typically at the Clerk's conference the Clerk and the Clerk Assistant attend. At the Parliamentary Counsel conference the Parliamentary Counsel attends. At the Sergeant-at-Arms conference the Sergeant-at-Arms attends. So normally there'd be two, two, and one, but it's going to be a function of what dollars are available.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I was going to ask you a question. In the past I've been fortunate enough to attend the conferences, and they're well worth while, although I think there's one place we could cut. I'm going to ask the Clerk: where we do send anybody, are we going to be paying a per diem? I mean, there's one thing to pay expenses, but then we were allowed to submit expenses for attendance, you know, like you were in committee, a hundred dollars a day or whatever. I don't think so. I think that if you're getting your expenses and your travel, you shouldn't get the additional per diem allowance as if you were attending a committee here. In other words, is that included in this budget?

DR. McNEIL: Yes. If you look on page 20, there's an allowance of \$8,000 for pay at parliamentary meetings. That relates specifically to a Members' Services order, a parliamentary meetings order that provides committee allowances at the same level as committee fees for attendance at parliamentary meetings.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Maybe if I could get the attention of the government members, I'd be inclined to move that that be removed. I don't see that MLAs, if they've already got their travel expenses – and they all get their travel – should also be paid to attend a conference. I think it's a privilege. To get paid \$100 or \$125 a day as if it were committee work, I don't think so. I think that's \$8,000 we could save. I'd like to hear some debate on that.



MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Taylor brings up a good point, Mr. Chairman. I don't think that people even realize they could claim. Maybe some have and maybe some haven't. It's true that we're already receiving a salary. To receive additional indemnity seems like an extra unnecessary expense.

MS HALEY: I agree.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, we should finish that discussion first, because mine was on a different point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MS HALEY: Of the \$10,000 or \$8,000, depending on which column you look in, how much was actually being claimed before?

DR. McNEIL: Oh, it has been claimed before.

MS HALEY: It has been. Because sometimes these numbers are there but not necessarily used up.

DR. McNEIL: Three years ago that budget was \$30,000. With the cutting of the travel last year, it came down. This reflects a pretty close approximation of what is being claimed.

MR. WICKMAN: I agree totally with what the hon. Member for Redwater is saying. There is not a need to double pay; let's put it that way. There's a salary component already built into being an MLA. To be paid to travel in addition to costs during this day and age is very, very questionable. I don't have any difficulty with that, but we should also point out so that everybody's aware, particularly the new members, that there used to be a time when I used to sit in here and go through the budget and see figures like four delegates to Australia, three to India. All that is gone. We are getting in this travel bare bones. I think taking it this one extra step is a good idea, and just that base figure is paid for. That's in keeping with eliminating any frills.

MRS. MIROSH: Just before we vote on the motion, Mr. Chairman, we don't have the base '92-93 written down in this column. So when you're taking out dollars, we're basing it on the '92-93 figure, and you've got '93-94 and '94-95 here.

DR. McNEIL: Our approach to this was to achieve a 20 percent reduction over three years on the overall budget, not on individual accounts. So if you look at House services, our projected change for '92-93 is minus 23.01 percent. We project a 23 percent decrease over three years in the House services budget and an overall 26.04 percent decrease over three years in the overall.

MRS. MIROSH: I appreciate that. It's just that when I'm looking at it line by line, it's good for us to see a '92-93 base that we're going on. So what was it in '92-93?

DR. McNEIL: I can tell you off the top of my head that it was about \$30,000.

MRS. MIROSH: It was \$30,000. So we're actually going from '92-93, \$30,000 down to zero if we vote for it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If Mr. Taylor moves to rescind the appropriate order. That has to be the motion.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I so move.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

That the appropriate Members' Services order that provides for payment of members at parliamentary meetings be rescinded.  
All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I hope you meant outside of Alberta.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, these are parliamentary association meetings.

Mr. Brassard.

MR. BRASSARD: Is it my turn?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. BRASSARD: Just for clarification. I find it odd that the salaries and wages are both taking a 5 percent reduction and yet employer contributions go up 1.4. How does that work?

DR. McNEIL: That works because UIC went up so much.

MR. BRASSARD: It seems strange that the salaries go down but the employer contributions go up.

Could I get your opinion on these other grants, these Commonwealth parliamentary scholarship and essay awards. It was \$3,200. You're recommending a 20 percent reduction. It's not a big issue. Can you just give me a feel for how important you see that program being to youth?

10:25

DR. McNEIL: I can give you my view, and the Speaker may likely want to supplement it. I think there is a real lack of understanding of the parliamentary system in this country, and anything we can do to promote a better understanding of the parliamentary system as part of our overall public education activities I think is important to do. These grants allow us to reward individuals, in particular parliamentary associations, for their involvement and participation. It enables them to come up to Edmonton and see parliament and interact with some members and so on. So that's the purpose of the awards.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I think as is indicated from this page, this is an outgrowth from our membership in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. That association is an association of parliamentarians around the world who subscribe to the Westminster model of Parliament, and I think it's our role to help people understand what that system is all about. For sure, there's all sorts of pressure everywhere else in our day-to-day life that sort of gets people thinking along another mode of governance.

MR. BRASSARD: Then can I ask a final question? I don't want to belabour it – it's a small amount – but are these youth parliamentary scholarships given to Albertans, or are they outside of Alberta?

DR. McNEIL: Just Albertans.

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you.

MR. BRUSEKER: The question I have is on page 16, professional, technical, and labour. I'm looking at two numbers: Access Network videotaping and TV coverage, \$53,000. I'm wondering if you could explain the \$53,000 for TV coverage.

DR. McNEIL: Yes. I made reference to this yesterday. In 1990 the CRTC changed their regulations with respect to what community programming was. As a result, in order for the Assembly to have question period covered, we had to contract with Videotron to do so at a rate of about \$450 to \$500 a day, including interpretation. As I indicated yesterday, there's the possibility of eliminating this cost if we become the producer of this program. The money is in this budget this year because I'm not certain how soon we can do that. It's not included in the budget next year. We may be able to eliminate it this year, but I'm not certain of that at this point in time. So that's why the money's there. Right now and for the past three years we've had to pay for our question period coverage by Videotron and the interpretation that goes with it.

MR. BRUSEKER: If we become the producer, would this figure be eliminated altogether?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Except for interpretation.

DR. McNEIL: I suspect except for interpretation, which was \$6,000 to \$7,000. Now, we've received a proposal from the Alberta Association of the Deaf to provide a different kind of closed-captioning, but that is \$31,000 a year, and it's our view that at this point in time we can't justify that expense.

MR. BRUSEKER: How quickly could we move to becoming our own producers?

DR. McNEIL: Well, as I say, I don't know the answer to that question. I think we can do it fairly quickly, but I'm not certain of that. There's some further discussion that probably has to be undertaken with CRTC, with Videotron.

MR. BRUSEKER: So those are some impediments that are blocking the way right now?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, the CRTC order is the impediment. We have to find a way around it.

DR. McNEIL: They've indicated that that's being changed, but we're not certain as to just what hoops we have to jump through to take advantage of that change.

MR. BRUSEKER: If we could do that quickly, it sure would be a nice little saving: \$53,000.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I guess, Mr. Chairman, further along the hon. member's line – and this is a maybe I want to fly. I thought it would certainly be dear to the heart of the Hon. Steve West. Could we handle the televising of the question period the same way that public broadcasting does in the States? Get a sponsor, and we'd sell the advertising: the next 45 hours of action brought to you by your friendly neighbourhood dealer, you know.

MS HALEY: I don't know anybody who would want to.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Why not? I mean, we're talking about privatizing many other areas. As long as advertising is not inserted in the thing, the way public broadcasting does. Could I ask the Clerk?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think public broadcasting like the public broadcasting system, PBS, broadcasts any legislative proceedings.

That seems to be on C-SPAN, which is another government funded organization.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I wasn't thinking of the broadcasting in that way. I was thinking of the way they do the advertising, the good taste. Texaco says: the following hour is sponsored by the following, or the previous hours were sponsored by the following. I think it's tasteful, and it's a good way of picking up \$58,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I think it would be if it was available. I don't think there's any example where any jurisdiction has followed that though. That's what I was pointing out. You would think that . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: We could be in the lead.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Mirosh.

MS HALEY: No, it's me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. Ms Haley.

MS HALEY: It's all right; just one more down the table there, Stan.

I just want to say that while that's a sort of novel idea, I don't know that the government wants to appear in any way beholden to any company for sponsoring us to be on TV. If truth be known, it wouldn't bother me a bit if we weren't on TV on question period, because I don't think it portrays us the way we should be being portrayed anyway. So if we can find a way to deal with the CRTC and reduce this by \$53,000, then let's do it; let's proceed with it. If we can't, then let's come back and talk about it next year, but in the meantime we're not going any farther than we are with this right now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would put it this way. The chair is certainly aware of this, and the chair undertakes to the committee that we will become the executive producer and avoid this cost at the earliest possible date, but I think in the overall numbers, there's going to be some work for us to do next year. If we can start saving it this year, fine. If we can't, we'll make every effort to make sure that we have this lump of money available for next year's operation in this budget cutting process.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Could I not move, though, that for the next year the Clerk put out feelers and report on the privatization of the question period broadcast.

DR. McNEIL: Certainly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You'd like to make that motion?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yes, I'd like to make that motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions or comments on that motion?

AN HON. MEMBER: A good idea.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee ready for the question on that motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

MR. BRASSARD: I move acceptance of this budget as amended, removing the \$8,000 expenditure and with the commitment that we will move into elimination of the \$53,000 production as soon as possible.  
That was House services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we were doing this by pages. That was page 20 you were moving?

MR. BRASSARD: No. I'm moving page 1, the entire budget for Leg. Assembly, House services, as amended.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see. Page 1. All right. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.  
Now we'll go back to tab 3.

Could we have Mrs. Kamuchik come forward, please, with regard to legislative committees? The chair welcomes Louise Kamuchik to lead us through tab 3. Perhaps you'd like to make some introductory remarks.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Overall the committee budget has gone down. It continues to go down from 1992-93, as you'll see, mostly a great deal through reduction in travel, reduction in salary of course, hosting, the elimination of the chairman's vehicle.

Do you want me to go through each committee at a time, or do you want . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have sort of been dealing with page – well, we've got two page ones.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Right.

10:35

MR. WOLOSHYN: That's got to confuse us.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: You'll see that these two pages are separate. One separates the standing committees from the special committees. As you know, from time to time we have special select committees that are appointed. Quite often these are unforeseen. There's no way to predict when this will take place. So the top section is the standing committees that are always there: Private Bills, Leg. Offices, Law and Regulations, Public Affairs, and so on. The second page incorporates all the standing and select special committees divided by elements such as travel, advertising . . .

MR. WOLOSHYN: Oh, I see.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: It's a breakdown. It's a different breakdown, but it amounts to the same thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, perhaps there are some questions by members on these two pages.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, on the page 2 of that page 1 – I was just wondering. Travel expenses seem to take quite a jump. What's the particular reason for that?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The greatest impact on that one has been from the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices. The former members to the committee charged next to nothing in the way of travel to attend committee meetings in the past. They would either

not claim or they would charge it to another allowance. Until we have a year of experience with the new committee – most of the members, with the exception of one, come from out of Edmonton: Calgary and the north and south of the province. If all members claim either their airbus or kilometre rates, the travel will increase greatly, and that's where the majority of the increase comes from.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So it could be substantially lower, but it wouldn't be higher.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's right. It could be lower, depending on whether or not committee members claim . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under this head.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's right. Normally if members come to attend more than one committee meeting or to attend to other business, they will quite often not claim the airbus, let's say, as an example, but after one year's experience we should be able to better assess what the actual claims against the travel portion of Legislative Offices will be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Brassard, followed by Mr. Bruseker.

MR. BRASSARD: Under standing committees on the first page 1, I noticed that most of the standing committees have achieved a reduction of anywhere from 23 and a half percent to 51 percent. Is this less meetings? How is that being accomplished?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The elimination of the chairman's vehicle and all related expenses accounted for a fair share.

MR. BRASSARD: Is it primarily vehicle?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: It's the reduction in salaries. It's less attendance at the conferences as well; the delegates have gone down.

MR. BRASSARD: So the 5 percent is impacted on that?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's right. Good management from the committees.

MR. BRASSARD: I see. Okay.

And Parliamentary Reform: that has been eliminated completely?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Well, the 1992 committee was eliminated once the election call came in, but the committee was struck again in 1993 to continue with a different mandate. So there's a separate budget that was set up for this committee, but the funds to fund this particular committee still come out of the overall committee envelope. There were no additional funds claimed from, let's say, special warrants. We just have to find the money to finance this committee out of the existing budget requirements.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, I just noticed that you've reduced the \$77,000 and basically replaced it with \$30,000.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's right; two different committees though.

MR. BRASSARD: Two different committees?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's right. One was the one that was discontinued with the election in 1992.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One was the Gogo committee, and the current one's the Day committee.

MR. BRASSARD: Both basically doing the same thing.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's right.

MS HALEY: One's just doing it a lot cheaper than the other.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, no. I think they're implementing a lot of the discussion information. Yeah, that's fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Recognizing that the budget reflects a 29 and a half percent reduction, Mr. Chairman, I would move acceptance of the Leg. Assembly committees financial report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hear the motion.

On the motion, Mr. Bruseker.

MR. BRUSEKER: Back to the Committee on Legislative Offices, Louise. I notice there's an increase in there. I know that at the moment we are in the midst of a search for a new Auditor General, and that doesn't seem to be reflected in this particular budget. I was wondering what impact that would have, and shouldn't it be listed on here somewhere?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Actually, the Auditor General search committee budget is right behind Legislative Offices. It's a separate committee. It just happens that the membership is made up of the members that sit on Legislative Offices, but it is a completely separate committee with its own budget, and again with that particular select special committee we have had to find the funds to finance it out of the existing committee envelope.

MRS. MIROSH: On that point, Mr. Chairman. Does this mean that once that search is finished, the budget will no longer need to be there? It's a one-time hit.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's correct. We don't anticipate it to continue past March 31, so there will be no requirements for that committee for the upcoming budget year.

MR. BRUSEKER: So in a sense, though, what you're saying is: there is a figure that should be included that really can't be included because we don't know what it will be.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Well, if you go to page 1 of the presentation . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: The first page 1?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's right. The select special committees are broken down at the bottom. If you go to the forecast line, \$36,213 is the expected expenditures for this committee.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

DR. McNEIL: To be expended in this fiscal year and not asking for an allocation for next year.

MR. BRUSEKER: That's right, because he has to be replaced by April 1.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Again, these are funds we were trying to find and will hopefully be able to find out of the existing committee budget.

MR. BRUSEKER: On that line, Louise, there is Pat Ledgerwood, the Chief Electoral Officer. Has he given us any clear indication of whether he is planning to stay on or not?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Not at the moment.

MR. BRUSEKER: His term technically ends a year after the election. Are we likely to be facing similar costs there?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes, we could. If he indicates that he wishes to retire, then there will be a need for a new search committee to be struck and funded, but until we hear officially, we cannot budget for something that we don't know.

MS HALEY: In anticipation of.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's right. Then the problem that's having with committee budgets is that they're very lean and if a select special committee is struck for any purpose, it's going to be difficult to find the funds to fund it.

MR. BRUSEKER: Do we have any indication from any of our other officers about their intentions?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Nothing that I've heard of. The Chief Electoral Officer is the only one. We haven't heard yet whether he wishes to retire or not, and if he does, then we need another search committee. The majority of the expenditure on that is for advertising. You're looking at over \$26,000, \$27,000 worth of advertising in Alberta alone.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you.

MR. BRASSARD: So can I call the question on my motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion? The committee doesn't want to add something for contingencies?

MRS. MIROSH: You mean like that one we just discussed?

MR. CHAIRMAN: For any contingency.

MRS. MIROSH: You mean add on a contingency fund?

MR. BRASSARD: Well, I'm not sure that we're in that day and age where we can entertain contingency funds.

MRS. MIROSH: But in anticipation of. If somebody quits halfway through the year and we don't have any money, what do we do?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We had an Ombudsman quit one time.

MRS. MIROSH: Yeah. I mean, how do we know? We could lose one again.

10:45

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question has been called on page 1 for \$161,301. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried. That item is carried.

Thank you very much, Louise, for your clear, concise explanation.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tab 5.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to put a motion on 4, which is zero, I'll agree. I wanted to ask the chair of the heritage trust fund committee to consider funding legislative intern scholarships. I thought I'd just make the motion while we're now on 4.

MRS. MIROSH: We can't ascertain that. The chair of the heritage trust fund has to decide that.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's what I'm saying: that we ask the chair to consider it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The chair sees a problem with this because the chair doesn't really believe the Members' Services Committee has a mandate to order other committees what they're to do. Isn't the proper approach, Mr. Taylor, for the heritage savings trust fund committee to make a recommendation to government that it be allowed to do such and such a thing, to recommend to the government that it provide funds for doing that? The committee itself has no budget for doing anything.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, first of all, I didn't intend that you order the heritage trust fund committee. I asked the chair to write a letter to the chair of heritage trust fund asking that when they consider scholarships for Albertans, they consider two legislative internships.

MS HALEY: May I make a comment?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Ms Haley, I guess this should be in the context that the Alberta heritage savings trust fund committee has now made its recommendations for this particular period to the government and will not be . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: It would lie there until next year. I mean, they're always ahead of us. In other words, if we don't make the post this year, we're not going to get it next year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms Haley.

MS HALEY: With respect, I guess – and I just wanted to clarify – we have in fact completed the recommendations. We have only one brief meeting left next week where we vote on those recommendations, so it's too late to make a recommendation for this year. Keeping in mind that by the time we vote next year, we are voting for the year that's going by. We're not impacting the budget of the next year; this is simply a philosophical kind of review. So I think that if you really want to have an impact here, maybe you need to write a letter to the minister of advanced education and have them recommend something like that as opposed to us trying to do it through here, which will have no impact at all.

MR. N. TAYLOR: My thought in there, Mr. Chairman, I guess, is that if we don't think it's possible, I could always just write a letter as an MLA to the chairman. Our budget is always behind theirs, so it's one of those perpetual things you'll never catch up on.

MS HALEY: That's right.

MR. N. TAYLOR: So I just wanted to say that I do know, after sitting on it for a number of years, that the heritage trust fund puts up

substantial funds – maybe you could refresh my memory – for Albertans for scholarships. Maybe it should have been funded there in the first place, but to ask them to consider it doesn't hurt anything.

MR. BRASSARD: I would recommend that the member do that specifically.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Okay.

MR. BRASSARD: I would move acceptance of the budget estimates for legislative interns as presented.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, we're not on that. Legislative interns was abolished. We're on tab 5, Public Information Branch . . .

MR. BRASSARD: Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: . . . and we have with us Dr. Gary Garrison.

MR. BRASSARD: Did we agree to abolish the interns? Have we already done that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is finished. That's why we're on tab 5.

MR. BRASSARD: Okay.

MR. N. TAYLOR: This is why I'm trying to get it shifted over to the heritage trust fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The chair would invite Dr. Garrison to open the discussion in this area.

DR. GARRISON: Okay. Just to give you an overview, as you can see from the first page, the overall proposal is for a budget which is down 9.3 percent from the comparable '93-94 estimates. It's down 5.2 percent under salaries, wages, and employee benefits. During the past year we had one person leave under the voluntary separation program and we abolished a permanent position there. The wages show an increase of 3.4 percent, and that's despite having a 5 percent rollback. That's primarily because with the new House sitting hours the *Hansard* workload has actually increased, if you keep the budget based on the same number of sitting days as before, because we're averaging more hours per sitting day.

Another component in there is that we're putting in a little bit more money for tour guides because we've had an increase in the number of groups. That's partly because of our policy now which gives us a better quality presentation to groups. It says that when we have groups over 35, we split them up. In years past we had some groups of 50 and 60, and it's just impossible for them to get anything out of it with a group that size. It's impossible for the guide to control a group that big too.

As well, we had been providing tours for Government House, but we're proposing that that be terminated this year because it's not really related to our mandate. We had that in there because visitor services was with the Public Affairs Bureau until about two years ago, and part of their mandate was to provide tours at Government House and tours at McDougall Centre in Calgary. When they came to us, McDougall Centre got split off and protocol kept that. We kept Government House, but with the severe financial restraints we're facing, it doesn't seem to me we can justify continuing to serve Government House because that's not really within our mandate.

Just to go on with the general overview. Supplies and services, you can see, are down 11.2 percent. We've got travel down 40 percent. The main reason for that is that in the last two years we've

had a traveling display, a booth going around to a number of trade shows and exhibitions throughout the province as a way of bringing the Assembly to the people, trying to give them information about how the Assembly works and inviting them to come visit the building.

There are a variety of other things in there. We've got a decrease in professional, technical, and labour. Printing costs are down because we've cut the quantities on a number of items. The marketplace is pretty competitive out there too, so we're able to get pretty good prices on things.

One thing that's relatively new, as most of you already know, is that we opened up an interpretive centre which we just started last year. It's just north of the fountains on the north end of the grounds. We have a small gift shop in there now, and we're planning to route the traffic so that we could, either through sales there or in this building, boost our sales of souvenirs and other items to the public. That, we anticipate, will bring in a fair bit more revenue than in the past. That's basically the overview. Would the members like to go through page by page or just talk about the overview?

10:55

MR. CHAIRMAN: Our procedure, Dr. Garrison, was to have that overview and then have questions and comments on these subsequent pages.

DR. GARRISON: Okay.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Back to one of the very first in the overview. He's dropping the advertising of listing Bills the Assembly passed and adding a smaller amount for site promotion? Where were those advertisements listing Bills the Assembly passed?

DR. GARRISON: We only did that one time, and that was in the summer of '92. We didn't do it last year.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Was that for the public, then, in the daily papers?

DR. GARRISON: It was in each of the cities that has a daily paper. There's an advertisement placed the one time in each of those. In other words, it wasn't all the dailies in the province. We picked one in Edmonton, one in Calgary, and then it was all the other dailies.

MR. N. TAYLOR: The second was on page 4. A Government House supervisor and Government House guides have been taken out. Where did they go? I know they're out of here, but where did they go? They're not fired. They're transferred to another department, are they? Or did Government House close down, like in the old Aberhart days?

DR. GARRISON: We're not terminating any people. What we're proposing is terminating the service. The people that provided this service also were supervisors or guides here in this building, so they would rotate.

MR. N. TAYLOR: In other words, this is not being done anymore then. I couldn't tell whether the service is discontinued, because it isn't in our budget, or somebody got transferred to another department.

DR. GARRISON: No. Unless somebody else wanted to pick it up.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I see. So it's dead. There are no guides at Government House anymore?

DR. GARRISON: There are now, but the proposal would be not to provide that service in the new fiscal year, starting April 1.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I'm just sort of curious. But the house is still open? Are people going to be wandering through there without anybody?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It just will not be open for tours unless some other organization wishes to take that on. Up to this point the Legislative Assembly Office has supervised those tours. It is no longer going to do that after April 1. So it'll either not be open for tours or somebody else will do it, but it won't be us.

DR. McNEIL: The point is: why should the Legislative Assembly be providing tours for Government House? That's not a Legislative Assembly function.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, no, I'm not disagreeing there. I just think it's a kind of shame because it's part of our history. It's just shut down without us taking any precautions or even volunteers or whatever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe there's a Government House Foundation. You said there's a McDougall Centre foundation or something that has some connection with those. I'm not sure. I know that there's an advisory committee . . .

MRS. MIROSH: We abolished that in the last budget. I was part of that one, as Calgary caucus chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, okay.

MRS. MIROSH: We're down to skeletons. We've closed offices. We've taken out protocol.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I misspoke. I apologize.

MRS. MIROSH: So, Mr. Chairman, are you saying that we aren't going to have any more tours after April 1?

MR. CHAIRMAN: At Government House.

MRS. MIROSH: Oh, at Government House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what we're talking about, Government House.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, that's done on a volunteer basis now. They still have tours but it's volunteer. It's not much. MLAs take them through on their days off.

MR. BRASSARD: On page 10 I notice that the space rental has gone up. I gather that's for teachers' conventions. Do they not pay for the space they use? I would have thought that would have gone the other way. How come the costs have gone up?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That was for the display, as I understand it.

DR. GARRISON: Yeah. This is a booth that we would take to a convention. So we would have to rent booth space from them.

MR. BRASSARD: I see. Okay. I misunderstood. I thought that was space . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Stelmach.

MR. BRASSARD: Just a moment. I'm not done, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, sorry.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Got your teeth into it now.

MR. BRASSARD: Yeah. I'm not going to let go. On page 12 I notice that there's quite a significant reduction in the Speech from the Throne and Budget Address and estimates documents, and this reflects actual. Is this just the less garish or less glossy production of those speeches or what?

DR. GARRISON: That's part of it. Another part under the Budget Address and estimates is that Treasury has gotten into desktop publishing. They produce the originals for all this, and they can do it much more cheaply now.

MR. BRASSARD: So those are down 50 and 60 percent. Then on page 13, the congratulatory scrolls. Are we doing these on computer? Are we reducing the numbers. You mentioned lettering done in-house. Is that the same kind of thing? You're able to do it on a computer as opposed to getting calligraphy performed?

DR. GARRISON: That's right. We had been paying a calligrapher to do all this, but now we're not.

MR. BRASSARD: I see. Okay.

I relinquish the floor, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Stelmach.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to go back to page 10. Mr. Brassard touched on space rental. What's the purpose of having the booths? Is it for the purpose of advertising? What's our goal here? What's our objective?

DR. GARRISON: As you probably know, we have quite a number of teachers who bring school groups here to the Legislature to visit the building, to see the House in session, and to learn about the legislative process and meet their MLAs, you know, see them in, shall we say, their natural habitat. [interjections] Okay. See them in their home away from home at least. A lot of teachers are unaware of the service we provide. A lot of teachers themselves are unaware of what happens in the Legislature, the role of the MLAs, and the legislative process. So by going to these conventions, we're able to make direct contact with teachers and in a small way start educating them.

MR. STELMACH: So what they're doing is they increased the space rental for us at their own conventions?

DR. GARRISON: No. We established about two or three years ago a rotation whereby over every three years we would visit every teachers' convention in the province. There are 10 different teachers' associations. The conventions that we had budgeted for in '93-94 were relatively cheap. They were in smaller centres. The ones we're budgeting for for '94-95 are mostly in Edmonton, so you'll notice that the travel for those is way down, but the space rental is up, because it's more expensive to rent space in a big city.

MR. STELMACH: Just a comment. I would suspect that given the climate out there teachers will be more interested in the affairs of the Legislative Assembly. But we're not doing any more trade shows then? We're out of that?

DR. GARRISON: That's the proposal, yes.

MR. STELMACH: Okay.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Maybe that extra budget is for steel reinforcement and protection when they set up the booth.

MS HALEY: Well, I guess I just have problems with the concept that we were required to do this. These are well-educated people, all of them with degrees, and we're out there doing what? I don't see any merit in it. If they didn't know who we were before, they sure as heck know who we are now. I don't know that this is a necessary expenditure.

DR. GARRISON: Well, you'd be surprised how little some teachers know about the Legislature and how it works.

MS HALEY: No, I wouldn't. They're teaching my kids.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I don't think they'd be surprised, no.

DR. GARRISON: They wouldn't be surprised?

DR. McNEIL: This was a program that was approved by the committee two or three years ago, but like anything it's up to the committee to decide whether it's worth while to continue or not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bruseker.

11:05

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, I'd like to turn back to page 13. Up at the top it says MLA school photos, \$26,000. I understood that MLAs were paying for that out of their constituency budgets.

DR. GARRISON: MLAs pay for half and our branch pays for half. That's why it's \$26,000 in here for the photos. We ask each MLA what sort of photo policy they want. You know, do they want to have a photo for each child, one for each group? Do they not want any photos? It's up to the member.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, we've talked in our earlier deliberations about the MLAs having more control over budgets themselves as opposed to out of the central. I think we could reduce this.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, those are 50-cent dollars. So if you take it out of there . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: Then the MLA has to pay it out of his constituency budget.

MR. WOLOSHYN: So you're saying that to save the money there, in the cost of photos, then it gets borne totally by the constituency office.

MR. N. TAYLOR: We could save \$13,000 easy if you move the MLA's share up to three-quarters from half. It seems fair enough.

MR. STELMACH: The three-year overview that was handed to us yesterday: is there not a projection for the elimination of that program, that \$26,000?

DR. GARRISON: Yes, that was included in the overall view of what we would do for the following year.

MRS. MIROSH: The Edmonton guys will hurt the most because there are more school groups. Excuse me, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Mr. Wickman followed by . . .

MR. WICKMAN: I was going to make the point Dianne's just been making now, and that is that most of the tours conducted at the present time are Edmonton's, so it certainly will penalize the Edmonton MLAs a lot more than the other ones. From Edmonton-Rutherford, for example, I've encouraged every school, and they all do come.

MR. BRASSARD: Could we take a five-minute break, Mr. Chairman, please?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The suggestion has been made that the committee recess until 16 minutes past 11. The committee stands recessed for five minutes.

[The committee adjourned from 11:08 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to move the public information branch as is.

MR. BRUSEKER: Oh, no. I've got another question. I'd like to draw the members' attention to page 15. The question I have here deals with the nearly \$9,000 figure on uniforms. The reason I raise the question is that under section 7, house services, which we've already approved, there's on page 18 an allocation for \$2,500 for uniforms. I'm wondering why we see uniforms here again for this amount of money.

DR. GARRISON: These are uniforms for the tour guides. The other one was for pages.

MR. BRUSEKER: Pages and tour guides or just tour guides?

DR. GARRISON: This is just tour guides.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The other one is pages.

DR. McNEIL: And security staff.

MR. BRUSEKER: So this is an annual expenditure of \$9,000 for tour guide uniforms?

DR. GARRISON: Approximately.

MR. BRASSARD: I imagine that would include cleaning, repairs, and so on, would it?

DR. GARRISON: No, it doesn't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the policy with regard to tour guides? Are they on short-term appointments?

DR. GARRISON: Tour guides?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

DR. GARRISON: They're wage people. Most of them stay around for a number of years. We've had some tour guides that have been here for 12, 15 years. Some of this money for uniforms is actually for the full-time people who are also involved in providing tours and other services for visitors as well as people welcoming visitors at the front door of the Legislature.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just out of curiosity, how many uniforms does \$9,000 represent? What does one of these uniforms cost?

DR. GARRISON: How much does a uniform cost? Well, part of the uniform allocation is for shoes, blouses, and shirts and pants for the men. There's an allowance of a maximum of \$50 for shoes. There's quite a breakdown. It's not broken down into so much per uniform, because the cost is always fluctuating. We have a private contractor who makes the ladies' uniforms. We did have an agreement with Woodward's to do the uniforms for the men, but of course Woodward's isn't around anymore, so the cost of that has changed as well.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Thanks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.  
Then Mr. Wickman.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. I'll move the Legislative Assembly public information branch, page 1.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So that's a net expenditure of \$1,314,269.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah. I point to the reduction of 9.3 percent, and I think that speaks very highly of Gary in his attempt to bring his expenditures down.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion, please indicate. Those opposed? Carried.

MR. WICKMAN: A parting remark. You've done such a good job that I hate to see us take the shoes away.

DR. GARRISON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tab 6, Legislature Library. The chair would like to welcome Mr. Lorne Buhr, who introduced the estimates with respect to the Legislature Library. Welcome, Lorne.

MR. BUHR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the Chair's indulgence, my predecessor had the habit of distributing a form.

MR. N. TAYLOR: And a Scottish joke.

MR. BUHR: Well, I'm not Scottish, so I can't help you on that.

This will just give you a background idea of where we stand in relation to other legislative libraries in Canada. If anything, you're getting better value for your money this year than you have in the past. I just give that as information.



MR. CHAIRMAN: Less than half the cost to British Columbia.

MR. BUHR: In our overview it indicates that we have a 5.3 percent reduction over '93-94, and that is made up primarily in the two areas of salary, wages, and employee benefits, where we reduce by 5.3 percent, and in supplies and services we reduce by 4.7 percent. In fixed assets, where we buy library furniture and that type of thing, we are not changing our request from previous years. Members of the committee from last year will recall that our chief librarian, Mr. McDougall, took the early retirement option as well, and this has been the major factor in our reducing our estimates over the three-year period as well.

I think that's all I have to say to begin with. If there are questions on any of the information we present . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Mr. Brassard.

MR. BRASSARD: Could you clarify the expenditures under travel expenses? Just what does that entail? I notice there's a 6 percent increase in your travel expenses.

MR. BUHR: Yes. That involves travel that we incur in the city of Edmonton. There are no changes in the first two categories. In the third one – we're on page 6 here – we have a slight increase to send two of our people to an Alberta library technicians' conference, which is in Banff this year. It's farther away this year than it was last year. We've allocated the same amount of money for travel to the Library Association of Alberta, which always meets in Jasper, and the last two are the ones that will make the difference here. We budget, usually, for sending one person to the Canadian Library Association but only every other year, because on the second year the Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Canada meets. They only meet every two years, so we put a budget amount in for one of those each year, and depending on where the location is, the amount of money required could change.

MR. BRASSARD: So in essence you have four delegates go to these various . . .

MR. BUHR: There would be a maximum of four to all of them, yes.

MR. BRASSARD: Yeah, I see.

Purchase of office equipment. You have it fixed at \$2,500. Is this something you anticipate, or is it something you've contracted for?

MR. BUHR: No. We put that in there every year to buy microfilm cabinets, because we need to house our newspapers that come in.

MR. BRASSARD: I see. So this is a track record that's been established.

There's something that doesn't show up in the budget. Is there any attempt to generate revenue through the library services? It would seem to me a natural.

MR. BUHR: Well, we're exploring that.

MR. BRASSARD: So you're exploring it.

MR. BUHR: We have built in some additional dollars this year of things that we anticipate we could do. We provide an interlibrary loan service to government department libraries, and we accrue most of our revenue that way at the present time. Up until now we haven't

had library fees for external users. We have not had fines for overdue books. Those are all things that could be done.

MR. BRASSARD: That was exactly what had come to mind. It seemed to me that you could provide a very valid and worthwhile service based on some kind of user fee and certainly a penalty for overdue equipment and material.

MR. BUHR: It's being considered.

MR. BRASSARD: Have you any idea of what kind of revenue you could generate?

11:25

MR. BUHR: That's very difficult to predict in terms of that aspect because the external users that we service vary from year to year as to how many would come along and ask for it.

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Taylor.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yes. It's on page 15, interlibrary loans. How does that operate, or what is that?

MR. BUHR: That is the area that I was referring to when I answered Mr. Brassard's question. These are the items that we retrieve for departmental libraries from the university. We have one staff person who does this on a daily basis.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's what other libraries charge you for the books?

MR. BUHR: No, that's what we charge them. This is the revenue coming in. This is the revenue side now.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Oh, I'm sorry.

Maybe while I'm still on that, then, is it mostly to other government organizations?

MR. BUHR: Yes, at this point.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It wouldn't be kosher to raise their fees?

MR. BUHR: We raised that fee last year from \$3 to \$4 an item, so we hadn't contemplated raising that this year. In the subscriptions of a couple of things that we produce and sell, we've raised the rate there. You can see that in the \$2,966. We're bringing in a little more money.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I would move the adoption of the budget, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Taylor has moved that the budget proposal for the Legislature Library be approved. All those in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

Thank you very much, Lorne.

MR. BUHR: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll now move to tab 8, information systems. Mr. Bill Gano will lead us in this discussion.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, hello, Bill. I didn't see you sitting back there.

MR. GANO: I was hiding in the corner there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Welcome.

MR. GANO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you'd like to introduce this subject to us, Bill.

MR. GANO: Yes, thank you. Information systems is an area that is responsible for the support and maintenance of the computer systems within the Legislative Assembly. Just looking at the overview, we are projecting a 3.5 decrease in the salaries and wages area this year due mainly to the 5 percent salary cut.

Under supplies and services we are expecting a .2 percent increase there. This is due mainly to the expanding network and a requirement to perhaps get some additional manpower in order to allow us to maintain and keep the network current. The increase, however, is largely offset by us being able to off-load or bring a number of systems from the mainframe computers down to the local area network. This provides a more responsive network for the members and for the caucus offices.

Within fixed assets we are expecting a 3.3 percent decrease, mainly because we anticipate slowing down the implementation of what we're calling the parliamentary information system. This is a system that provides on-line access to such things as *Hansard* and Alberta statutes and so on.

That basically is the overview. I certainly will entertain any questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Then I'd like Mr. Brassard to make his question or comment.

MR. BRASSARD: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can only imagine what it's like trying to keep up to the changes in computer technology and updated equipment and everything in a building this size, so I have to honestly say I've got the greatest respect for what you do, and you personally because I've had some experience with your abilities.

Having said that, on page 6 I notice the conference expenses are eliminated, but then I see lodging for 60 days. Could you clarify your lodging and meals expenses in this category?

MR. GANO: Yes. All of those expenditures there – vehicle rentals, lodging, meals – are for us when we are traveling to constituency offices. What we attempt to do is visit each constituency office in the province.

MR. BRASSARD: I noticed on page 9 that you're anticipating quite a significant increase in telephone rental and long-distance tolls. The long-distance tolls are up 500 percent. Could you just give us an overview of what's involved?

MR. GANO: Okay. As far as the long-distance tolls, that's as a direct result of providing network faxing service. This allows any member or staff member to fax an item anywhere in the world directly from their computer on their desk. What happens, actually, is that when they do that, it goes through a telephone line, and it is

paid for by information systems. These costs have been averaging \$600 to \$700 per month over the last year.

MR. BRASSARD: Has there been any attempt to establish a network of E-mail that would minimize the necessity for use of fax machines? We all have computers in our constituency office. It seems that if we could tie into an E-mail system, much of this transfer of information could be done that way.

MR. GANO: We do have an electronic mail system for those that are part of the Legislative Assembly network, so all constituency offices, for example, are able to dial in and exchange electronic mail and documents through that system. This, however, is for faxing items to people outside of our network that are not directly connected.

MR. BRASSARD: I see. Okay.

Well, as I said, I must compliment you because I've been very satisfied anytime we've had a problem with our equipment or anything, so it's a kudo.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bruseker, followed by Mr. Wickman.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of questions. On page 5, staff training, caucus and LAO, there's an expenditure of \$30,000. I was wondering if you could tell me what that is for.

MR. GANO: Information systems pays for all training for all staff and Members of the Legislative Assembly. That's for WordPerfect training or any other computer related training that is required.

MR. BRUSEKER: Pays whom?

MR. GANO: We pay the training companies. For example, the WordPerfect course is provided by a private company. Those kinds of courses are offered through us. However, we contract to these private companies to actually do the training.

MR. BRUSEKER: Oh, okay. I thought the training was provided in-house.

MR. GANO: We do some of the training ourselves, but there is some that is contracted out.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

My next question deals with page 11, contracted services: a substantial increase, from nothing to \$35,000. I wonder if you could comment on that, please.

MR. GANO: Yes. As I mentioned in the overview, there is a lot of upgrading of the systems going on right now. We expect to require some additional help to upgrade all of the constituency offices as well as the Legislative Assembly network as far as WordPerfect, the new operating systems, the new hardware. So we're expecting to require some additional help in order to do that over this next year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a one-year project.

MR. BRUSEKER: I've got one more, Nick. I'm not done yet.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Sure.

MR. BRUSEKER: Finally, on page 14, maintenance pool, purchase of EDP equipment to replace old stuff. Now, the figure is constant. I know how public works has the responsibility for disposing of assets, but shouldn't there be somewhere in here a revenue side? Presumably when you replace the old one, you get something for it at any rate. Can that money not even be reflected?

DR. McNEIL: It goes to the GRF.

MR. BRUSEKER: That's it. That's for every piece of equipment that the government owns: vehicles, computers, the whole nine yards?

MRS. MIROSH: Yeah. It goes back to public works.

11:35

DR. McNEIL: Back to the general revenue fund.

MR. GANO: Yes, that's correct.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, this is more of an exploratory one. Telephone and telecommunications, professional and technical: those are where your big jumps were on page 1. That's pretty well a direct reflection, I would take it, of increased capacity in the load that the computers in the constituencies are putting on; isn't it?

MR. GANO: That's correct.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I'm just wondering – I'm computer illiterate – is there a system whereby the MLAs or the constituencies could be charged for the use of the computer? In other words, is there overuse? I would suspect that some people use their computer very little in the constituencies. Mine apparently is bulging, so my assistants tell me. For what reason I don't know. I would think that those that use it a lot should have to pay more than those that don't. In other words, is there some sort of a charge system after so many bytes?

MR. BRASSARD: The costs are the same whether you use it a lot or not.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, that's what I'm asking. You didn't tell me you were computer knowledgeable. Is that right, that the cost's the same whether you use it a little or . . .

MR. GANO: Yes, basically. The equipment has been purchased.

MR. N. TAYLOR: So it's the capital cost of it that's the big one.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Are you happy, Nick?

MR. N. TAYLOR: I should have hired Roy to look at this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you finished?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, no. I'm just trying to figure out, on the computer – these costs jumped. We're not getting new equipment. Where's it jumping? It must come from the use then.

MR. GANO: Yeah. You're getting new services; okay. For example, one new service is that you are able to now fax directly from your workstation. Even though the computer itself didn't change, there is an additional service added on to that computer. Therefore, we have to pay for telephone lines. There's another

service that is being implemented that will allow the general public to actually dial in and do on-line lookups of *Hansard* and committee transcripts and so on. That's an additional cost. Although, you know, the computer in your office didn't change, there is a new service being offered.

MR. N. TAYLOR: So it's not sensitive to use as much as the facility we put in. As Roy says, whether you use it or not, it's a strict cost there.

MR. GANO: That's correct. The network itself is expanding as far as service.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It's like going and buying a car: whether you use it or not, it still costs you a fortune.

MR. GANO: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman, followed by Ms Haley.

MR. WICKMAN: I was going to move the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can do that.

MR. WICKMAN: With one question, Mr. Chairman. The question pertains to the earlier one raised by the Member for Calgary-North West. We look at the increase in 712K00 and then at the decrease in 712L00. Is there any relationship between the two? Is the increased expenditure in one partially accounted for by the reduced expenditure of 42 grand in the other one?

MR. GANO: Yes. Basically there is a need to acquire additional manpower because a lot of the systems are being off-loaded from the mainframe down to our local area network. The costs, as I mentioned, are basically offset. They're equal there. However, this is a one-year kind of thing, and in following years there will be additional savings because we won't have the manpower. However, the items that were on the mainframe will no longer be there, and therefore they will not be costing us in future years.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay.

My second question again follows up on the Member for Calgary-North West. If you were able, Bill, to show it as a projected revenue, what revenue is being lost as a result of public works picking up the disposal of computers and equipment?

MR. GANO: It's hard to say. Public works actually sets the prices on these things once it has been determined that they are no longer usable by us. Computer equipment does not have a large resale value. You know, a computer that's two or three years old is selling for perhaps \$250.

MR. WICKMAN: There's something wrong there when you have to show the total cost of the expenditure in your account, and then it's shifted over to public works that can sell it for whatever.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Percy, that's an overall policy of government whether it be members' offices, a constituency, or whatever. That's not, with all due respect, a debate for this particular item on its own. It's an overall policy that covers all equipment. Maybe we'll address that at a subsequent meeting, but with respect to this budget, zero impact at the moment.

MR. WICKMAN: David, I'd like to see a report on this for our budget discussions for next year. Possibly what it should say is that we should have a requirement to attempt to change that procedure. I think that in fairness to departments like Bill's, to be charged a total cost and then not get the benefit of any recovery – it goes over to public works – isn't right.

MR. WOLOSHYN: And the cost of disposing of the junk and storing it and paying somebody to haul it and look at it and install it?

MS HALEY: With all due respect, there is only one taxpayer, so you might benefit on one side and lose on the other anyway.

I want to move that this department . . .

MR. WICKMAN: I already moved it.

MS HALEY: Well, then, for God's sake, let's vote on it. You moved it and then talked for 10 minutes.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Success has a thousand fathers.

MR. WICKMAN: Eight minutes, Carol.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman had moved that the budget for information systems be approved as presented in the sum of \$547,132. All those in favour, please indicate. Opposed? Carried.

Now we come back to the deferred matters?

MR. WOLOSHYN: I guess so.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The first one is MLA administration.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Page 15, Mr. Chairman. Do we have any motions with respect to the one last item that we had information on this morning?

MRS. DACYSHYN: We just had a notice of motion from Mr. Taylor that he would bring this up at a future time.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Okay. So now all we have to do is deal with the extended benefits portion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, the possible change of policy.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Oh, that's going to come back later?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. That's the only thing that's outstanding. Mr. Taylor gave a notice that he wanted to move that former members be allowed to remain in the group if it did not cost the taxpayer any money. That was the only thing that was outstanding under this.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Then we have to accept page 15 as amended. Okay; just for my own clarification.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I hate to differ with you, but the item dealing with the \$75,000 expenditure is still on the table.

MRS. MIROSH: No. We moved that the page be accepted with amendments.

MR. WICKMAN: But then you tabled the whole thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That had never been dealt with.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Just as a matter of clarification, Mr. Chairman, if we move that page 15 as presented today be accepted as presented, that would take into account the amendments that were made yesterday by Mr. Taylor, and that would then leave that \$75,000 extended benefits intact.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That would be the budget item, if we dealt with that, and then Mr. Taylor's motion to add members would be different other than page 15.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Maybe I'm confusing myself. I thought my motion to have them pay their own benefits got rid of the \$75,000.

MR. WOLOSHYN: No, it doesn't. That was a different story, Nick.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's already committed.

MR. WOLOSHYN: No, no, that's different. You're talking about ad infinitum, at their own cost, past the five years, Nick.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Taylor, this \$75,000 is for the five-year period commencing June 15 basically. Your motion was to do with all former members who qualified for any group thing.

MR. N. TAYLOR: As long as it doesn't cost the taxpayer. Well, I'll make it simple. Let's do that anyhow first, yeah.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I would then move that we accept page 15 as presented this morning, which would mean, for clarification, that the extended benefits remain intact. Okay? That would be my motion for discussion.

**11:45**

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, because you've allowed the motion from the Member for Redwater that dealt with the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, that's not before us yet.

MR. WICKMAN: No, no, but you've allowed them to serve notice of motion. At this time I'd like the opportunity to be given the same treatment and you accept my notice of motion that at the next regular meeting of Members' Services we deal with the motion calling for the establishment of an independent commission to review these pay and perks so we don't have to keep dealing with these little – I shouldn't say little, but with these types of items like the \$75,000 benefit to former MLAs.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That's at the subsequent meeting, Percy.

MR. WICKMAN: I know, but I'm just serving notice of motion, just like Nick did on his other one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps that can get us over the requirement for writing letters, because we still haven't heard from Mr. Taylor in writing.

MR. WOLOSHYN: So we're building the next regular meeting's agenda.

MR. WICKMAN: That's fair enough.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I have to write you the motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm saying that if you would give us notice that you're going to raise that at the next meeting, well, then it will be on the agenda.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah, I thought I did already by moving it here.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, you have, Nick.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I didn't think I had to do again.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Nick, we're okay. Just don't kill it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I was just talking about other ones. We had a discussion at yesterday's meeting.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Nick, just say okay. We're okay.

MR. N. TAYLOR: All right, all right. Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. So we have Mr. Woloshyn's motion. Is the committee ready for the question? All those in favour of Mr. Woloshyn's motion, please indicate. Opposed? Carried.

MR. WICKMAN: Now, I don't have to give you a letter for my motion. It will automatically be in the agenda of the next meeting, calling for an independent commission. Thank you.

MRS. MIROSH: Is yours on the table, Nick?

MR. WOLOSHYN: No, it's next meeting.

MR. BRUSEKER: Another time down the road.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For members' benefit, just so there shouldn't be any misunderstanding, we're circulating a draft order that deals with the amendment that was made, Mr. Taylor's amendment regarding sessional reimbursement.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That was accepted in this motion that we just passed, was it not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Good. Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This would be the order that would flow from that, and we want to see that it properly reflects what the members . . .

MS HALEY: Do we have to move this order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. It's just being circulated in case. If there are no questions or comments about it, that's fine.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Chairman, we then go back to the caucus budget. Is that correct?

MR. BRUSEKER: We haven't moved those yet either.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll have one final motion: to accept the MLA administration budget as amended.

MS HALEY: Page 1?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The whole thing as amended.

MS HALEY: So moved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms Haley. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Now, tabs 10 and 11.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, my understanding is that we have a motion on the table that calls for a 5 percent reduction in the private members' allowance. Correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is correct.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm going to call a question on the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

MRS. MIROSH: Just for clarification, Mr. Chairman, are we at 9 percent for this year?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are at 9 and a little bit, 9 and a touch.

MRS. MIROSH: Without this?

DR. McNEIL: With this. With the 5.

MR. N. TAYLOR: We're doing that well; are we?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. It was 9.17.

MRS. MIROSH: To look for our 20, we have to find 5 and 5. Next year and the year after, we have to find the rest.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee decided at the December meeting that we should try to do 10 percent this year. That's what this committee decided in December.

MRS. MIROSH: So in order to get to 10 percent, how many more dollars do we need?

MR. CHAIRMAN: About \$180,000.

MR. N. TAYLOR: If we pass this, that would do it then.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, that's included in it.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I was wondering how we got the 9 without this in there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're short \$180,000 from what we intended to try to do in December.

MRS. MIROSH: So if we don't make that target, we have to find it next year and the year after.

MS HALEY: No. That's not the point. If we're supposed to get 10, let's get to 10. Increase this. Increase it from 5 to 7 and a half.

MRS. MIROSH: What does 10 percent do?

MS HALEY: It hurts like hell.

MR. BRASSARD: Speaking on this motion, I think that the demands that are going to be placed on the constituency allowance and government members' offices in the ensuing years are going to be extremely significant. I believe it may be unwise to try to accomplish the full three-year budget, if you will, in the one year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In all fairness, we weren't trying to do all three in one year.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, I realize that, but that seems to be the way this conversation proceeded. I guess I'm speaking in support of Mr. Wickman's motion for a 5 percent reduction. That's a call for the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee's ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please indicate. Opposed? Carried.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Actually, it was my motion; wasn't it?

MR. WICKMAN: I just called for the question. It's all right, Nick. You're in the minutes.

MRS. MIROSH: It's your motion. You started it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe that you were the genesis, Mr. Taylor.

MRS. MIROSH: We're done.

MR. BRUSEKER: No, there's still technically tab 11; isn't there?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those are tabs 10 and 11 except for two items in tab 11, which is the leader's allowance and the Calgary caucus office.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the 5 percent of course should apply to the private member allowances in the Liberal caucus and the 5 percent reduction in the leader's allowance. The Calgary caucus office . . .

MR. WOLOSHYN: Excuse me, Mr. Wickman. Are you accepting a 5 percent reduction to the leader's allowance based on 1992-93 actual? If that's your position on that item at the moment, we can have that discussion and then move on to the last item.

MR. WICKMAN: I didn't want the 5 percent to apply to the Calgary caucus office, because it's a different nature, and I want to make an explanation of it.

MRS. MIROSH: But we're on a '92-93 base. It was never in there then.

MR. WOLOSHYN: So then if I move, Mr. Wickman – and correct me, Clerk, if I'm wrong – that the \$295,000 leader's allowance that reflects the 1992 actual be reduced by 5 percent, we would have concurrence from your group, and then we'll discuss the Calgary office?

MR. BRASSARD: We do it separately though.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, that's the motion. I would make that motion then.

MR. N. TAYLOR: No, no. Wait a minute.

MR. BRUSEKER: No. We're saying 5 percent off the \$357,000.

MS HALEY: You have to go back to '92-93.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, the '94-95 estimated budget that was presented here originally included \$45,000 somewhat per private member. It included a leader's allowance of \$357,000. That was the projected leader's allowance.

MRS. MIROSH: That's '94-95.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, that's what we're dealing with now. Our fiscal period is '94-95.

MRS. MIROSH: We're dealing with the base budget.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Look under tab 11, Mr. Wickman. The leader's allowance summary budget would refer to '94-95, '93-94. The whole two days of discussions we've had have been based on '92-93. Unless I'm wrong, yesterday at some point, I believe when we were discussing this, the number \$295,000 was the cost of the Official Opposition allowance in '92-93. Is that correct?

MR. BRUSEKER: We've had an election in there too. Things have changed substantially.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, there were two opposition offices then. If you're going to base on '92-93, you would have to put both opposition offices together and then come down 5, which would be too expensive. I think it's more reasonable to take 5 percent off this estimate. Not only that, you have a lot fewer opposition MLAs . . .

11:55

MR. BRASSARD: You don't have any actuals to work on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Clerk would like to . . .

DR. McNEIL: Just for information, the Official Opposition leader's allowance in '92-93 and '93-94 was \$295,040. That's what the Official Opposition leader's allowance was.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's the one . . .

DR. McNEIL: The Official Opposition.

MR. N. TAYLOR: And what was the second opposition leader's allowance?

DR. McNEIL: The second opposition party leader was \$211,000.

MR. BRASSARD: We don't have two opposition leaders.

MR. BRUSEKER: We're basing it on '92-93, so you're talking \$506,000.

DR. McNEIL: No. I'm saying that there was an allowance for the Official Opposition leader of \$295,040.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yes, and the second opposition party was \$211,000, as well.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah, and that's no longer in the budget.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, we have more members in our one opposition party now than there was in the two.

MR. WOLOSHYN: We have one leader left in the opposition, so how you can say all of a sudden that because we had two leaders that money should be combined into one sort of stretches my imagination, that at times is quite creative. The total opposition has increased by some six or eight members, which is reflected in the budget by the multiplier. In that budget, if we were to apply things equally, your leader would not be counted as part of that. In effect we've already given a \$42,000 – remember we talked just yesterday, Percy, and I said we wouldn't push that issue. So if you want to take it realistically, by counting the leader as one of the multipliers in there – that's one \$45,000 for the leader there; then you take the \$295,000 – we're at \$340,000. So by just taking those '92-93 actuals and giving you the privilege of using the leader as a multiplier, we're really already talking about \$340,000 for that office.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Stan, your logic doesn't go all the way through, because if you were the leader of a three-person opposition, that would be \$295,000 also. The size of the budget allotment to the leader has to have some reflection on the size of the opposition. The Official Opposition has in history – even you have gray hair too; you can recall an Official Opposition with two. So if we get into that method of doing it, I think we're setting ourselves up probably for a problem. I think there has to be some reflection on the increase in the size of the opposition. As far as the taxpayer is concerned, there were two leaders in there before drawing down over \$500,000 for an opposition that's smaller than what it is today. So if we knock \$500,000 down to \$350,000, we're coming down around 35 percent.

MR. WOLOSHYN: No. You are mixing apples and oranges. We have an organization . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: Don't call us Liberals apples and oranges. If there are any apples in the House, it's . . .

MR. WOLOSHYN: If you want to go one step further, we have obviously one whole operation that is gone, and that was the third party. That's gone.

MR. N. TAYLOR: We're them.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, you are them now. What I'm saying to you quite simply is that when we are here trying to debate a budget, I'm trying to be as fair as possible. I'm pointing out to you that if we take the opposition leader as a multiplier, which I've conceded to – Percy alluded to this yesterday – you add him on to the \$295,000, you're at \$340,000 already. If we're going to get out of here quickly today, quite frankly, I would be prepared not to have a discussion, go over and leave your \$295,000 intact, not even apply a percentage to the \$295,000, given the fact that you are already using him as part of the multiplier.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I want to go back a bit in history here. David, is there not a formula that spells out how you come up with the calculation of the leader's allowance?

DR. McNEIL: There was. It's evolved. It started in about 1989-90, when the Official Opposition leader's allowance was established at that time as the average cost of a minister's office. That's the first year. In subsequent years there was a percentage applied to that number. After it was established, the average cost of a minister's office wasn't looked at every year and the leader's allowance adjusted to that point. What happened after the first year was that a percentage was applied. One year it was 3 percent, another year it was 5 percent, and another year it was 15 percent, I think. So it went from \$271,000 when it was first established to 1992-93, when it became \$295,040. That's where it stayed the last two years.

MR. WICKMAN: That was for Ray Martin.

DR. McNEIL: That was for the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. WICKMAN: Now, looking at the last term, when you did the calculation for the private members' allowance, were Ray Martin and Laurence Decore both considered private members in terms of establishing the budgeted figure that would come forward?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: So in keeping with that, this is no change.

DR. McNEIL: This is no change.

MR. WICKMAN: Now, where did you come up with the figure of \$357,000?

DR. McNEIL: Your office. If you'll notice in the book, there's a memo from your chief of staff. We indicated that unless we were advised otherwise, we would put in the leader's allowance from last year.

MR. N. TAYLOR: What page is that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are two sheets under tab 11. It's the first sheet of tab 11.

MR. WICKMAN: My understanding is that this goes back to the discussions with Grant Mitchell and Ken Kowalski when the two of them sat down and said: "Now it's a different ball game. We now have two parties instead of three; we have only one opposition leader instead of two. We've got to do something different." They were recognizing at the same time that there was dramatic restructuring of the Legislative Assembly because that's the way people wanted it, and I think that respects it. Those were negotiations, discussions that were done in good faith to try and be as fair as possible to both parties. It was recognized by Grant Mitchell at the time that to simply combine the two opposition budgets would have given us a field day, even though collectively we had more members than the other two opposition parties combined in the last term. So, first of all, we chop all that off, and then despite the fact that we're representing more members, we overlook that. Grant Mitchell was given the direction for the Calgary caucus office to seek government space for free. We were told no, that we were given this in exchange. So this, Stan, with all due respect, was negotiated in good faith between the two House leaders.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, I really don't know where this conversation has come from. When government downsized cabinet, they went from 27 cabinet ministers to 16. They did not take the accumulated total and divide the 27 cabinet ministers' salaries up

into the 16; the salaries remained the same. If you're a cabinet minister, that was the price you got. I think it's ludicrous to say that the Liberal and NDP leaders combined had \$511,000. That's not an issue. The Leader of the Official Opposition was entitled to \$295,040, and that's the figure that we're using. We based everything that we have considered around this table for the last two days on the '92-93 budget. To bring in the fact that now there's only one opposition leader instead of two and so on I think is ludicrous. Let's just deal with the facts of the matter and stay with the '92-93 budgeted figure and go from there. I support the 5 percent reduction, which should apply throughout. We've done it with everybody else's salary. I don't know why this allowance would be exempt. I can't see where this conversation is coming from at all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Stelmach.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the voters made a choice on June 15. They saw a great benefit, a move to cost reduction of going to two parties, and our budgets should reflect that reduction. We shouldn't be adding all of the costs of operating the two opposition parties from the previous term and then dividing that somehow and providing that to the only opposition party. That's quite a substantial increase in the operation. Given the fact that the opposition caucus has increased and they see the benefit of the individual private member's allowance increased substantially, I believe that's a fair goal.

The other thing is that we are working and have been working on the '92-93 base for the last day and a half.

12:05

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms Haley.

MS HALEY: Yes. Just with regard to the '92-93 aspect of this, it is the basis on which we've done everything else in this committee. I'm not prepared to accept that this \$357,000 is written in stone somewhere. We're working from \$295,000. As far as I am concerned, there should be a 5 percent decrease on that, just the same as there was on private members. You know, there are not two parties; there's one. They've also got 32 members that can share the work. They are at the same level as we are. I don't understand why we're even wasting our time discussing the \$357,000. Let's just move to \$295,000 and decide whether we're going to take 5 percent off it or not.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, I'm happy to try and enlighten the hon. members opposite. I guess they haven't looked at the sheets before them. The 9.17 reduction that has been calculated on the sheet that we have been talking about for the last two days does in fact include the \$357,000 figure, and it's been in the binder for the last two days. Now, if they haven't recognized that, I suppose that's a problem they have with their arithmetic.

Mr. Chairman, what Mr. Wickman is proposing is that the leader's allowance of \$357,000, that was agreed upon between the two House leaders at that time, in fact is an agreement that did occur based on the fact that we recognized that things needed to change. You couldn't simply add the two numbers together, yet it was recognized that the \$295,000 with respect to the size of the caucuses that we did have prior to June 15 and the size of the caucus, singular, that we have now has in fact changed. Reducing the 5 percent would change the \$1.78 million figure and would change the minus 9 percent to – what? – minus 9.2 or minus 9.25. It would have us getting a little more in the direction that we want to get. So it does tie in with the figures that are on the chart. We are simply attempting to make a

little more improvement on it and deal with the figure that, as I said, has been agreed upon by the House leaders.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just on this point?

MR. BRASSARD: On this point. I'd like to point out that there's nothing wrong with my mathematics at all. The figures that are quoted in there do indeed quote the '93-94 figures, not the '92-93.

MR. BRUSEKER: But we're looking at '94-95.

MR. BRASSARD: But the base we're using is '92-93, and if you look on the paper, it does not include that \$357,000, so I think we're going around . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: No. It includes, in fact, \$506,000, and we've seen a reduction from that. In fact, that's how we get to the minus 9.17 percent. What we're proposing is: reduce the \$357,000 by 5 percent, which is \$17,000 or something.

MR. BRASSARD: Three fifty-seven is not a valid figure at all. It's \$295,040. That's the figure that . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: Read your letter. What's the use of having House leaders if . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Mr. Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: Just in terms of the agreement, in the final analysis this committee sets the budget for the Legislative Assembly Office. If there was an agreement between Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Kowalski, I think to reflect the reality it would have to reflect that that would be something that would be recommended to this committee, because neither Mr. Mitchell nor Mr. Kowalski in their particular roles as House leaders make decisions that override this particular committee of the Legislative Assembly. They can agree to make a recommendation to this committee, but I'm not sure they can agree that the budget that this committee will approve is such and such.

MR. BRASSARD: That recommendation has never been ratified by this committee.

DR. McNEIL: It was never brought to this committee.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Chairman, can I ask the Clerk a question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you may ask a question.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Currently, with everything that is in legislation and legal, how much is the Official Opposition leader's allowance for the year 1993-94? I don't mean the agreements. I mean, what is currently approved by the Members' Services Committee?

DR. McNEIL: Two hundred and ninety-five thousand and forty dollars for '93-94.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Could you repeat that, please?

DR. McNEIL: The Official Opposition leader's allowance for 1993-94 was \$295,040. The number that we proposed for the 1994-95 budget was what we received from the chief of staff of the Liberal caucus asking us to put it in the binder, which is what we did.



MR. WICKMAN: Based on what, though, David? Let's extend it the whole way.

DR. McNEIL: My understanding is that the \$357,000 is the average cost of a minister's office in 1994-95.

MR. WICKMAN: And the figure agreed to by the two House leaders. If what our House leaders negotiate doesn't mean anything to this committee, if what Kowalski negotiates doesn't mean anything here, how can our House leader possibly negotiate in good faith?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Point of order, Mr. Chairman, although I'm standing. The negotiations have nothing to do with this. That motion has never been put to the floor for '93-94, that Mr. Kowalski has negotiated with Mr. Mitchell. I would like Mr. Wickman to withdraw that remark, because this is a budget debate on '94-95. I asked a very specific question. All that we have in Members' Services is a number of \$295,000. If he wants to honour the agreement, then they should have brought it forward as a motion to Members' Services. That has not been done yet. If I am wrong, please correct me, and I'll withdraw all those comments.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I think you are wrong. Mr. Chairman, I was on the committee when they started trying to do opposition House leaders, and it was based on what they thought the average cabinet minister's office would cost. In cabinet there was also a car, a lounge, everything. The pay for the opposition leader is the same as a cabinet minister. The whole thing is running parallel to what a cabinet minister gets. I don't know. If there's a breakdown in communication between the House leader of the government party and this committee, maybe what we should do is – I move to table this motion to Monday so they get a chance to talk with Mr. Kowalski.

MR. BRASSARD: What motion?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Table this discussion of this budget. I think what's happening here is that the two parties and the leaders and I think even the Premier are involved. They were all discussing what kind of a setup the Leader of the Opposition was going to get. I think we're maybe walking into blind territory, and I'd like to table it so we could each get back to our caucuses, if indeed it is going to be the government majority's motion to work on \$295,000. That's something that should come back to our caucus and that should go back to their caucus too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just so we are operating on the basis of what the Clerk did tell us, this average cost of a cabinet minister's office was based on 1989 figures . . .

DR. McNEIL: I think it was '87-88.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, whatever. But since that time it has never been established on the basis of what the average cost of a cabinet minister's office was. It started off that way once, and every year thereafter it was adjusted upward by percentages varying from 0 to 15 percent and never really was attached to the average cost of a minister's office after the initial date.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, Mr. Chairman, I was just trying to say that I think this is an issue of such importance that it should go back to the caucuses and the leaders and the Premier. I think we're playing in water here that maybe is going to make the thing more

complicated down the road. I think there could be a lot of emotions here. I don't know. I'm with the Clerk. All I see is a letter. I wasn't a party to the negotiations. I don't know exactly what went on between the Premier, Mr. Kowalski, Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Decore, but they've had meetings, so I would like to go back and see just what the hell they did do. That's why I move a tabling motion.

12:15

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we have to deal with this tabling motion. The committee can either accept it or reject it. All those in favour of Mr. Taylor's motion to table this subject, please indicate. Those opposed? The motion fails.

Now, the list I have has Mr. Wickman, Mr. Bruseker, and Mr. Woloshyn on it.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, you know, I recognize that we're a minority here. I recognize that we were just outvoted on what I thought was a very, very intelligent motion, a very intelligent way of trying to deal with it. We can go a little beyond the Deputy Premier. The initial discussions, Mr. Chairman, involved the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Premier of the province. Direction was given for the two House leaders to negotiate; that was the direction that was given. It was all part of a parliamentary reform package, a restructuring and so on and so forth.

The question was asked: why was this not dealt with before at Members' Services; why did it wait till now? I pushed a number of times the question during the fall session: why isn't Members' Services meeting to deal with that? I think you would be familiar with that, Mr. Chairman, because I think you were involved in some of the notes that went back and forth. But the assurances we kept getting from the Deputy Premier, although I didn't get them directly – I got them through our House leader – were that he preferred not to ratify or formalize it at that time. He preferred just to wait until the legislative session was over, and that was done by us as a courtesy. We didn't push it for that reason. To go back on that, you know, is the most deplorable breach of good faith that I have seen this committee exercise.

MR. WOLOSHYN: On that point, Mr. Chairman, let's make something abundantly clear. We have not – and I repeat, we have not – said that the Liberal caucus would not get the agreement of the two government leaders that reflects over a \$100,000 increase to a leader's allowance, a man who goes around this province saying cut, cut, cut and he wants \$100,000 more. That's damn near 100 percent more. He can have that because the deal was made. We'll caucus and we'll give you that for '93-94 because Mr. Kowalski doesn't go back on his word; the government doesn't go back on its word.

We have spent two days here very responsibly trying to put together a budget. I was under the understanding that we were dealing on '92-93, and if that understanding was wrong, then I have been somewhere else for two days. The point that I'm making to you is that we had an anomaly with the election, with all this, and there were a lot of reforms going through. I don't know the substance of the discussion, but I certainly would not be a party to reneging on something, because I know you would have budgeted on that amount in good faith, and I respect all that. However, we're working on reducing from '92-93. It impacts on everybody. I can't in clear conscience understand how you folks there can say that we're being unfair, that the world is turning backwards because we won't throw in arbitrarily a \$115,000 increase on the Leader of the Official Opposition's budget or more. It doesn't make any sense.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It's \$200,000 less.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Now, let's do some arithmetic.

MR. BRUSEKER: The \$295,000 is no increase, zero increase over the previous Official Opposition leader.

MR. WOLOSHYN: You don't mix two different factor bases. Let's look at the way things are, because if you want to go on that kind of arithmetic, your Liberal budget is up by some 100 percent.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, so is the membership up by 400 percent.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That's right. We have the opposition leader's down by 50 percent, and that cost to the government should be down by 50 because there's one leader of the opposition less.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It is.

MR. WOLOSHYN: And you're trying to bring it right back up.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It's less by about 40 percent. Obviously he's not a math teacher or a history teacher.

MR. BRUSEKER: The \$295,000 figure is no increase, a zero increase over the Leader of the Official Opposition salary before.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That's right. We want to reduce it by 5 percent to be consistent with the '92-93 budget.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, you're sitting here saying that it's a \$100,000 increase over what we had before.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That's your request.

MR. BRASSARD: That's the figure you're using.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, yeah, and that's new math too, but it's more like \$60,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The list now is Mr. Bruseker and . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: I think I'd move that we adjourn.

MR. WICKMAN: No. On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. David, you answer this. When you look at the accumulated amount of money it cost in '92-93 to provide the caucus funding for the entire Legislative Assembly, how much was that? Was that the subtotal of \$3.587 million on your overview? Now, if we're going to compare apples to apples, let's do it.

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: That was the figure that it actually cost in '92-93.

DR. McNEIL: But with the factor added to compensate for the nine additional members that we now have in '93-94.

MR. WICKMAN: No, but we've been talking that we want to reduce 5 percent from the base of '92-93. We have the base in '92-93 of \$3,587,970. Let's take away 5 percent of that. What would we end up with? The figure we would end up with is roughly \$3,300,000-somewhat dollars. We're considerably below that. We've exceeded considerably the 5 percent reduction on the overall cost of the caucus research, way over.

MR. WOLOSHYN: You see, I'm really having all sorts of problems with this, just kind of where we're going on this. The two leaders made a deal for one year. The Official Opposition title hasn't

changed; it's still the Leader of the Official Opposition. We have lost a third party, and the associated costs should go out with that. How we can wind them into the caucus I don't know. In addition, which came out of this, the two leaders agreed to spend over a quarter of a million dollars on renovating Liberal offices because they wanted new rugs, new chairs.

MR. BRUSEKER: That's irrelevant.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That is not irrelevant. We're talking about the cost of doing business. That quarter of a million dollars is going to appear somewhere in the '93-94 actuals. So now for this year since June all of a sudden for the Liberal caucus not only do we have the government members, we have a quarter of a million dollars here, we have requests for phones there, we have to have wooden desks as opposed to metal desks, and now 350,000 bucks.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Stan, we gave up the offices in the Legislature for you people.

MR. WOLOSHYN: You can have them anytime. They were offered to you.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, if you'd have moved over to the new building and given us the offices here, we wouldn't have had to have any renovations either. I mean, we're the ones that moved over to the freight shed.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Have you lifted the level of the standard of living that much, Nick?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. Order please. The chair has been a little lenient, but we are now getting into everything under the sun, and we are not on the subject of the leader's allowance.

There is a motion to adjourn, so that is really nondebateable, but the committee is authorized to vote on it. Therefore, I think it's time that we decide whether we're going to adjourn or not adjourn. Would all those in favour of adjourning, please indicate. That makes four. Those opposed? Mr. Stelmach?

MR. STELMACH: No, I was in favour of adjourning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. So the committee stands adjourned till Monday at 1:30.

[The committee adjourned at 12:24 p.m.]



