

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

1:35 p.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Schumacher]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, ladies and gentlemen, when we adjourned on Thursday, January 27, it was on Mr. Woloshyn's motion that the allowance for the Leader of the Official Opposition be reduced by 5 percent in 1994-95 from the 1992-93 actual figure of \$295,040.

MR. BRUSEKER: From what figure, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: From \$295,040, which was the '92-93 actual vote.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I thought you'd withdrawn the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what was on the table when we left.

MR. N. TAYLOR: So what are we doing now? Is it open for discussion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's still open for discussion.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I think there's a misunderstanding here, because the two House leaders at that time, the Deputy Premier and our House leader, Grant Mitchell, reached an agreement. Maybe the Hon. Dianne Mirosh will remember back when we were both on the committee that opposition leaders are on line for the same thing as cabinet ministers: the cabinet minister pay, the cabinet minister car, the cabinet minister allowance, what the average cabinet minister's expenses were. Following that theory, because there are fewer cabinet ministers, I guess the allowance is higher, so they came up with the average cabinet minister's allowance of \$357,000 being the one that they're working for. I think if it's a question of maybe fact rather than anything else, there's the opposition leader's estimate: '92-93 happened to be \$295,000, or whatever it was at the time. But now, because it floats with the average of the office of any cabinet minister, it is -- what the hell is it? -- \$357,000. So I submit that the motion is -- there is a word for it. It's like "square circle" and "pretty graveyard"; it's an impossibility. I was going to say something else about Tories, but I won't.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, I would like some clarification. It is my understanding that we are basing all our presumptions on the '92-93 budget, first of all. Secondly, any agreement that was made between the House leaders was made based on this current year. We're not talking about this current year at all. We're talking about the budget, which is next year. All our deliberations have been, as I said, based on '92-93. The '92-93 figure was \$295,040. As far as I can understand, that's the figure that we're using for a basis. Now, if there was some agreement made for I presume a one-time adjustment period this year, so be it. I've no difficulty. I'm not dealing with that at all. I'm dealing with next year's budget based on last year's actual. That's where I'm coming from. I think what we're talking about is, in essence, a request for another \$117,000 on next year's budget, which I find ludicrous in light of all of the discussions we've been having. So I don't know where my worthy friends are coming from.

MS HALEY: Mr. Brassard pretty much encompassed what I wanted to say, but I would like to reiterate that we're dealing with '92-93.

That's \$295,000. My feeling is that that needs to be reduced by 5 percent to reflect the same as other MLA offices that are being impacted.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to make a plea here that we kind of get back on track. For two days we were doing reasonably well in arriving at compromises in some cases that reflected today's reality and reflected a spirit of, I thought, co-operation. Obviously, we got off track. I'm going to try this one more time. If it doesn't work, I guess it doesn't work. We are the minority here. We recognize it. Whatever the majority chooses to do, whether we feel it's right or wrong, I guess they parliamentarily have the opportunity to do it.

Let me just point out now that we've gone over this during the weekend just to make sure that all the ducks were in order. They are in order, Mr. Chairman. Grant Mitchell and Ken Kowalski sat down after the election, and they negotiated many, many items. One of the items that they negotiated was: how do we set Laurence Decore's leader's allowance in view of the fact that there is a restructuring of the Legislative Assembly? I believe it was Ken Kowalski himself that came up with the suggestion: well, let's take the average of a cabinet minister's office. The average to run a cabinet minister's office, the support staff, is \$357,000. Now, if that was done on the basis for one year, then am I to assume that the cabinet ministers have reduced their average down to the \$295,000 less 5 percent, which Stan's motion entails? I would think no; that's probably not the fact. When one establishes a base level of \$357,000 based on the average cabinet minister, obviously that's not going to be for one year. That's to set that structure, to set that foundation in place. If the Member for Barrhead-Westlock was here, I would hope that he would verify what I'm saying to be correct.

The same, Mr. Chairman, goes for the \$55,000 allocation for the offices in southern Alberta. The request was made that we be allowed to use government space, whether it be Government House down there or McDougall house or government space period. It was the other side that came and suggested we just give additional money. Now, you don't set up an office for one year, then pull the rug out and say: "Well, that was only funding for one year. From here on in you're on your own." That would make absolutely no sense, because had they gone with our original proposal to just give us space that was already leased or owned by government, then it would have just carried on.

So, Mr. Chairman, what has happened here under the motion presented by Stan is just terribly, terribly wrong. I would hope that the members would reflect on what has happened in the past, act in the spirit of fairness recognizing we are the minority but not holding that against us, and do the proper thing. The proper thing is the \$357,000 minus a percentage that we're reducing the other budgets in accordance.

Thank you.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, at the risk of belabouring the point but to try to answer the hon. members for Olds-Didsbury and Three Hills-Airdrie a bit, we use multipliers in setting caucus amounts. We have now more private members, so we have a bigger budget. We have fewer cabinet ministers. So we've used that. We've also used the fact that the MLA's total budget, the \$45,100, is governed by the number of MLAs that we have in the province. So the opposition has to be tied to opposition numbers to a certain amount. Although both members are much younger than I am, they can still remember oppositions with only about two people. Hopefully it won't be you next time or us or anything else. The point is that an opposition of two people really wouldn't expect to have this kind of a budget either. So there is some sliding scale. The old \$295,000 we're

talking about existed in a day when there was another opposition leader at the same time, being the third party opposition leader. The old \$295,000 also existed for a party that had – you're going to have to help me. Was it 18 NDP MLAs?

1:45

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Sixteen.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Sixteen MLAs. Now we have one with 32. We're double. Therefore, there has to be a sliding scale.

For things like this we have to depend upon either the Deputy Premier's word in negotiation or your generosity, because you outvote us. You can put a motion in there that the opposition leader's budget should be a thousand dollars, shove it through. I mean, nobody's going to argue that you can't shove anything you want through. I'm just saying that there has to be some reflection of the fact that there's one less opposition leader, and the opposition leader will be handling double the budget. As I said, the general average. I thought, "Well, he shouldn't be getting more than a cabinet minister," and the cabinet ministers have averaged around \$357,000. So that's the main logic. What I'm trying to ascertain: the multiplier effect is used often in members' services, either in the government's caucus or the opposition caucus. The multiplier effect of it is in there. So I don't think it's fair just to take as a standard what was on one opposition leader.

I remember Mr. Mitchell going in with the argument that both opposition leaders with only 24 members totaled over half a million dollars. Now we've got 32. We could have argued that we should be going for \$600,000 or \$700,000. Of course, the Deputy Premier came back quite logically and said that, well, that's fine in mathematics, but it's not the way it goes in the real world. So instead of going for three-quarters of a million dollars, all you're going to get is \$357,000 or something less than that, and that's the saw-off they reached. So I don't know what we're going to do.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm having trouble with this good guys/bad guys debate here. I would point out that it isn't us that changed any position here. We've been dealing with the '92-93 actuals all along, and now we are being asked to consider something different, something based on what I consider to be a one-time agreement that was made between the two House leaders. I don't know in this day and age how we can consider that it is going to cost \$117,000 more to act as Official Opposition with this government than it did with the last government. I'm saying the 1989 to '93 government as opposed to the current government. At that time \$295,000 obviously was quite adequate for research and whatever else the budget is being used for. We all went into this discussion knowing that we were going to be facing reductions. Every department, every MLA, every office has not been unscathed in all of this. They have reduced based on an actual figure that they had to work from.

I think that this conversation is something that has been brought on the table by the opposition, and it's unfounded. I can't for the life of me see how we can justify almost a 50 percent increase in budget funds to act as Official Opposition. If there were one-time expenses incurred and these were negotiated between House leaders, so be it. I'm not arguing that. I do think that our discussion should remain on track just the same as it has for the last two days.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Stelmach, followed by Mr. Woloshyn.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to speak to what Mr. Percy Wickman called the spirit of co-operation. Shortly upon leaving the meeting on Thursday, on the way home I was

surprised to hear one of the esteemed members of the Liberal caucus on the radio, speaking from Medicine Hat in fact. He talked about how excessive the allowances were for MLAs and how we should be reducing the cost of operating our government. Unfortunately, the member wasn't present at either of the last two meetings where he could have influenced the decisions on those various what he called "perks." The member using the allotment of five free trips for MLAs to fly all over Alberta and politick would be, I suppose, acting as a critic. It appears to me, if my information is correct, that we have now two critics appointed for every minister. Here in government we've downsized the number of ministries. Every minister has assumed additional responsibilities, yet we've appointed two people to criticize every department in government, and this is all at the taxpayer's expense. Given the fact that there are these built-in allowances for members to travel around Alberta, I question the need for such an increase in the opposition leader's allowance and also to open another office in Calgary. I just leave it at that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's not really in this motion, Mr. Stelmach. That would be the following one. The Calgary office I know has been referred to, but it's a separate thing from the leader's allowance.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you.

MR. WOLOSHYN: You know, we're sort of going around and around the block here. I would like to ask Mr. Wickman or any of the other members there to give me three good reasons why Mr. Decore as Leader of the Opposition should get extra funds when every government department and all agencies are basing their budget cuts on '92-93 actuals. This committee spent two days basing our reductions on '92-93 actuals. Quite frankly, I'd like to know what would make Mr. Decore so special that we would pull one item out of the budget and make it on '93-94. I guess in sort of a sidelight, he has made reference to using the scalpel to make nice, neat cuts to it. If this is his version of the way he would use a scalpel, it must be getting pretty darn dull.

MR. WICKMAN: I can come up with three reasons; I could probably come up with more. In reality, we're talking in terms of a reduction in the leader's allowances as compared to the last term. In the last term Ray Martin, it's been pointed out numerous times, has drawn \$295,000 for 16 members; Lawrence Decore drew \$153,000 for a max of nine members. Combined that comes out to \$450,000. We're talking in terms of operating an opposition caucus consisting of 33 and one-third percent more people than the two previous caucuses combined at a cost of a hundred thousand dollars less. That to me is economizing. That to me is efficiency. That to me is a bigger bang for the buck.

Secondly, it was agreed to. A deal is a deal. I think that's very important to recognize. A deal is a deal, particularly when the Deputy Premier has been involved in it very instrumentally and to some degree the Premier of the province.

Thirdly, the Member for Vegreville-Viking talked in terms of opposition MLAs running around, two of them watchdogging each cabinet minister and how they had downsized and such. Well, Mr. Chairman, let me point out what private members, or backbenchers, do. The opposition ones: yes, they present a different point of view. To suggest that we're spending unnecessary money by having two people watchdog in comparison to the Tories downsizing their cabinet – let's look at what happened to the Tory members that are not part of caucus. I would venture to say that every one of them, every private member, including the ones that are here, get extra pay for sitting on other committees. Whether it be an agricultural

research committee or whether it be Syncrude, I would venture to say that the average government private member probably draws \$12,000 or \$13,000 more in personal pay than the opposition members. Certainly they do additional work other than being a private member, but they get paid for that additional work. Opposition members go out there; they do their job. They're not asking for extra money because they're a critic of education, whatever; they're simply saying: give us sufficient resource dollars to carry out our job as opposition effectively. The figures given are the figures that lead to it.

1:55

MRS. MIROSH: Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't have a problem supporting a deal if a deal was struck. I missed the latter part of last week's meeting. I would have expected that the Liberal caucus would have brought that motion forward for this committee to pass based on '93-94 budget. That deal was struck for '93-94 budget. All the cabinet ministers' offices and all budgets right now are being reviewed for '94-95 and forward, as we are here. The motion, I understand, is for '94-95. So, I mean, if you feel there is a deal that has been struck, I would not have any problem supporting it. A deal is a deal. I mean, we've all made those deals. But we want to look ahead for '94-95 and forward as well, so I just am expecting the Liberals to bring that motion forward.

MR. STELMACH: They have a motion on the table.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, let me just respond to Dianne. She's saying to review it, yes. We're reviewing everything here. The figure that Stan is using is not a figure based on the review; it's a figure that's arbitrarily arrived at because that's what Ray Martin got. That's what the difficulty is with the whole direction this is taking. If Stan were to bring back a document showing that the average cabinet minister had reduced their office expenses from \$357,000 to \$295,000 less 5 percent, then possibly I could accept his argument. But we haven't seen that, and I don't venture to think that that has happened.

MRS. MIROSH: That's what we're doing. We're into that now. I mean, that's what we're all doing.

MR. WICKMAN: But has that happened? Can you tell me that every cabinet minister is going to have a new base averaging \$295,000 less 5 percent?

MRS. MIROSH: I can't tell you anything yet, because it hasn't been decided.

MR. WICKMAN: Exactly.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: You know, I hope we would stay on topic, and the topic is the 1994-95 budget based on '92-93. If anybody would like to question the \$295,000 number, then I believe I would react to whatever the Clerk would tell me: that I'm quoting a wrong number that was applied to the Official Opposition's office for that year as an actual. If it's not, then that's there. The discussion isn't suddenly on the downsizing of government. I made it quite clear that we would honour any commitments that the Government House Leader made for '93-94.

I would also like to point out very clearly that in the Members' Services meeting of December 8, on page 19 in the *Hansard* – and I'll just quote shortly here. I'm quoting the Deputy Premier. He said:

I would think caucuses and the Whip for the government caucus should be alerted to the fact that the caucus budget he currently has the ability to manage in this fiscal year – and the Whip of the Liberal caucus should understand and recognize that the current budget they have in their caucus may be very different than the budget they'll be looking at after April 1, 1994, depending on the will of this committee. They're going to have to be prepared to take necessary steps now to in fact prepare themselves for that.

The committee further gave guidelines that everything was based on '92-93. That was done here, and the Clerk went back and did the proper preparations.

I asked for three reasons. I haven't heard three reasons. I've heard us go off on a tangent. I would say to you that we have to act responsibly. Every department of government has gone down – every department – from '92-93 actual to '94-95. How you can say, in a year that had so many differences in it – and I wasn't a party to the discussions – that all of a sudden we should just take that number. I don't know why it came up at \$357,000. I really don't know, and I'm not going to question why. If somebody wants to change the 1992-93 actual for the Official Opposition with a good, rational argument, then I'm prepared to listen. However, the discussion on what the House leaders have done: I don't know; I wasn't sitting in on them. I know that we would honour for '93-94, that budget year, because we're not dealing with it.

We have to arrive at a budget for '94-95. I have a very sensible, sincere motion. I think the members of the opposition, if they are willing to act as responsibly in this committee as they pretend to do outside, would support it. I'd like to see it go through unanimously.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, to point out something, you go back to the first draft you have there. For instance, the government members' services, '93-94, jumped 18.8 percent over '92-93. Then from that base you're going down 9 percent, '94-95. Now, I'm not arguing. There are fewer cabinet ministers, even though you have less majority. I think it's per member or per department that's important. When you have two opposition leaders – now we have only one opposition leader with twice as many opposition – I think the \$357,000 is quite reasonable. I'll say this: if we vote that in, I would be prepared to move immediately afterwards that we reduce it 10 percent. And I'd be quite prepared to move that we cancel the office allowance of \$55,000 in addition to that, provided we get two rooms and access to a conference room in McDougall Centre. They've got the space there. So between those two reductions we come to about \$80,000. It's quite possible in here.

All we're trying to do is approve the principle that the opposition leaders, provided the opposition is of a decent size – I suppose a dozen or more – get the same administrative salary as the cabinet ministers. Further, I'd be prepared to move a vote that an opposition leader never, even in the next couple of years, gets more than the average cabinet minister. If the cabinet ministers reduce lower, as the hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow has suggested, I think the opposition leader should have to move down also. Whatever the cabinet ministers' average is, I'd be quite prepared to tie it to them; make those subsequent motions if you put it through. Recognize the principle, and then we'll tie it up so that there's no way . . .

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Mr. Chairman, here's where I have a difficulty. I'm trying to in clear conscience arrive at a figure that I feel the Official Opposition could reasonably function with. They have 32 members. We've even counted the leader in there as one, so that's an extra 40 some odd thousand dollars. Mr. Taylor then tries to argue the basis on status. I haven't heard why, how, the Liberal opposition can't function on \$295,000 less 5 percent. If we talk global figures, they've got a budget that's very reasonable even after it was reduced, tied to membership. They've got a very generous

allowance on top of all this. Really, I'm quite frankly – as Mr. Taylor said, if the cabinet goes down, we'll go down; if they go up, we go up. That's not the point. The point is that there is a need for the Liberal opposition, the Official Opposition. I feel – that's the way the motion is – that they can function very well and be uninhibited on that with the allowances proposed.

Now, the principles we were expounding with respect to tying it in to the number of cabinet ministers – I would be very, very careful on that one, because if you took all the current . . . This is something from mathematics that you want to pay for. If you want to add up the current total cost of the ministries, if you will, and divide that by the previous number of cabinet ministers and use that as a base number without knowing the mathematics, I'd go with that, because then we're sticking to the principle of an average of so much per cabinet minister based on a cabinet size of 29. If you want to do that, Mr. Taylor, we can have the Clerk calculate. We'll take a recess and calculate what the global picture is and then divide it up and then . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Stan, you're being ridiculous.

MR. WOLOSHYN: No, I'm not being ridiculous. I am sorry, Mr. Wickman; I am not being ridiculous. I am following your arguments of principle. The only principle I can see here that Mr. Taylor is coming out with is the principle that the Leader of the Opposition is the same as any cabinet minister; therefore, he should go up and down with a cabinet minister's average stipend. I'm saying: if that were established based on a cabinet of 29, maybe the number, if we'd known it was going to go to 16, would have been 50 percent of the cabinet ministers' salaries.

2:05

MR. WICKMAN: Maybe your cabinet ministers should reduce their allowances accordingly then.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The list indicates Mrs. Mirosch, followed by Mr. Taylor.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, just for clarification. In the '93-94 budget that you have on the sheet, you've got for the leader's allowance – which is all we're talking about right now; right?

MR. BRASSARD: No. We're getting to '93-94.

MRS. MIROSH: No. I mean, we're just talking about the leader's allowance. We're not talking about the Calgary office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're on tab 11, and we're on leader's allowance.

MRS. MIROSH: There's no Calgary office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right.

MRS. MIROSH: There's no such thing as a Calgary office. Government House in Calgary is for government business. It's not PC or any other party business.

MR. WICKMAN: We asked for any government space, not necessarily there. Any government space.

MRS. MIROSH: You can't have my office either, Percy.

The \$295,040, though, is the '92-93 base, and the '93-94 on this page that you've got in our book is \$295,040. Is that based on the

'92-93 budget? I mean, where did you come up with that figure? I thought that we could only put in here from the election forward.

DR. McNEIL: No. That's the amount that was allocated originally to the Leader of the Official Opposition in the 1993-94 budget: \$295,040.

MRS. MIROSH: Then that's reflected by ongoing principles. The fact is that from January to June '93 you had another party, and I'm sure you had expenses you had to pay out. So we really should be looking at June from '93 to . . .

MR. BRASSARD: That issue isn't on the table though.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, I'm trying to establish a base here.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, you've got a base: '92-93. It's the same base we've used for every other deliberation.

MR. N. TAYLOR: No, no. She's right. The base is from the last election until . . .

MR. BRASSARD: The base is not. I'm sorry.

MRS. MIROSH: It's a lower base then, because it's only . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. Everybody's speaking at once.
Mr. Brassard.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, just on this point. The base we are using throughout our entire deliberations has nothing to do with those '93-94 estimate figures at all. The \$295,000 is in there as a carryover from the actuals of '92-93; am I right? So the figure we're using and we should stay on, as we have done throughout this entire deliberation, is the '92-93 figure. I think we need to put any private deals aside and stay on track with the figures we've been using throughout our deliberations.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, he can block in the '92-93, '90-91, '85-86 – you can pick any base you want – but I think the hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow made a very good a point.

MRS. MIROSH: Glenmore.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Calgary-Glenmore. I'm sorry. A Freudian slip. The actuals – it was easier to do '92-93 because we had a full year, and I think in most cases we have, but even then, with government members' services and opposition services as a total, we didn't stick to '92-93. We just stuck to the per capita.

Then I'd like to go back to Mr. Woloshyn's argument. He said: prove that you need it. Well, I suppose there are democracies where the government decides what the opposition should need. I've worked in a lot of countries that did that. They weren't democracies really. I remember Tito saying how much the opposition should get because he figured they were paying where he couldn't scratch. I remember working in Czechoslovakia, and they decided, when the Russians put in a parliamentary system, how much the opposition should get.

Who weighs an opposition? I don't know. I must confess I really don't. The hon. Member for Stony Plain certainly was in the opposition, and maybe he felt – obviously, he jumped over to the government side – that it was useless; they should get nothing for research. I don't know. The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking says that he heard two people in Medicine Hat – perish the thought

– criticizing the government. What an awful, uncharitable thing to do. Can you imagine in the opposition – you, Mr. Chairman, were in the opposition for years. You were a very short time in the government, I should say. I doubt you ever had the benefit . . .

MRS. MIROSH: How dare you.

MR. BRASSARD: Can I give . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: No, just wait a minute. How do you weigh an opposition's value? I have no idea. And maybe these two have run into an idea. The Member for Olds-Didsbury says '92-93; no matter how many members you get, we base it on that. After the next election I can still hear him with a violin out: '92-93. For some reason or other that's the base year in his mind. Maybe it was a great model car. I don't know. That's the one he's picked. That has to be on. But nobody knows exactly. Nobody knows . . . [interjection] You're going to have to sit and take it for a bit. You asked for it, Roy. There's nobody that knows what the opposition gets, so it is a toss-up. We're just saying that in general with one opposition leader and a respectable number of members, it should run about the same as a cabinet minister takes. Now, if you only elect two opposition members – and perish the thought, it could actually happen to Olds-Didsbury and Vegreville-Viking the next time around – then we'd have the argument all over: '92-93; divide that by 32. You should be down to just enough to get three free cokes in a coke machine downstairs, because after all, you shouldn't be criticizing God. The point is that the government system operates on an elected opposition, and gosh knows how much it should be. I remember the day when we got very little – I admit here, very little. I'm just saying that this is the general term, not '92-93, unless you want to group all opposition leaders together.

The hon. gentleman from Olds is a salesman in the automobile end. Now, if somebody comes in and says he wants to trade his two pickups in for a big truck, he wouldn't say, "Well, you had two pickups before, and now you're only getting one." What you've got now is one big truck instead of the two pickups you had before, so you can't sit there and compare the old model pickup and say, "Well, the big truck is only worth so many dollars more than the other, because now we're only going to compare with the one truck." You've got two, and two oppositions. They may not be worth a damn in your opinion, but there's no question worth does not come in here, Member for Stony Plain. Worth does not come into this argument. I'm not sure we can judge. Are you? If we're going to devise a system where you've set our allowances, the opposition allowances, and the opposition sets the government's allowances, we'll all be broke. We've both got to realize we have to pick some sort of commonsense compromise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's Mr. Brassard followed by Ms Haley.

MR. BRASSARD: Just on this point. The year-end in this government, I'd point out to the hon. member, is from April 1 to March 31. So at this present time when we're trying to establish a budget, we're only working from estimates. We don't have any actual. The only actual we have is the last full year, which happens to be '92-93. Now I don't know how the hon. member ran his business when he was in business . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: I had two pickups.

MR. BRASSARD: . . . but when we had the car dealership, we ran our estimates on actual figures. We didn't base them on some kind of prevailing estimate. So the most current actual figures we have

for the entire year are '92-93. We've used that throughout based on the full year's operation, and that's what they judged all the forecasts on and applied the percentage factors to. I point out that although there may be more members in opposition in the one party opposing government, they also have increased private members' allowances, and that's exactly what that's for. My private member allowances go to pay for certain things, researchers and so on. I presume theirs do as well. That has nothing to do with leaders. So the size of the caucus over there has nothing to do with the amount he's asking for, because those members come with them and allow sufficient to operate their offices. What we're talking about here is strictly a leader who feels he needs an additional \$117,000 to operate in opposition.

MR. BRUSEKER: Where do you get that figure?

MR. BRASSARD: Moreover, it's \$55,000 for an office that wasn't there before in Calgary and . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're on the middle item.

MR. BRASSARD: I withdraw that and place in the figure \$62,000. It's as valid. The Leader of the Official Opposition is asking for an additional \$62,000 for his office alone to perform the same function the Leader of the Opposition before him performed. I think it's ludicrous. And this isn't a figure, a year that I'm pulling out of the air somewhere; it's the last actual figure we have at our disposal.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Could I answer his question on business?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll put you down again, Mr. Taylor, because you may have something to answer as well to Ms Haley and Mr. Woloshyn.

Ms Haley.

MS HALEY: Thank you. Perhaps this would be classified as a hypothetical type of question. So much of what the hon. members across from me are saying is based on the fact that at one time there were two opposition parties, the NDP and themselves, and now that one of them isn't here at this present time, somehow to the victor go the spoils. I fail to understand. I mean, if we had one NDP member elected, would their argument then still stand, that because they had won so many more seats than that other party, they would still get to have that money? We're not talking about whether there's one party or 17 here. It doesn't make any difference. They're an opposition party entitled to an opposition budget. They're not entitled to a two-party budget. So when you narrow this down to what it is we're really discussing, and that's \$295,000 versus \$357,000, let's get on with it. In 45 minutes we've got zero. We're nowhere on this discussion.

2:15

MR. CHAIRMAN: The list now is as follows: Mr. Woloshyn, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Wickman.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I'd like to clarify something for the committee. The Clerk circulated these guidelines at the last meeting on December 8. The guidelines – and I'll just read a portion – started:

This projection should produce an overall 20% reduction when compared to the 1992-93 actual expenditure levels. It is suggested that managers target for 10% (1994-95), 5% (1995-96) and 5% (1996-97) reductions in their budgets.

Mr. Kowalski had some comments, which I read to you earlier, pertaining to this particular item. The chairman then said: "Any

further comment? Is there any objection to the guideline that has been circulated?" Mr. Kowalski asked for a clarification. He said:

Mr. Chairman, this is a guideline the Clerk would use for those elements within the budget that would deal with the administration.

What we're dealing on now.

I have no problem at all with that.

Dr. McNeil argues, "Correct." Mr. Kowalski goes on further:

The scenarios that would be looked at – there will always be ups and downs. If any of them says 10 percent, it might be higher in some and lower in others. That's just the basic guideline. It's no problem.

That was the end of the discussion, and Mr. Wickman got on to another topic. Darn it, guys, if you had some reservations, some misunderstanding with '92-93, why didn't we hear it in December? I mean, we were abundantly clear. We instructed the Clerk to do it; he comes back with it. I'm here patiently trying to hear some reason why we should make a one-line exception to the '92-93 actuals. Quite frankly, folks, I'm still waiting to hear a good argument.

MR. N. TAYLOR: We do make exceptions on a per person basis. We've made a number of exceptions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Taylor, you have the floor now.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah. It would seem to boil down – and I think the Member for Three Hills-Airdrie hit it fairly close. Is there a standard amount or is there a sliding scale amount that goes with an opposition leader? That seems to be the question, too, by Stony Plain and the Member for Olds-Didsbury. They seem to say, "Well, in '92-93 the opposition leader got that." So if one opposition leader for 16 or one opposition leader for 32 – and I would suppose their logic would apply. If we would have been unfortunate enough to have only two seats, we would have \$295,000 less 5 percent under that kind of logic. The point is that the size of opposition has to have something to do with it. It doesn't say logically . . .

MS HALEY: It's called private members' allowance.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I think you're right on. I remember the time when we had opposition leaders; we had to share because we both had two members. I also remember the time when one member – because they were the second party but the lead party only had two, the government decided, well, it didn't make sense to give them nothing because one doesn't make an official party of recognition. If one party ran in a by-election here, freethinkers or the NDP or something else coming down the road – and I hope it's none of us, unless it's because we won a million dollars in the lottery and told the MLA business to go to hell; I wouldn't want anything unfortunate to cause a by-election – we've always sat here and adjusted that minority party, be it they're the opposition and that, for the size they covered and how many others there were.

MS HALEY: You've got that already in the private members' allowance. I mean, that's already done.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yes. Oh, you're right, because it comes up twice.

MS HALEY: You're talking about the leader's caucus.

MR. N. TAYLOR: You're exactly right. It comes up under the private members' allowance. But even when you have a one-person opposition or a two-person minority party, the amount per person is not enough. They have always said that they have to have more aid. I think it's fairly logical to give the socialist opposition – or if you had a socialist government and you were the conservative

opposition, you would rightly argue, "Well, I need a little bit more than just the research from two of us, like we would have if I were part of the bigger machine." I would want to have some sort of leverage factor. So the argument boils down to plain and simple: you can't tie the opposition leaders – and I think there are some other cases, budgets in here; I don't recall right now – to a per person basis or to what it was in the past. You have to have . . .

MS HALEY: You guys are getting more than we are, and he's claiming under the leader's allowance as well as private members. So we've already got a duplication.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yes, there's no doubt. That argument came up. As a matter of fact, I remember the day when private members on the government side got nothing. They said the cabinet minister did it all, and all you people had to do was stand up and sing the Hallelujah Chorus when they gave the signal with the baton. It's to the tribute of this government . . .

MS HALEY: Now it's just the Liberals that do that.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah. Okay. Could be, except we're probably singing something else.

The point is that it was thought that MLAs should have some control. I have actually moved in here and amended the thing. Where it was on a per MLA basis rather than a government caucus basis – remember earlier? – I said because it gave the question on a per capita basis. So we're on a sliding scale basis. I think that's number one. Number two, we thought we had a deal with the Deputy Premier, but you people have got the vote, and if you say the hell with the Deputy Premier . . .

MS HALEY: You want to take a one-year deal and extrapolate it for years.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, I don't know exactly, but we're going to be around, we think, for three or four years. So we would like to take the \$350,000, which is less in opposition research considerably. In '92-93 it was nearly half a million dollars putting the two opposition leaders together. We now have more opposition, a larger opposition, and we're saying that \$350,000 is respectfully down a substantial amount from that \$470,000.

MS HALEY: There you go combining two leaders again.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I know the hon. member is saying: "Heck, I don't care what it is you had. You're going to get 10 percent less than what the last leader had even though he only had 16 seats." So you can shove it down our necks; there's no question about it. I've been in politics long enough to know and I'm old enough to know there's seldom a road that doesn't have a turn. So it's up to you people. If you want to say to hell with it, you can do it.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, as long as they're going to present arguments, I guess we've got the right too. If it means we've got to schedule another day before the 10th of February, so be it.

There are points being raised here that have to be disputed. The member from Olds makes reference to the number of caucus members really not having any bearing on a leader's allowance; a leader fulfills a function whether it's X number of caucus members or Y number of caucus members. Let me refresh the committee's memory that traditionally it always respected the number of people that are in a caucus. That's why the former Leader of the Official Opposition got \$295,000 as compared to Decore getting \$153,000. That was a direct reflection on the number of members in each

caucus. That's the way it's been; it's the way it still is. Even though it's not engraved in stone and there's no cast-iron formula that spells it out in that sense, it's a principle that's kept in mind when budgets are set.

There's talk about this '92-93; let's always base everything on '92-93. The cabinet ministers that are there now have not based their office expenses on '92-93. If they did, then they would have a considerable increase from '92-93. Maybe there's an indication they're going to reduce it considerably to that same level they're asking Mr. Decore to reduce his.

Let me point to the Premier's office. Since the current Premier has taken the position of that office, has claimed that office or won that office, his budget has gone up 14 percent more. His budget has gone up from \$710,000 to \$799,000. Now, as to whether that's based on '92-93, I don't know.

2:25

MR. WOLOSHYN: On that point, Mr. Chairman, I have to interrupt. That is an absolute, unadulterated falsehood.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Okay; what's the truth?

MR. WOLOSHYN: The truth of the matter is quite simply that in the 1993-94 estimates there was an item called office of the Premier for \$799,232 followed by an item called general administration in the amount of \$2,365,096 for a total of \$3,164,328, which were discussed at a subcommittee that had the Leader of the Opposition present through the whole thing. It was explained quite clearly that the two amounts would be combined. We had \$710,899 back on the estimate. I read you '93-94 the first time; sorry. The '92-93 estimates were \$710,899 plus \$2,703,824 for a grand total of \$3,414,723 or a reduction of \$250,395, a reduction of 8 percent for that year.

Mr. Chairman, I will quote to you from that subcommittee's minutes. There was a question, and the Premier answered as follows:

Well, as a matter of fact, [there] has been a significant change this year. That was to take a lot of those expenditures that were in administration, in what was then Dr. Mellon's office, and rightfully put them in Executive Council.

Vance, you might want to supplement.

Mr. MacNichol then replied:

Mr. Chairman, previously Office of the Premier just reflected salaries, where now Office of the Premier reflects all expenditures.

Mr. Klein: Yes, such as travel, housing, postage, equipment rentals, telephones, contracted services, materials and supplies.

Mr. MacNichol: So everything is in the Office of the Premier now, where before it was in administration.

Mr. Smith: Final supplemental.

On we go.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would accuse the Liberals of deliberately misleading the public with an erroneous news release.

MR. N. TAYLOR: There's nobody getting higher dudgeon.

By the way, all we did was combine two opposition offices into one.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That wasn't two opposition offices. Those are two different functions, Mr. Taylor.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, the taxpayers did it for you. They combined two opposition offices into one. This was for nearly \$500,000. Then we reduced it a lot more than the Premier did. We reduced it about 30 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. [interjections] Order please. Mr. Wickman had the floor.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I'm sorry, Mr. Wickman.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to look at the base of '92-93, and I'm going to equate it to the overall caucus costs. When one looks at the overall caucus costs, which are spelled out in the draft sheet at the very beginning, no matter how you look at it, the expenditures are reduced considerably. You don't have to do what you're doing, Stan, to achieve that because the shifting in the numbers of government MLAs and opposition MLAs has had a considerable impact. Look at those figures at the front. You don't have to take this one back to \$295,000, to Ray Martin's allowance, to have major reductions. You've got the major reductions. Look at your bases from '92-93 as they equate to existing cabinet ministers' offices, as they equate to government private backbenchers.

If you start telling all that kind of stuff up there, Mr. Chairman, it's going to show when you start looking at all the budgets. When you look at the average cost of a government MLA backbencher now as compared to before, when you look at the total cost, it's considerably more with committee pay and such. When you look at a cabinet minister's average cost, it's considerably more than what was being operated previously. To try and use a figure to equate Decore's allowance to a previous administration where there were 29 cabinet ministers and taking that average just makes no sense at all. It makes no sense.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Clerk maybe had a comment on something Mr. Wickman said earlier in his remarks.

DR. McNEIL: Just in terms of the committee's decisions in the past respecting the leader's allowance in relation to the number of members in the caucus. In 1987-88 the Liberal opposition leader's allowance with four members was \$192,880. In 1989-90 with eight members it was the same value. Okay? So there has not been a history since it was set up of the leader's allowance having any relationship with the number of members.

MR. WICKMAN: But, David, there's a principle involved. That's the reason . . .

DR. McNEIL: I'm just telling you what the facts are. I'm not arguing with the principle. I'm just telling you what the facts have been.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Does that apply to the Leader of the Opposition too?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. N. TAYLOR: He got the same salary after the '86 election?

DR. McNEIL: Well, the salaries are not part of it.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I'm sorry. I meant the same allowance in '86 and '89.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. The Official Opposition had \$271,000 with 16 members and the same amount after the election with 16 members, \$271,000.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I think I have a solution here. We're going to take all the positions that have come to me here as I've been

listening, and we're going to follow them. You said that \$357,000 is an average cost of a minister's thing for this year; right?

MR. N. TAYLOR: We're taking a different . . .

MR. WOLOSHYN: No, don't start that. Agree or disagree, because I'm running out of patience here, and we can move on to better things.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Oh, and your patience is so valuable to this committee.

MR. WOLOSHYN: You betcha.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Why don't you go take another five-minute break and cool down and then come back?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, I will in a minute, but would you agree with that or not, Mr. Taylor?

MR. N. TAYLOR: No, I'd just take any – \$350,000 is the figure that the Deputy Premier . . .

MR. WOLOSHYN: Okay, fair enough, \$357,000. Now, that average is impacted on because there are varying costs for varying ministries. Some are higher and some are lower.

You also said in your comments that if we give you the \$357,000, you'd take 10 percent, no questions asked; right?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Right.

MR. WOLOSHYN: So we'll approach this very, very openly and up front. If you check public accounts, you will see that the minister is paid an extra stipend of \$47,000 for his ministerial duties. We will deduct that from the \$357,000.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's his salary though.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yeah, but that comes out of his minister's budget, which contributes to the sandwich, and that'll be verified by the Clerk. It doesn't come under Members' Services. So we will reduce the \$357,000 by that allowance, which should rightfully come out of the leader's allowance, giving us \$310,000. I'll agree with that. I will agree with your 10 percent, and we'll reduce that \$310,000 by \$31,000, agree on it unanimously, and move on to the next thing. That gives you everything that you've argued for.

MR. N. TAYLOR: This guy must have worked for the Japanese government at one time.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, I'm trying to get a resolution that's acceptable to everybody, including Albertans and you guys, and I took your argument.

MR. WICKMAN: Then a little bit of fairness would do it, Stan, not the jibberish-jabberish garbage. We're talking fairness here.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Hey, I just gave you everything you asked for right here today, and I just have to recess with my committee to see if they agree.

MR. BRUSEKER: Oh, I have no doubt they'd agree, whether it's what was really said is another issue.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah. You mean, you're really worried about their agreement; are you? I've seen you giving your thumbs-up and thumbs-down.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the committee like a short recess?

MRS. MIROSH: Yes. I move that we have a short recess.

MR. WICKMAN: What's the purpose. No, let's not recess. Let's keep going.

MR. WOLOSHYN: You said earlier that that's an allowance that you . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah, but 10 percent off the \$350,000 is \$35,000.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, if we're going to compare them to ministers, as you wanted to – and that average was driven up there – you take the minister's pay out of it.

MR. N. TAYLOR: The minister's pay is in their average cost of \$350,000?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yes, it is, Mr. Taylor.

MR. WICKMAN: Maybe we should equate it to Klein's office expenses and take away 4 percent, because we were only 4 percent behind in the polls there. We could use that type of mathematics. We could use any type of mathematics.

MR. BRASSARD: Should we have a five-minute adjournment, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee will recess until 2:45.

[The committee adjourned from 2:34 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee will come to order after its five-minute recess.

Mr. Brassard.

MR. BRASSARD: I have a motion that I'd like to put forward.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could we have Mr. Woloshyn's motion withdrawn, then, for the time being?

MR. WOLOSHYN: I move that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. BRASSARD: By way of explanation, just so that we're all on track, the \$357,000 that we have been referring to and using as the benchmark, which I disagree with but we've been using, includes the ministerial salary. The Leader of the Opposition also receives that amount. So if we're going to compare apples with apples, then we're going to have to reduce that allowance from the \$357,000 that we're talking about, because it's already included, and for the time being we will overlook the double-dipping of the private member's allowance, which the Leader of the Opposition also receives. So we'll overlook that double-dipping and just reduce the \$357,000 by that . . .

MR. WICKMAN: By how much, Roy?

MR. BRASSARD: By \$44,700

MR. WICKMAN: Up to how much?

DR. McNEIL: It comes to \$312,300.

MR. BRASSARD: And we will reduce that by the 5 percent that we have applied right across the board on everything else. I would make that in the form of a motion, and you can probably condense it.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay, and what are you going to do with the Calgary office?

MR. BRASSARD: That's a separate issue altogether, Percy. Let's deal with this issue.

We'll reduce the leader's allowance down to – what was the figure? – \$312,000. So now we're comparing apples with apples. We will overlook the \$42,845, which the leader receives over and above that as a private member in their caucus budget, which I think is double-dipping. Anyway, we will overlook that, but we will apply 5 percent to that figure of \$312,000, and whatever that comes out to, that would be my motion, Mr. Chairman.

DR. McNEIL: It comes out to \$296,685 by my calculation.

MR. BRASSARD: Then that would be my motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BRUSEKER: What was the figure for the minister's allowance again?

DR. McNEIL: The minister's salary is \$44,700 as it is now reduced by 5 percent.

MR. BRUSEKER: So you're saying go down to \$312,300 minus 5 percent?

MR. BRASSARD: Now we're comparing apples to apples. We will overlook the private member's allowance, which he receives over and above that.

MR. N. TAYLOR: So that's \$296,685. Well, I'm not happy but . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Nick, you can't look at the minus 5 because that's a given we've accepted, a deduction of minus 5 no matter what the base is. So in fairness to these fellows and women you've got to look at the \$312,000; eh? So it's \$312,000 you're looking it. Is it \$312,000?

DR. McNEIL: It's \$312,300.

MR. WICKMAN: So you're looking at roughly \$17,000 where we had been looking at \$62,500. Okay, yeah. It's lessened the bath somewhat; eh? We still take a pretty good dip, but, Nick, we've got to . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: It's taking a shower without the soap; that's all.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, just a moment. A pretty good hit would be to remove the member's allowance as well.

MR. N. TAYLOR: No. We've got a motion on the floor. Let's go ahead.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Just for the record, Mr. Chairman, I would like it pointed out very clearly, in support of my colleague's motion, that all that happened in terms of that change was to make the point that the Liberals were after, that the average support of a cabinet minister's office – we wanted that to reflect the same as the Leader of the Opposition's. That's one of the principles we ascribed to. The Leader of the Opposition does get his allowance. It doesn't affect his pay. He gets it for looking after the caucus, whatever is there. So that is also clear.

The other principle. Although the hon. members across the way were saying that they'd go for 10 percent, my colleague here is saying that we'll apply the 5 percent factor, which we've been doing. Although we have strayed from a very fundamental principle – and I hope we don't set a precedent of getting away from '92-93 actuals – I would suggest that if this could be a unanimous decision of all members of the committee, we'd then move along to the next item.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Are you putting a caveat on that it has to be unanimous?

MR. WOLOSHYN: No, I wouldn't do that to you, Nick.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Just one comment I want to make, Mr. Chairman. I know we're dealing with this in isolation, and I'm prepared as one member of this caucus here to support it. I would hope, though, I would truly hope, make the plea now that we're not going to go through a bunch of rigamarole on the Calgary office, because that's a whole different thing. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: You said it, brother.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm just trying to point out that we're demonstrating a spirit of co-operation here. I hope that the same happens. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. [interjections] Order.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Okay, question.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: No. I have a question that I'd like to put. What total dollar figure does this result in, then, the figure that I guess we're agreeing upon? The private member's allowance, \$137,100, and what figure do we now have in the column for leader's allowance?

DR. McNEIL: By my calculation \$296,685.

MS HALEY: It's an increase over \$295,000.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I beg to differ.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, he still stays on the formula.

MR. BRUSEKER: I don't necessarily agree with the formula is what I'm saying.

MRS. MIROSH: The formula includes the leader.

MS HALEY: You want him taken out? We can take him out. Then we'd stop the double-dipping. [interjection]

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I don't think it is, but let me just . . .

MS HALEY: Well, do you guys want to break for a minute to discuss it?

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, I'd like to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll have a five-minute recess.

MR. BRUSEKER: Please. I'd like to crunch a few numbers, if I might, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee will resume at 3 o'clock.

[The committee adjourned from 2:53 p.m. to 3 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: When the committee recessed, Mr. Bruseker was formulating a question.

MR. BRUSEKER: No. My question is resolved. Thank you, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee ready for the question? All those in favour of the motion by Mr. Brassard that the leader's allowance item on this estimate be set at \$296,685? Opposed?

MR. BRASSARD: Records show that that's unanimous, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The record will show that the decision of the committee was unanimous.

We now have one more item on this estimate, and that has to do with Calgary caucus office, which is proposed at \$55,000.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, I'll move that we adopt this allowance, too, less 5 percent.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I have a question or two here. You said "proposed."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, this is the estimate. They are all proposed estimates.

MR. WOLOSHYN: What was the actual for '92-93 on that line?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There was none because there has been no money expended, I gather, on that project.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Wasn't there sort of an iffy bit, Mr. Chairman, that the Leader of the Opposition at that time could use the place for news conferences and stuff like that? I don't believe it was full-time, but I think there was partial use. Then the Deputy Premier came up and sort of wanted us clean out of there. We'd have rather been clean in . . .

MRS. MIROSH: Where?

MR. N. TAYLOR: The McDougall Centre. I believe Mr. Martin was allowed to come in for news conferences and stuff like that.

MR. WOLOSHYN: As I recollect very accurately.

MR. N. TAYLOR: You do?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Very accurately. When the Official Opposition was the New Democrats, they maintained a Calgary caucus office, and that office was paid for out of their caucus budget. I think the

Clerk would verify or deny that for me. There was rental paid for a caucus office on there; yea or nay?

DR. McNEIL: Yea.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Was that an extra to their caucus budget, or was that part of their per member allocation?

DR. McNEIL: Those funds were paid from their caucus budget, either from the private member's allocation or the leader's allocation.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, here again in our dealings with the Deputy Premier we felt as Official Opposition that just as we have access to the legislative offices here – and that is supposed to be legislative offices down there. We have access. We asked for a couple of rooms and a place in the schedule for the conference rooms, to work out whatever schedule they could. It was the Deputy Premier's idea, not ours, that they would not take any services, that he would see the Legislature pay for offices for the Official Opposition outside McDougall Centre rather than in, when we'd just as soon be in McDougall Centre. I asked: well, surely there must be a couple of rooms in there? We have an employee paid out of our caucus budget, like you.

MRS. MIROSH: So, Mr. Chairman, if I may ask the question: what's the \$55,000 for?

MR. N. TAYLOR: That was our estimate, Dianne.

MRS. MIROSH: For an office and a staff?

MR. N. TAYLOR: That was named by the Deputy Premier. In checking the space and what office space rented for in Calgary, he got down there and that was his figure, how much per square foot.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, he wouldn't have. That must have come from your caucus request.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, no. He was in charge of it. He was in public works, so he's very familiar with prices and that. I think that was the estimate.

If you want to adjourn this till you've had a talk with him, okay, but my understanding was that he came in with it completely himself. There was no debating at all.

MRS. MIROSH: The figure was derived or arrived at by whom?

MR. N. TAYLOR: By the Deputy Premier. We didn't ask for \$55,000. We didn't even ask for office space. We wanted space in McDougall Centre.

MRS. MIROSH: I don't even have that much money to run my constituency office.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, how much are you using for stamps and Christmas cards?

MRS. MIROSH: None. I'm in the high-rent district.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I'd submit that if the government members have not checked with the Deputy Premier – because we would prefer and I think it would save the taxpayers \$55,000 or \$50,000 a year if we had space in the McDougall Centre. So do you want to pass a motion that the government make space in the McDougall Centre for

us and take this out? We'd be quite happy. It's the government's directive, not ours. I can see some reason for it. Maybe as an opposition . . .

MRS. MIROSH: You asked for it. The government is not out to give away dollars.

MR. WOLOSHYN: You could ask to operate the McDougall Centre. It doesn't mean we'd make that motion.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, no. I don't know whether you have showers or things like that or you don't want to be seen by the public or something, but I had the impression that the government felt that they didn't want to have opposition members wandering around McDougall Centre.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Taylor, I think for the record – and you know this – members of the public are welcome in this building. They are welcome in Government House, and they are welcome in McDougall Centre. If you as an individual, even as an MLA, should want to see McDougall Centre, I'm sure you would be treated with respect and courtesy. The question that I would have of you people in order to be fair and resolve this last issue is: what size of space do you need and what do you feel would be a fair amount of money with which to rent that space? I don't know how much you want, and if it's a location factor – in keeping with the spirit of the thing, I think we've been moving along, other than the last item which took a little bit of time, quite reasonably. I don't know where this \$55,000 came from, and it really doesn't matter, quite frankly. I think you would be prepared, for example, if you found space for considerably less, to rent that space. Would you not be prepared, then, to have that as a figure, or is \$55,000 sacred somehow?

MR. N. TAYLOR: If we found something cheaper of course, we are only going to charge for what the cost is, I would think.

MR. WOLOSHYN: What space are you now in? Tell me.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, what was proposed was two offices with access to a conference room. The easiest place to get that is usually in a law office or something like that or in a building that has a conference room in it. That's the type of space.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, going back to the original agreement. It was an agreement that was proposed by Ken Kowalski as an alternative to government space, not necessarily just McDougall Centre but government space down there along with a few amenities. For example, going into McDougall Centre you have some support service such as secretarial service, telephone answering, and that built into the structure. In view of the fact that that was not acceptable, the figure of \$55,000 was agreed to by Ken Kowalski and Grant Mitchell. That office is existing; that office is operating. It's not like a question of it being proposed. It's done. It's there, and this is to allow the continuation. When one goes into an agreement of this nature, I don't see how one can make an argument that it would only be for one year. That argument was used on the last issue, but I would hope that it's not going to be used on this issue.

MR. N. TAYLOR: As a point of information, Percy, hasn't the Clerk's office signed the lease?

MRS. MIROSH: Yeah. That's what I was going to ask. You've got a place rented already and a lease?

MR. WICKMAN: It's functional. It's operating.

MR. N. TAYLOR: But haven't you signed the lease?

MR. WICKMAN: It was all done on the basis of an agreement.

MS HALEY: Then what are you talking about coming back to McDougall Centre if you've already got a place? I mean, let's be at least a little coherent on it.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I think we could cut expenses 5 percent, yeah, if everybody else has, because it covers more. You know, there are probably side rentals of the conference room and stuff like that.

MR. WICKMAN: Nick, I really don't think we're going to get an argument on this one. It's in place. I really don't see any logic. Stan, you're not intending, I don't think, to argue this one, are you?

MR. WOLOSHYN: I don't know. I'm having difficulty, but keep going, Percy.

3:10

MR. WICKMAN: Well, I'm not sure what else can be argued.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, I have a question to the Clerk.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, maybe Mrs. Mirosh can answer your question.

MRS. MIROSH: You're saying that you're already committed to the space you're in.

DR. McNEIL: The Liberal caucus is committed to it.

MRS. MIROSH: The Liberal caucus.

MR. N. TAYLOR: But you signed the lease.

MRS. MIROSH: And we haven't had this in the budget. So you just went on . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: Is that \$55,000 from the lease you signed?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just for background. I suppose it should be pointed out that the existing year's budget was presented by my predecessor in the form of an estimate before the agreement, whatever the agreement was, was made between Mr. Kowalski and Mr. Mitchell. Therefore, that's why it doesn't show an expenditure in the existing year and why it is being funded by the Liberal caucus this year.

MR. WICKMAN: Exactly, Stan. Yeah, that's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So that is the factual side of it.

DR. McNEIL: It's no different than the NDs' caucus office. That was funded from their caucus budget.

The question that is before this committee now, it appears to me, is whether or not this committee will approve an additional amount of funds of \$55,000 to pay for that.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Pay for it for what year, David?

DR. McNEIL: For '94-95.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Where's the money coming from for '93-94?

DR. McNEIL: The Liberal caucus budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Because the current year's budget was not adjusted by the agreement, whatever the agreement was.

MR. BRASSARD: Could I ask: if you were to set up a constituency office allowance, am I to assume that we would just divide the \$3 million whatever by 83? The average.

MR. N. TAYLOR: What is the constituency office allowance now?

MRS. MIROSH: Well, it varies depending on . . .

MR. WOLOSHYN: The average constituency office is \$39,462.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's around \$50,000, isn't it?

MR. WICKMAN: It's a bit more than that.

MRS. MIROSH: It's \$39,000 actually.

MR. BRASSARD: No. Your communication allowance and promotion allowance, those are areas – but your constituency allowance doesn't, right? So there's no variance. We get a consistent amount right across the province for our constituency allowance. Well, why don't we agree on something like that?

MR. WOLOSHYN: The basic constituency, Nick, is \$39,000, and population, communications . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, I can agree with the Member for Olds-Didsbury's argument that, you know, you try to tie it to something equivalent to a constituency allowance, but I thought that was higher than this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Clerk would like to comment.

DR. McNEIL: There are three components of the members' services allowance: the constituency allowance, the communications allowance, and the promotions allowance.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah. What those three total, though . . .

DR. McNEIL: It varies on how many constituents and electors you have. The base . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: I don't want Cardston with downtown Edmonton, but I'm just talking in general.

DR. McNEIL: The base is: each office gets \$39,462.

MR. N. TAYLOR: But then they have a communications and a . . .

DR. McNEIL: Plus the other two on top of that.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It comes to about \$60,000 when you . . .

DR. McNEIL: It varies depending on the number of constituents and electors.

MRS. MIROSH: I don't want you communicating in my town. It's my town. You can have an office, but quit communicating.

MR. N. TAYLOR: You can come up to Smoky Lake any day and talk to all those Irishmen on my behalf.

MRS. MIROSH: Okay.

MR. N. TAYLOR: As a matter of fact, your family is from my constituency. They still wonder what went wrong.

MRS. MIROSH: It's not my family, no relative of mine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Chairman, just further to the observation, the average constituency allowance is \$39,462.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's after the 5 percent, is it?

MR. BRASSARD: No. Well, yes. Pardon me. That's what we always have agreed on. Over and above that the individual member has communication and promotion allowances. Those are caucus items, I think, that are borne by a caucus for communication. If we're looking for an office, the office allowance would be \$39,462. I think perhaps that's the figure we should be looking at, not \$55,000.

MR. WICKMAN: Are you saying you can support that?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, you've got to be fair, Percy.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, just say yes.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I just wanted something that is fair so we won't ride this horse once again.

MR. BRASSARD: That's the constituency allowance and . . .

MR. WICKMAN: What are the other two components in there?

MR. BRASSARD: Communication and promotion, and those are based on per capita that we represent . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: I'm sorry. The Clerk is trying to get the floor.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Clerk.

DR. McNEIL: Just for information. In the *Members' Guide* it says: The constituency office allowance provides each Member with \$39,462 in each fiscal year for office space, office furnishings, office and secretarial assistance, and related services. That's how its purpose is defined.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yeah. I think that covers what you're looking for, does it not?

DR. McNEIL: It may also be used to pay the reasonable living and travel expenses of staff working for the Member and traveling to the Legislature or to the Member's constituency up to three times in a fiscal year.

MR. N. TAYLOR: We have the additional problem for a caucus representative in the southern half of Alberta having access to a meeting room or something like that, which an MLA wouldn't have. That's why I'm saying the MLAs wouldn't have a caucus – I think could be expected to have to have a meeting room.

MR. WOLOSHYN: You know, Nick, to put it in the right perspective, you really would not want to expend – just for the sake of argument, let's say the allowance was zero, okay? You would not then go and rent a facility that had offices and meeting rooms and whatnot attached. You would be more inclined, then, to rent a meeting room when you needed it.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's right; exactly.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Let's see, that was what you were saying initially. Now it's going through my head: well, why would you want to keep a big meeting room empty 90 percent of the time?

MR. N. TAYLOR: I just said access to one.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Now, if you take, let's say, this business – and we'd have to have a little recess in the discussion on this one. If you accept that for the sake of tying it to a constituency office as outlined at \$39,000 there, you would theoretically, I think it would be fair enough to say, have sufficient funds to rent an office and to have staff in there too, and if you needed meeting rooms, what would stop you from renting a spot at some place when you need it?

MR. N. TAYLOR: That should be in the allowance, don't you think?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, I don't know.

MR. BRASSARD: That's what the allowance is made up of.

MR. WOLOSHYN: The allowance there, if you take in what it covers as office space plus staff plus that, I could give you the argument that the staff maybe should come out of your caucus budget and all this. There has to be some degree where you would be . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: My impression from the Deputy Premier was that: the basic MLA's allowance plus the fact that a caucus would be expected from time to time to rent meeting space. Now our argument is, of course – we don't even want to argue about money – that we could save everybody money by just giving us a couple of basement rooms in the McDougall or any government building. Surely with all the government buildings we have in Calgary, we don't have to be at McDougall Centre. To be honest with you, I don't see why we're even paying \$29,000. I don't think we should pay anything. There must be empty government offices. The department of agriculture is downsized.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, maybe we should look into that.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Maybe we should refer this back and see whether after this lease – is it leased one year? Do you know what we signed?

DR. McNEIL: I can't remember. My guess is it's a two- or three-year lease.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Because I'd rather have free space in a government space. You know, there must be extra space there.

MR. WOLOSHYN: So you'd want to make a motion, then, along the lines that you'd want, I guess, a feasibility of finding you some space in Calgary.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Government space, you know, so it won't cost the taxpayer. Surplus government space.

MR. BRASSARD: In lieu of any allowance?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah, if we could. Well, we have to pay out our lease.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Wait a minute now. This is for the record though. What we will do: at the moment we have to be very careful, because there are some leases. We don't want to start hanging things on it. You've got a lease that the Clerk says is there. I don't know anything about that, and we wouldn't want to wreck that.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I must confess I haven't read it either. Probably a year, is it? Or is it a two year?

DR. McNEIL: My recall is that it's a three-year lease, but I'm not certain of that.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, just as a point of information, because I think we're getting sidetracked here. We have a motion on the floor from Mr. Taylor that would reduce the \$55,000 that's on the paper by 5 percent. If you recall, when we dealt with the issue of constituency allowance budgets, I think you asked the question: how did we get the \$55,000? If you take the total constituency allowance budget, \$4.5 million, divide it by the 83 members we have right now, you'll get \$54,700. That's how the \$55,000 was arrived at.

3:20

MR. WOLOSHYN: That throws in a different dimension. That throws in something called communications and promotions.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yes, it does, and that's what I'm saying: that's how that figure was arrived at.

MR. WOLOSHYN: So somebody slipped on that one. It should have been straight . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Kowalski agreed to it, Stan.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Then your House leader slipped on it I guess is what you're saying. I disagree with that. I guess I would like to see us deal with the motion that's on the table, this \$55,000, because with the lease it might cost us more to get out of it than it would be to change it.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I think in the discussions we're not suggesting anything like that. Mr. Taylor was putting forward, I think, an alternative that maybe we shouldn't even be discussing, but the motion then would have to read that you would want your '92-93 budget – that's what we keep tying back to – increased by whatever numbers there. Right?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, we didn't have . . .

MR. WOLOSHYN: That's the point I'm making: we didn't have anything there. So that would be another increase on there.

MR. N. TAYLOR: For the *Sun* newspapers the headline would be: Liberals increase their budget allowance by \$55,000. The point is that we didn't have one.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, to David again: what portion was the communications on the constituency budget?

MS HALEY: Everything over and above \$39,000.

AN HON. MEMBER: Just look in your . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: It's right here.

MR. WICKMAN: No, no. I have my book with me. There are two: promotion and communication. I'm talking communication. I'm looking for individual without dividing. David has it.

DR. McNEIL: It's \$11,700.

MR. WICKMAN: That would mean that the promotion . . .

DR. McNEIL: That's average.

MR. WICKMAN: Thirty-nine; that's 50.

MR. N. TAYLOR: We shouldn't be doing this. We should be staying with the surplus government space.

MR. BRASSARD: With no money. Is that what you're saying?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, no. We've already signed in here. Once the Deputy Premier negotiates . . . I mean, the whole thing is – work it out. I know if we could get out of it – but I don't know if we can get out of it. I don't think you can get out of leases today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So you're finished?
Mr. Brassard.

MR. WICKMAN: No, no.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're looking for a calculation?

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, I'm trying to arrive at a figure. With all respect to the Member for Redwater, I think we start running ourselves into some real difficulties leaving it up to government to find us some surplus space someplace. This was agreed to for a particular reason because there's some resource or some support services that go in that office as well as just the space. It's not just physical space that we're talking about. I agree with what Frank has said here. There's a motion on the floor, and we've got to stick with that motion. It's a question of what's a reasonable amount. Now, it had been agreed to for the \$55,000. We're saying take a \$5,000 reduction.

MS HALEY: That's 10 percent; the motion is 5.

MR. WICKMAN: Or 5 percent I'm saying as a compromise. If we want to compromise it and reduce it by 10, bring it down to \$50,000, fine, let's do it, but let's not get into that rigmarole we had last time in the last issue for so long. We could skirt around, skirt around, skirt around.

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

MR. BRASSARD: I would like to amend Mr. Taylor's motion.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I didn't make a motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you have. You've made a motion, Mr. Taylor,
that there would be \$55,000 less 5 percent.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I want to comment on some of the arguments. I keep hearing that the House leaders did this and the House leaders did that, and I pose a question. If the House leaders had understood that the previous Official Opposition was getting extra, as some people thought, to rent that office, what would your position be then?

MR. N. TAYLOR: All kinds of things if he understood what he was voting for.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, this is the point that I'm trying to make, because those two leaders haven't been here. I keep hearing this deal, this deal, this deal, and the only thing I've seen on this deal is a little bit in the book there. I don't know if you would want to get into this or not now, but where is the space being rented currently? If you have space, where is that space and how big is it and what is it costing? I don't know these things. Maybe those are unfair questions. I certainly don't want to set a precedent of delving into caucus details.

MR. WICKMAN: They are very unfair questions. If you want to start controlling every nickel and dime that the Liberal caucus spends, yeah, then that's the direction you're heading. Normally there are blanket budgets that are given and we decide how much of that goes for rent and how much goes for this and how much goes for that. Ken Kowalski has sat on Members' Services previously. He sat here in the last go-round when the New Democrat caucus made their arguments where they tried to get government furniture. Ken Kowalski is fully aware of what the circumstances are. So is Grant Mitchell.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, what did the previous Liberal opposition get? The previous Official Opposition got nothing in this category. Nothing.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. They got a leader's allowance of \$295,000 based on 16 members. Now, you average that out; you average our portion that goes to the leader's allowance. They're not comparable, Stan. I don't think you can start comparing what happened in the past and what's happening now.

MR. BRASSARD: We're not going back over this all over again, are we?

MR. WICKMAN: We're going to go through the whole thing again. Exactly.

MR. BRASSARD: I thought we'd discussed that. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. BRASSARD: I would like to amend Mr. Taylor's motion to reflect the accepted average constituency allowance of \$39,462.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's an amendment proposed by Mr. Brassard. Any questions or comments on that?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Let's counter the amendment. A constituency office is not the same as a caucus office for the whole of southern Alberta. Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition office in southern Alberta

should be lodged in Her Majesty's government office in southern Alberta.

MR. BRASSARD: Your own member just talked about all the extras that the leader gets, including the private member's allowance and . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: Except that I'm saying you would save all this money if you'd lodge us in McDougall house, give us a couple of rooms and access to secretarial and everything else that goes with it.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, I'm back to my question then. Are you saying, Mr. Taylor, that if you could somehow find a government space somewhere in Calgary, we'd forget about the \$55,000?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, I don't like to say anywhere in Calgary, because it might be an experimental farm.

MR. BRASSARD: Is that what you're saying though?

MR. N. TAYLOR: There's a methane experiment burning cow manure. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. BRASSARD: It's too late in the day for your sense of humour, Nick. Are you saying that if government space were found somehow, somewhere, you'd eliminate the \$55,000? If that's so, put it on the table: yes or no. [interjections]

MRS. MIROSH: I move for a five-minute break. Let's take a break.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The nature of the discussion that's now going on – the committee will recess for seven minutes.

[The committee adjourned from 3:28 p.m. to 3:37 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will the committee come to order, please.

MR. BRUSEKER: Is Mr. Brassard's motion on the table before us, or are we still with Mr. Taylor's motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, they're both, because Mr. Brassard's motion is an amendment to Mr. Taylor's motion.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Will you withdraw yours?

MR. BRASSARD: In lieu of what, in favour of what?

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I'd like to put an amendment to the motion on the table. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. We cannot further amend the motion. We could have both the motion and the amendment withdrawn and start afresh, if someone would like to suggest that.

Okay, we'll have a further two-minute recess.

[The committee adjourned from 3:38 p.m. to 3:39 p.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The committee will come to order. There's general agreement that the motion and the amendment be withdrawn. Is that agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is so ordered.

Now we're open for a new motion. Mr. Bruseker.

MR. BRUSEKER: May I put a motion on the table, please, Mr. Chairman? I would propose

that with respect to the Calgary caucus office the figure be arrived at in this fashion. We take the constituency allowance and communication allowance and calculate an average figure, [which I have calculated to be \$51,200, less 5 percent] which gives the Calgary caucus office a net figure of \$48,640 for the 1994-95 year.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Chairman, the difficulty I have with it is in the precedent of including communication allowance in that. I have real difficulty with that kind of an approach. It basically declares a further communication allowance built into an office that is already built into a leader's allowance and a private member's allowance and so on. So I have a real difficulty with that approach.

MR. BRUSEKER: If I could just speak to that issue, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate Mr. Brassard's concerns. However, there's not much point in having an office if it's not going to communicate anything to anyone. With respect to the issue that, well, there's never been anything in this line item before, with all respect the government has Government House here, they've got McDougall Centre in Calgary, and I would imagine that if we started examining those figures, we'd find them to be significantly higher than the \$48,640 that's being proposed here.

MS HALEY: It's totally irrelevant.

MR. BRUSEKER: It's completely relevant because what it does is say that, yes, the Official Opposition has a role to play, and we're saying that this should be involved.

MR. BRASSARD: But in fairness, Mr. Chairman, the opposition caucus and opposition body are already communicating. That is already being done. That is already being done out of this office. I don't know why they'd need a further allowance in Calgary to enable them to do it. I think, if anything, they're being very aggressive in their communications already. I have a real difficulty.

MRS. MIROSH: Just for clarification. Within the rules and regulations that we have in our constituency budget – and you're going by our constituency budget – we're not allowed in our constituency to use our PC logos or anything to do with the party. Would that apply here?

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, yes.

MR. BRUSEKER: Definitely.

MRS. MIROSH: You don't have any Liberal signs or anything in your office and no paper that says Liberal on it or anything?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, no.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, it says Liberal caucus.

MRS. MIROSH: We don't have anything that says Alberta PC caucus.

MR. WICKMAN: Have you been out to Barrhead and seen the sign?

MRS. MIROSH: It doesn't say Alberta PC caucus anywhere, because that's against the rules. Now, I'm just wondering about the rules when we're talking about the comparison of constituency – we're using public money – about using the party name.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Perhaps it should say Official Opposition caucus.

MRS. MIROSH: Right.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, one thing that I think the Member for Olds-Didsbury touches on is that this is the opposition portion of the Legislature's communication thing. Communication is a lot more than putting out our news releases, which you collect, and I'm glad to see that we have stung you a few times. You mentioned we're vociferous. But part of communication is that people in southern Alberta – if they can travel to meet their government in Calgary, surely they should be able to travel to meet their opposition.

MRS. MIROSH: One. You've got one member, one Liberal.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It doesn't matter. Well, we've got one in Lethbridge too. You could argue the same thing in Edmonton. Government House should be closed down and turned over to the Liberals because Edmonton is solid Liberal.

What I'm getting at is that the way the democratic process works is that the public has the right to access those that are governing. Governing is not just the governing party; it's the opposition party.

MRS. MIROSH: That wasn't my question.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Both sides have to be in there. To be located in Calgary – actually I suppose it could be located in Lethbridge also, Peace River, and Grande Prairie. But the government has a location in Calgary. We think it's only fair that the opposition have one, just as they do in Edmonton. The fact that Calgarians have not seen the light yet, not staffed it – I don't think it makes an argument whether Calgary has one opposition MLA or all 18 are opposition.

MR. BRUSEKER: Twenty in Calgary.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Twenty. Well, I cut off a couple of areas there. Anyhow, it doesn't matter whether they've all voted one way or not. The Official Opposition, no matter what it happens to be, should be accessible to the people of Alberta. That's part of the communication. That's the conference room, that's meeting them, and so on and so forth. That's why I thought Mr. Bruseker, in conjunction with the government chairman, had compromised by knocking off promotional but leaving communication and space. They knocked off promotional. It comes out to a reasonable method. If we're not going to be in the Government Centre, if we can't be there, then this is a reasonable compromise.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, Mr. Chairman, my interpretation of everything I've seen and read would lead me to indicate that the discussion that took place between the two House leaders was for rental of facilities, period. It did not include any of the communication allowance or promotion allowance or whatever.

MR. BRUSEKER: It did include all of those.

MR. BRASSARD: No, I'm afraid it didn't. You just arrived at a figure because it happened to coincide. I'm just saying that in anything I have read, they talked about the rental of facilities, period.

That's it. There was no reference made to communications or anything else. So I would be far more comfortable with coming to some agreement on a dollar amount than tying it in with anything that exceeds the rental of facilities. If you're not happy with the \$39,462, then let's talk about an amount for rental of facilities without reference to communications, and I would be far more comfortable with that. That's where I'm coming from, Mr. Chairman. I could live with a modified amount.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman.

MR. BRUSEKER: There's a motion on the floor, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, Mr. Wickman is recognized to speak to the motion.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to support the amendment that's in front of us, but . . .

MR. BRASSARD: There's no amendment.

MS HALEY: It's a motion.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Everything else was withdrawn, Percy.

MR. WICKMAN: I respect the motion that's in front of us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This motion can be amended.

MR. WICKMAN: This motion can very well be amended; exactly. If the member is not comfortable tying it in specifically to some type of formula and he feels another number is more suitable, a fixed number, I'd like to see the member make an amendment to this motion so we can have that in front of us and we can debate it and we can get this thing done. So give us your amendment.

MR. BRASSARD: All right. Then I would like to amend that motion to reduce the figure to \$40,000.

MR. WICKMAN: We're right back to where we started.

MR. N. TAYLOR: We're just horse trading now.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, then come up with a figure dammit. That's what I just did.

MR. BRUSEKER: That's what I just did.

MR. WICKMAN: We did. We came up with a figure.

MR. N. TAYLOR: You're awful hard to argue with, hon. member, because when we come up with a figure, you say that it's a coincidence.

MR. BRASSARD: No, you did not. You did not. You didn't come up with a figure; you came up with a formula.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. Order.

MR. BRASSARD: And I'm having difficulty with your formula.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms Haley.

MS HALEY: Thank you. I hate to get into this because everybody's having such a good time, but a number I'm comfortable with is \$39,462. The number they're comfortable with is 48,400 and something dollars. I would respectfully request just some comprehension. Maybe we could split the difference, and maybe we could get on with things.

MR. BRASSARD: To what?

MS HALEY: We'll just split the difference between his number and ours.

MR. BRUSEKER: We've come down from \$55,000, and you're saying \$39,000.

MS HALEY: You've come down from nothing. There's nothing in the budget for '92-93, so let's face it, everything from here is a plus. You had a one-year agreement, which we'll honour, but this is a new year. It's a new ball game.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any more questions or comments concerning this motion?

MS HALEY: I move an amendment that we split the difference.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In order to bring Ms Haley's suggestion before the committee, Mr. Brassard would have to withdraw his amendment.

MR. WICKMAN: The fair thing to do, Mr. Chairman, is take the \$55,000, take the \$39,000 and something and split it right down the middle. Now, that's compromise.

MS HALEY: No, no. We're talking about something you're comfortable with and something I'm comfortable with. I'm not comfortable with \$55,000.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, I'm not comfortable with your figure.

MS HALEY: There you go. Then we've got no agreement. There's no deal. Forget it.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Chairman, in that my motion is so close to the proposal that was rejected earlier, I'll withdraw my amendment.

3:49

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we now just have the original motion by Mr. Bruseker. Is there any further amendment to Mr. Bruseker's motion?

DR. McNEIL: What's the dollar value of Mr. Bruseker's motion?

MRS. DACYSHYN: It's \$48,640.

MR. BRASSARD: Can I speak to his motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you may.

MR. BRASSARD: I have to state quite emphatically that I am uncomfortable with tying your motion to any formula. We are talking solely about the rental of facilities. I'd have to read the motion back, but if it includes a formula, then I'm extremely uncomfortable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The chair's recollection is that it did not really specifically include a formula, but Mr. Bruseker said that it could be rationalized on this basis.

MR. BRUSEKER: I explained how I arrived at the figure.

MR. WICKMAN: It sounds good to most of us: \$48,600 all our own.

DR. McNEIL: The average of \$48,640 and \$39,462 is \$44,051.

MS HALEY: I would be prepared to move that amendment. I'll move an amendment to \$44,051. That's splitting the difference.

MR. WICKMAN: David, while you've got your calculator out, what's the split between the \$55,000 and the \$39,462?

MS HALEY: It's not going to happen, Percy.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm just asking a question, Carol.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, let's make it around \$45,000.

MR. BRUSEKER: I see that you're willing to negotiate. A nice open mind over there. We appreciate that. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. The Clerk may be able to answer Mr. Wickman's question.

DR. McNEIL: It's \$47,231, the average of \$55,000 and \$39,462.

MR. BRUSEKER: It's splitting the difference of the \$55,000 we have on the paper and your original figure of 39,000 and something dollars.

MR. WOLOSHYN: What's splitting the difference between zero and \$55,000.

MR. WICKMAN: No, no, Stan. Listen, don't wield this little bit of power you've got there now. Let's be reasonable here. Let's compromise. What is that figure, David? Forty-seven . . .

DR. McNEIL: It's \$47,231.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. That sounds fair. Is everybody agreed to that?

MS HALEY: No. Forty-five thousand.

MR. N. TAYLOR: We're getting close. You came in at \$44,000; wasn't it?

MS HALEY: I had \$44,051, which I'm prepared to adjust to \$45,000.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Stan, can you buy the 47,000 and something dollars?

MR. WOLOSHYN: I buy \$45,000.

MR. WICKMAN: Forty-six thousand dollars.

MS HALEY: Forty-five thousand dollars. That's a hell of a lot more than \$39,462.

MR. WOLOSHYN: What do you guys think? I can't do this alone. I don't want to be outvoted.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's a 12 percent reduction, you know.

MRS. MIROSH: Reduction? You never had it to begin with.

MS HALEY: It's a 45,000 percent increase over zero.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. In order to accomplish a further adjustment, the chair would suggest that the motion to amend the main motion be withdrawn and we start with a new number. Is there agreement to withdraw the amendment to the motion?

MS HALEY: Sure, I'll withdraw it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is Mr. Bruseker prepared to withdraw his motion and substitute a new number?

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I'll withdraw the motion, and I'll let someone else since this motion isn't acceptable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman or Mr. Taylor, would you like to suggest a new number?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah. That's all right with me.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah. The \$47,231: now, that is in the spirit of compromise if I've ever seen it. We've taken the \$55,000, the \$39,000 and we split it right in half. Now, Roy, even if you were selling cars, you would say that that's a deal.

MR. BRASSARD: Just don't tie it to a formula, and I'll have no problem.

MR. WICKMAN: I won't. I'm not tying it to a formula. Okay, we've finally got an agreement here, fellows.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman has moved
that the Calgary caucus allowance be set at \$47,231.
Any questions or comments or amendments to make to that? Is the committee ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour? Those opposed? You can't abstain. You must have a vote.

MRS. MIROSH: We've abstained.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. There are no abstentions.

MRS. MIROSH: Okay. Call the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, there are three in favour. Those opposed?

MR. WICKMAN: No. Call the whole vote again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. All those in favour of the motion of Mr. Wickman that the Calgary caucus allowance be set at \$47,231? Four.

MR. WICKMAN: No. There are three on that side alone.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, sorry. Five. Opposed?

MRS. MIROSH: Two opposed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So it's 6-2. The motion carries.

MR. WICKMAN: Now, can I move one motion that we accept the budget as amended?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a good idea. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That gets us up pretty close to 10 percent; doesn't it?

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah. We'll survive. We're good Liberals. We can live with anything.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There remain before the committee two other items, if the committee is willing to deal with them, the first of which is the notice of motion that Mr. Taylor made at our last meeting, that those members whose extended benefits are due to expire be allowed to maintain those extended benefits at their own expense for as long as they wish to maintain those benefits.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. That was a notice of motion, very similar to my notice of motion, for the next regular meeting of Members' Services. This is a continuation of the existing one, so it's the new agenda.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Then those two matters will go over to our next meeting.

There were two items arising from the minutes of our previous meeting that were not dealt with. The first was the use of this room by the media, and the second was the disposal of constituency office furniture and equipment, which the Clerk was going to make a report on.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Chairman, can I ask for a clarification? I'm just going back a couple of items. I would like to know how two House leaders' agreement has altered the '93-94 budget when I don't recollect seeing any motions come to this committee. I felt, maybe erroneously, that any adjustments to a budget had to come to this committee. Am I correct or am I wrong?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, this committee is the only body in the Legislature that can set a budget for the Legislative Assembly. It's quite clear that the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition working together or the House leaders cannot put anything into effect that requires the action of this committee.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I guess what I am alluding to is: I tried to keep the meeting going last day so that the members of the opposition would bring forth the portions of the House leaders' agreement to formalize for the Clerk, I guess, the expenditures of said moneys, and again I was waiting for that to come today. Am I waiting for . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I guess you might be waiting for a while.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Okay. Fair enough.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, we've dealt with it. Let's get on to the business here.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Okay, I'm sorry for the interruption, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then with regard to the use of this room by the media, the chair has been advised that the government members do not wish to make this room available. Is that still their position?

MS HALEY: Absolutely.

MRS. MIROSH: That's right. This is a government members' room only.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So the chair will report that.

DR. McNEIL: It was in terms of the Official Opposition.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In our December meeting it was suggested that perhaps the media might wish to access the opposition lobby for that purpose, and the chair has received advice from the Opposition House Leader that after consulting with his caucus they don't really feel this should be allowed.

3:59

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the difficulty that I understand from some discussions with some of the members of the media is that that's not going to serve their needs, being over on the other side, when cabinet ministers then can wiggle through here and get out here.

MS HALEY: I don't think it's called wiggling. It's just exiting.

MR. WICKMAN: What is it? Exiting. I'm sorry. I've been corrected: exiting through here, avoiding the area over there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So it would appear, then, that the government, the opposition, and the media in combination are not prepared to make any changes from the existing setup.

MRS. MIROSH: Correct. Right.

MR. WICKMAN: I think they would like this room here.

MRS. MIROSH: We said no. The discussion's finished.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That being the case, then, Mr. Clerk will advise us as to the disposal of constituency office furniture and equipment.

DR. McNEIL: The agreement that was reached at the last meeting was to have the Clerk report at the next committee meeting on the existing policy for declaring equipment and furniture surplus and the procedures involved for MLAs wishing to acquire surplus items. I have a handout item here. The first item on this is a letter that I received later on the day of that meeting from Mr. Wickman asking for additional information beyond that which the committee had asked for. Also attached is the information, the policy that was in place with respect to the purchase of surplus equipment, a briefing from Public Works, Supply and Services as to the status of their inventory as far as constituency equipment is concerned. The memorandum from Scott Ellis to myself dated April 28, 1993, summarizes the policy and procedure with respect to MLA purchase of surplus equipment, which was followed pre and postelection in 1993.

MRS. MIROSH: I have a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mrs. Mirosh.

MRS. MIROSH: Is this, first of all, basically how we've been operating in the past? This is the policy with public works and within government process?

DR. McNEIL: Correct.

MRS. MIROSH: I have no problem with that. The only problem I have is: who determines the price of that equipment? Who makes the final determination of the price of any equipment?

DR. McNEIL: The surplus sales people in the department of public works.

MRS. MIROSH: Then my next question is with regards, for instance, to cellular phones. You know how they depreciate. If a member wants to buy it, is the price determined by public works – because it's not bought through them – or is it determined by what that cellular phone company would determine that price at?

DR. McNEIL: It's determined by public works in terms of their assessment of the value of the phone at the time of the sale.

MRS. MIROSH: Even if it differs from the private sector. Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. I have a number of questions. Now, my understanding is – just run me through a hypothetical case, or I guess it could be in some cases costly real estate. An MLA is departing. There is equipment, there is furniture, whatever, that may be in that constituency office, that may have been purchased with constituency funds. So that member that is leaving writes to somebody and asks for permission to buy it outright?

DR. McNEIL: A request asking if they could purchase that equipment.

MR. WICKMAN: So then it's deemed surplus.

DR. McNEIL: No. That's only the question. The answer to the question has to be whether or not it is declared surplus.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Now, if it is declared surplus, are there some instances where it may be declared surplus with no value to it?

DR. McNEIL: Not that I'm aware of; not that it's been our experience.

MR. WICKMAN: So everything has a price to it.

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: It's a question of what that price is.

DR. McNEIL: Correct.

MR. WICKMAN: Now, how is that price arrived at?

DR. McNEIL: It's arrived at by the experts in surplus sales making an assessment as to what the market value is for that particular item given its age and use and so on.

MR. WICKMAN: So all these items are disposed of at what that person's opinion is market value, what the market will bear at that particular time.

DR. McNEIL: That's my understanding.

MR. WICKMAN: Are members of the public provided the opportunity of purchasing those items at that price?

DR. McNEIL: No, not in those situations where members have asked to purchase a particular thing.

MR. WICKMAN: Is there a policy that wouldn't allow the public to participate?

DR. McNEIL: No. If an item is declared surplus and no member wants to purchase it, then that would go to public auction through surplus sales.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay, but is there a listing, then, of those items that may have been purchased by the MLAs? Does it show up in some accounting, public accounts? Could I, for example, find a cabinet minister leaving and retaining the car? I understand that most cabinet ministers did retain the government cars. They bought them, in other words. Now, is there somewhere the public can go and say, "I want to know how much that member paid for that car" to make sure that it was at market value?

MRS. MIROSH: Absolutely. It's black book market.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah. I'm asking: where? Where can you get that price?

DR. McNEIL: Well, you'd have to ask public works that question, because we have no dealings at all with vehicles.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, does your stuff show up in any accounts?

DR. McNEIL: I would imagine that it would show up as a cumulative figure when the surplus sales are done.

MR. WICKMAN: So it wouldn't be broken down. It would be one ballpark figure.

DR. McNEIL: I would doubt it, but I don't know that.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, would the committee entertain a request by myself that we be provided a listing of those items that were disposed of after the last election, purchased by individual MLAs, whether it be vehicles from cabinet ministers, for example?

MS HALEY: We're not going on a witch-hunt here, Percy.

MR. WICKMAN: No, no. Just information, Carol, just information.

MRS. MIROSH: Come on, Percy; that has nothing to do with Members' Services.

MR. WICKMAN: The public has the right to know what's going on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Woloshyn, on this point.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yeah. Although I can, you know, sympathize with where Mr. Wickman is coming from, I sort of really have to

question why we would be imposing on anybody to get that kind of list going and what purpose it would serve. If you still are of the opinion that something untoward happened – I take you back to the discussion we had last week – then, for heaven's sake, lay it on the table, and let's follow it up. Otherwise, I must thank the Clerk for doing this.

If there is a problem with public works' method of pricing, as members from both sides have questioned, I think that's something that could be brought up at budget time, or you could even question the minister of public works in the House as to how they arrive at values for items. But at this point to go on, I am getting the baddest vibes. It appears to be some sort of fishing expedition, looking for something untoward.

MR. BRASSARD: A witch-hunt.

MR. WOLOSHYN: A witch-hunt or whatever. I think this committee has done a very good job up to this point. I think the Clerk has presented the report as was requested. Now to go on a further report I think, quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, is a total waste of time, and I would say that we do not endorse that position at all in this committee.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, sometimes, Mr. Chairman, you know, as members of opposition we've got to ask questions. I can recall asking questions in the Legislative Assembly about the use of lottery funds. It was only through that questioning that we were able to determine that lottery funds had been used to buy Samsonite briefcases, for example. It's because opposition chose to question, and I'm choosing to question.

There are two points that I am not satisfied with. One, I feel that the public, the taxpayers, have the right to know what those items were purchased for, to begin with, because we're talking disclosure; we're talking freedom of information. I'm not satisfied that that's available to me. I haven't been able to get it. Now, if somebody can tell me how I can get it . . . [interjections]

4:09

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The chair is going to make a ruling that it is not in order to pursue departmental matters from this committee. That is not in order. Therefore, the chair is going to have to reluctantly suggest to Mr. Wickman that this problem be not pursued here but be pursued in the designated estimates committee when the public works estimates come up next year.

MR. WICKMAN: That's fair enough. I already have a motion on the Order Paper.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It can be a motion for a return too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, it can.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move that we accept this policy that the Clerk has brought forward for information and circulate it to our members so that there are some guidelines. I'm quite satisfied that the integrity and honesty of MLAs have been upheld. If there are any discretionary issues with anybody at this table, bring them forward. Don't try and lace everybody in our Assembly as being dishonest. There is a procedure to follow. You've laid it out, and I would like to move that we accept this information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the motion, Mr. Wickman.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. First of all, I have not said anyone is dishonest. Secondly, the policy that is in front of us here for information in my opinion is not sufficient. This policy allows the existing to occur, which we're not sure exactly what it is. In other words, it allows an MLA to purchase an item without members of the public being aware of what that purchase price was. Secondly, it doesn't allow a member of the public the same opportunity on that particular item, which I think is wrong. I think, Mr. Chairman, the way to deal with this is to put them in surplus and put them through the normal process.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MRS. MIROSH: Percy, leave it alone. If you have a problem, let the Speaker know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. The question has been called on the motion by Mrs. Mirosch that the policy be circulated to all members of the Assembly. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Any further business before this committee?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I sent over – remember, I brought it up at the first meeting. Although the minutes said that all I had to do was bring it up, the Clerk said that the verbatim record said I had to send over things. So I did that. There were two areas. One was a case of a plaque. I don't know how far to go into it. There were two items.

DR. McNEIL: I haven't received any correspondence with respect to this item being on the agenda.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah, it was sent over. Wasn't it a week or so ago? This is the one about the *Native Network News*.

DR. McNEIL: It wasn't sent over. I have some information, if the committee wants to deal with it, but I haven't received anything to this point.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Either your bureaucracy or mine, probably mine, must have gone haywire then. There were two items. There was also the question of a plaque. I think you may have the same problem. The department of agriculture has been honouring people that have been a hundred years on the same farm and then sending the MLA the bill . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: For \$300.

MR. N. TAYLOR: A \$300 bill for each. Those people that live close to Edmonton have – I've got quite a list of farmers. If the department of agriculture is going to give them a plaque for living a hundred years on the same farm, they should pay for it or give us the option.

I'm sorry about that. I wonder what happened to it. I went back that day and even dictated it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The material being circulated now is Mr. Taylor's memorandum to the Clerk of March 9, 1993.

MRS. MIROSH: Nineteen ninety-three?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. It was before the previous Members' Services Committee. It's now being revived before this one.

MR. N. TAYLOR: With your lead, Mr. Chairman, I will try to explain my problem, and then I will leave the room, sort of like the schoolboy thing, so you can vote whatever way you wish.

This isn't the only invoice; I've had three invoices from *Native Network News*. Basically, they show what they have: Nick Taylor, MLA, native affairs critic, Alberta Liberal Party. The word "party" is on there. I think the Clerk's office understands and strictly interprets that it should be Alberta Liberal Opposition. I think there are two reasons why the bill should be paid. One is that MLA says quite clearly that I'm a member of the Legislature. It was a holiday season area and one of those things that I'm sure all of us get from time to time, especially in the opposition, but I think government members do too: requests from native papers.

MRS. MIROSH: You don't want to pay this bill out of your pocket; is that it?

MR. N. TAYLOR: No. That's right. The second reason I have for asking that it be recognized – I know I tried time and again – is that this is a native newspaper that's trying to get off the ground – to explain to them that there's a difference between party and opposition.

MRS. MIROSH: Oh, they made the mistake; did they, Nick?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah. Well, I got three in a row. And no matter what I do, it keeps coming back.

You know, talking to them is even more difficult than talking to the *Edmonton Sun*. It comes out this way all the time. All I'm arguing is that I think they're legitimate bills. Does anybody want to ask any questions?

MS HALEY: I just want to make a comment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms Haley.

MS HALEY: Thank you. This happened to me, and the Clerk was ruthless about it, no sympathy whatsoever. I placed an ad in the Trochu newspaper with just my constituency office numbers. He figured the ad was too plain, so he added the PC stripe to the bottom of the ad. Of course, when the ad was sent in, it was sent back to me saying, "We don't pay for this because it has a party logo on it." Well, I never put the party logo on it, but it ended up being on there. I ended up paying the bills. C'est la vie. Pay your bills, Nick.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, we've dealt with similar situations previously in the last term. There was the classic one of Jim Dinning and the reference to his questionnaire to rate people, including the Premier. Then there was a response to that, and they rated the Premier way below him, for example, and they rated the mayor. That was questioned. Jim came here and made a presentation, and the committee excused it and said, "This one time we'll cover your costs, but learn by it." Steve, the one that Nick beat out – what was his last name?

MR. BRUSEKER: Zarusky.

MR. WICKMAN: He withdrew his appeal. He filed an appeal, and then for some reason at the last minute he came in front of the committee and said: I withdraw.

MRS. MIROSH: No, he didn't. He paid it.

MR. WICKMAN: I know, but he withdrew his appeal, and he paid. We don't know why he chose to do it, but he did. Traditionally what will happen – there I go again with that term “tradition” – is the Speaker of the House previously sort of respected that everybody's entitled to one mistake. Nick here has made a mistake, no question about it.

MRS. MIROSH: This is three; three mistakes. Nick, you've been around. He's been around. He doesn't have gray hair for nothing.

MS HALEY: No bloody way. He's been around long enough to know better than this. Don't try that one.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the member does have the right to file a formal appeal with this committee if you turn down an appeal by him. First he has to go to you. If you rule against him, he then has to bring it to this committee. The committee will hear him. He can't vote on it. The committee will hear him and make a decision. So I think Nick might want to do that: first write to you and plead for your understanding and so on and so forth.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the committee wish to defer this matter? Mr. Brassard.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Chairman, we have sat around this table and tried to come to some kind of universal agreement on a whole host of issues. I will accept that Mr. Taylor was a victim of circumstances in this instance, and I would move that we accept this bill.

4:19

MS HALEY: No way. Then you pay mine. I can't believe this.

MR. WICKMAN: But you didn't appeal here, Carol. You had the right to.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I can only think of Kipling's famous poem: “The female of the species is more deadly than the male.”

MR. WICKMAN: Okay; question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. There's a motion before the committee by Mr. Brassard that . . .

MR. BRASSARD: That in the spirit of co-operation we accept.

MR. CHAIRMAN: . . . this matter be allowed. All those in favour? Those opposed?

MR. N. TAYLOR: You didn't read the reasoning.

MR. BRUSEKER: I read your reasoning. I had the same thing with the *Kerby News* in Calgary.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Anyhow, we have a tie.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know.

MR. WICKMAN: It's a tie. Stan has to vote now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I didn't see Mr. Woloshyn vote.

MRS. MIROSH: I didn't either.

MR. N. TAYLOR: He voted for it.

MR. BRUSEKER: I didn't see him vote either.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, somebody didn't vote. That's right. You'd better call the vote again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we'll have this vote again.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I'll vote whichever way Frank votes.

MR. BRUSEKER: Wow, I get two votes all of a sudden. Ooh, can I have that in the Legislature on a regular basis too?

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. All those in favour of the motion by Mr. Brassard, please indicate. One, two, three. Those opposed? The motion fails.

MR. BRASSARD: Sorry, Nick. I tried in the spirit of co-operation.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, look, don't feel sorry for me. Feel sorry for the Indians. They're not going to get paid for a wrong ad.

MR. BRASSARD: You're not going to pay for it?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Not for a wrong ad. I've got written instructions telling them what to do.

MRS. MIROSH: Are we done? I move for adjournment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any new business?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank you, all the members of the committee, and the staff for what I think has been, although at times a lengthy discussion, very productive. When the figures come out, at least we'll have come very close to meeting our own guidelines that we set in the beginning. I appreciate the spirit of co-operation that was here.

I'd also suggest one more time to the Liberal members that they might want to consider putting forth a motion in order to formalize their '93-94 budget. The motion would be based on the House leaders' agreement, because my understanding is that a motion is required for their budget to be approved.

MR. WICKMAN: No, no. You're not right, Stan.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's this year's budget.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That is correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It has already been dealt with by the House. The House has approved it.

MR. WOLOSHYN: With those adjustments in it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it didn't include those.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That's the motion that's being presented though.

DR. McNEIL: It would require a supplementary estimate.

MRS. MIROSH: It would require what?

MR. BRASSARD: A supplementary estimate in order for this year's agreement to be in place.

MRS. MIROSH: So you have to swallow it.

MR. WICKMAN: Stan, let me just stir this up. Do you recall that I sent you a series of notes on that dealing with the agreement that Kowalski and Mitchell had arrived at? When I talked with Grant about it several times, it was stated that it was going to be taken – you know, how you guys do it: with a spending warrant, whatever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Special warrant?

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, and I just assumed now it was all done.

MRS. MIROSH: Special warrants are no longer allowed.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, you have legislation that allows it up to a certain amount.

MS HALEY: And we don't do it.

MRS. MIROSH: You have to go back into the House to pass this.

MR. WICKMAN: No, but that's why it wasn't raised in the House . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Clerk may have something to offer here.

DR. McNEIL: In order to put additional funds in the Legislative Assembly budget for 1993-94, it would require either a special warrant or a supplementary estimate.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, through an order in council.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's a special warrant.

DR. McNEIL: Or else when the estimates come down, there would have to be a supplementary estimate for '93-94 for that amount, whatever that amount is.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. But that particular one, Mr. Chairman, Grant can go back to Kowalski because it's just not in the power of . . .

MRS. MIROSH: They don't pass this budget.

MR. WICKMAN: But it's not in the power of this committee to do that now because the '93-94 budget was passed by the Legislative Assembly. It's a done deal.

MRS. MIROSH: Right; it didn't include this.

MR. BRASSARD: The agreement that was made between the House leaders must come forward and be amended by this committee. This committee is sovereign. People just can't make agreements in isolation of this committee that are going to impact on the budgets established by this committee; am I right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right.

MR. BRASSARD: So in order for that agreement that took place between the two House leaders – it's got to come before this committee.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I think the hon. member is quite correct. It can be advisory, but it can't be binding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's the chair's view that nobody in this room knows exactly what that agreement was, so I don't see how anybody in this room can propose a motion to make a supplemental estimate.

MR. BRASSARD: I'm absolutely amazed that the opposition members have not brought this up before now.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, yeah. I appreciate that he recognizes the sensitivity with which the opposition members have trod, because the \$405,000 increase by and large has gone into the government members' services increased budget estimate. So he's correct; we haven't brought it forward. As it appears in the summary estimate we have here, is this the figure that has already been passed, this \$1.8 million for the government and whatever the figure is, \$1.6 million, for the opposition? I mean, what are the figures we're dealing with really? Pretty hard to ratify an agreement when we don't have anything on paper before us. I won't make the motion.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Look in your binder.

MS HALEY: There's nothing in the binder.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yes, there is.

MR. WICKMAN: Stan, refresh my memory. David was part of the discussion too, because he was there. When we met in December, do you remember this was raised? Do you remember the Hon. Ken Kowalski making a statement that everything that he and Grant Mitchell had agreed to was in the budget? Now, does anyone have their minutes from that December meeting here?

MRS. MIROSH: Yeah, we have *Hansards*.

MR. WICKMAN: *Hansard*, yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have to find it in *Hansard*.

MRS. MIROSH: We've got *Hansards* right here.

MR. WICKMAN: I had asked a question, Nick Taylor had asked a question, and Michael Henry had asked a question. Three of us had asked a question.

MR. N. TAYLOR: The very first meeting.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, the first meeting.

MR. BRUSEKER: I wasn't at that one.

MR. WICKMAN: Frank wasn't there.

DR. McNEIL: What is in the budget for 1993-94 is – there is no allowance for a Calgary caucus office. There is no adjustment beyond the \$295,040 for the leader's allowance for the Official Opposition.

MR. WICKMAN: Dianne, can I see your minutes for a minute? Is that from December?

MS HALEY: Page 20.

MRS. MIROSH: The leader's allowance is pro rated.

DR. McNEIL: It was pro rated for the 295 days from June 15 to March 31 for the Official Opposition.

MR. BRUSEKER: What did the budget that was passed for '93-94 reflect for government members' services?

DR. McNEIL: I'm just trying to find my . . .

MR. WOLOSHYN: Now, here we are, Mr. Chairman, if I may. Page 20, at the bottom. Mr. Chairman said:

There was some discussion here a few minutes ago that indicated that the agreement between the Opposition House Leader and the Government House Leader made last summer with regard to the budget for the opposition caucus is in place and will remain in place for the balance of the . . . year.

Mr. Kowalski goes on to say:

Mr. Chairman, if there is a requirement to do some additional work in clarification of this, we could have the Clerk give us the numbers, and the next time we meet in this committee, they can come forward with motions. It's within our guidelines.

I'm waiting for those motions.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay, Stan; let's go to page 19.

Mr. Wickman: Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding that the Government House Leader and our House leader have come to an agreement as to the '93-94 budgets for the various caucuses. That's all in place now? There's nothing that needs to be done?

Mr. Kowalski replies, "For this fiscal year," referring to '93-94 of course. "Mr. Wickman: That's what I'm talking about. So the agreement you and Grant Mitchell had is in place. Okay." That's when Kowalski shook his head. Then you cut in, Stan, and you said, "The chair understands from the hon. Deputy Premier that what we're really concerned about is what starts on April 1, 1994." So on that basis we dropped the discussion because that gave us clear indication that everything was in place for '93-94, what the two leaders had referred to.

Now, to formalize it, I guess there was an obligation on the part of the Clerk to come forward with that data to provide us the opportunity if we had to make additional motions to make them.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Then Mr. Taylor was onstream on page 20, column 2, at the bottom.

Well, I just wonder if we need a motion sort of enshrining the agreement between the two House leaders. I was going to be prepared to make a motion that at least the opposition caucus office budget – to put in print what I believe is the agreement that has been worked out. Would that be in order?

That's where we went on to . . .

4:29

MR. WICKMAN: Well, keep reading what the chairman says though.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Then you read Mr. Kowalski's comments.

MR. WICKMAN: No, no. Read Mr. Chairman's comments.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Chairman's understanding of the agreement was quite clear.

Now, I quite frankly, Mr. Wickman, don't care. I'm raising for you, for your caucus the opportunity – one principle maybe Mr. Chairman could comment on: can the two House leaders in a hypothetical situation at any time get together and adjust a budget passed by Members' Services?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. WOLOSHYN: What happened in '93-94 budget adjustments?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Nothing. It was nothing.

MRS. MIROSH: Can we just swallow it?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Okay; I move that the committee . . .

MR. BRASSARD: You can't make an agreement in isolation of the committee.

MR. WICKMAN: No, no. Hold it, Stan. Hold it. You didn't finish reading the rest of that.

MR. BRASSARD: It doesn't matter what this says anyway, Percy.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Wickman, if you are comfortable . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. [interjections] Order. One person at a time, please.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, let me read here. You said then:

There was some discussion here a few minutes ago that indicated that the agreement between the Opposition House Leader and the Government House Leader made last summer with regard to the budget for the opposition caucus is in place and will remain in place for the balance of the fiscal year. It was also advised that that agreement was for this fiscal year and that April 1, 1994, would see the beginning of a new budget for a new fiscal year.

Now, based on that, what more was expected of us to do? It's very clear that you yourself as chairman of the committee, as Speaker of the House made it very clear that it was all in place. So what do you want us to do now, David, pass another motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry if there's a misunderstanding, but I was proceeding on the basis that the budget for '93-94 had been passed and completed by December 8, 1993, when we were meeting. That's what I was indicating, that things were in place for this fiscal year.

MR. WICKMAN: See, I thought they were all in place too.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Chairman, we'll go to page 21. Mr. Henry asks Mr. Kowalski about "other arrangements," and Mr. Kowalski goes on to say, "There's certainly an understanding," et cetera. But Mr. Henry said, "We would then need motions in the Members' Services Committee to . . ." Mr. Kowalski interjects and says:

Yeah, I would say that, because they are policy matters. We would deal with them when we go through the budget in dealing with that.

Anyway, all I did, gentlemen and ladies, members of the committee, was raise it. If you are comfortable, excellent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think they're comfortable.

MR. BRUSEKER: Can I go back to my question that I asked Dr. McNeil, the original figures that were passed with respect to the estimates?

DR. McNEIL: For the Liberal caucus this is the estimate that was passed in September or October. The value was \$1,508,000.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. And for the government?

DR. McNEIL: It was – what? – \$1,543,532.

MRS. MIROSH: Did we go over it?

DR. McNEIL: The fiscal year's not over yet.

MR. BRUSEKER: If that's what was passed in September, then why do we see a figure beside government members' services \$300,000 higher than that at \$1.8 million? Or is that the adjustment factor? Their caucus backbench went up one extra member so they needed another . . .

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. In here are the numbers that were in at the beginning of the year, in this binder last year. See, numbers initially put in the budget in February were approved by Members' Services Committee. Then there was a revised budget submitted to the House in September based on the fact that there was a reallocation. There was no ND caucus anymore. There were different distributions of members between the two caucuses.

MRS. MIROSH: But we didn't overspend anywhere.

DR. McNEIL: No, no. This is just the budget estimate. It has nothing to do with the expenditures.

MR. BRUSEKER: So what it reflects is that because the government backbenchers increased by one, they got an extra \$300,000, and because the opposition backbenchers increased by eight, we got an extra \$157,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, no.

MR. BRUSEKER: That's the way the numbers work out here.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah, but you have to remember here . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, yeah. I'm glad to see you agree with me.

DR. McNEIL: These numbers that I gave here are based on 95 days of the year between April 1, 1993, and June 15, when we had three caucuses. Your caucus had nine members between April 1 and June 15 and then had 32 after that. The government members' caucus had a different distribution, also the ND caucus as well. So we have to be careful here in terms of what we're comparing, because we're comparing three different points in time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion before the . . .

MR. WOLOSHYN: There's no motion, just an observation. I was thanking you folks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh. No, yours was not a motion.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Before you entertain a motion to adjourn, there is the question of these plaques for a hundred years on the one farm.

MRS. MIROSH: Nick, leave it alone.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I know, but they're important. Well, it'll be important to you in another 10 years. If you represent a constituency around Edmonton – Edmonton was settled as the earliest part of the province – the number of families that have been on the land for a

hundred years is staggering. The department of agriculture has been sending out bronze plaques and then charging them to us, the MLAs, at about \$300 a plaque.

MRS. MIROSH: That's the way they should do it.

MR. BRASSARD: They go through you. It's \$200 a plaque. They go through every MLA. You have control over that.

MS HALEY: Then refuse them.

MR. BRASSARD: Let's talk about that one.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I inherited a whole pile, and so did the Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

MS HALEY: That's what happens when you change constituencies, eh?

MR. BRASSARD: That's part of your communication allowance. That's what it's all about.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah, but they should have asked us.

MS HALEY: Yeah, they should. Or you should just send the bill back.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, this matter has been brought informally before the committee. We don't have the material with which to address this matter.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I'm going to have to go back and check with my office so that I can speak to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. I would strongly urge that some paper be generated for us.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Okay; I will. What I've been determining is that the government members get asked before the plaque is printed, I guess.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think so. I had a situation in Chestermere Lake. The plaque arrived, and the bill was with it, and I hadn't received any information about it ahead of time either.

MRS. MIROSH: You'd better write a little letter to the minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think there's discrimination here. I think it's a valid point to be brought forward, but it should be done at our next meeting.

MR. N. TAYLOR: My constituency contains where George McDougall of the Hudson Bay started farming in the 1870s, so you can imagine how many. I mean, my whole communications allowance plus my office space would be gone if they get ahold of this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As you know, Mr. Taylor, the McElroy family is fairly large.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I take it back. If you've got them on your tail, you've got your problems.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyway, that should be on the agenda for our next meeting.

The chair would remind members of the committee that unless we meet before March 31, 1994, we are going to put this extended benefits matter in jeopardy. So if we're getting close to the adjournment time, I think we should discuss something about our next meeting.

MRS. MIROSH: There's no cost there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We still have to deal with it.

MRS. MIROSH: Before April 1.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. N. TAYLOR: As a point of order, at two-thirds of the change – could we settle that now? I don't really see the sense of waiting that long to pass that motion.

MS HALEY: There was a question raised about it. It was: is there or will there be an impact on other members because of the expansion of this plan? I don't recall having heard an answer on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We don't have that information.

DR. McNEIL: Cheryl can comment on that.

MRS. SCARLETT: The best I can respond to that is that we have mechanisms for each of the different plans to monitor the costs incurred by members so that we would be able to manually go through and identify whether the premiums that the retired members are paying cover their actual expenditures against the plan, to make sure that current members are not paying as a result of them incurring more experience against the plan. So it can manually be monitored.

MR. WOLOSHYN: You know, with all due respect, Mr. Chairman, I think this is not a matter of urgency. The majority of MLAs who would be asking for this extension are on a five-year plan that started back in June in any event.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, there's a large number in '89.

DR. McNEIL: No. Once they're off, they're off.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Okay.

4:39

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, my understanding is that at 65 they're cut off in any case.

DR. McNEIL: That's correct.

MR. WICKMAN: So you have that five-year period. At 60 you're covered to 65. The only people it's going to hurt are those below 60; otherwise, they get cut off.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Except those from 1989. We don't know their ages. You're assuming June last.

MR. WICKMAN: My difficulty, Mr. Chairman, is that I'm not convinced that it's not going to impact on the overall package.

MS HALEY: That's what she just explained.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah. It would have to be monitored. We would not be able to say ahead of time. So we could in fact pass it assuming there are no costs but find out down the road that there is a cost.

MS HALEY: Then it can be canceled.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee can always cancel it.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I don't see the impact if you're ruled out at 65 anyhow, Percy. They put a plan together assuming most people are going to get to 65. I don't know; Cheryl could maybe answer me. What do you call it when you figure out insurance? I don't think it's going to make any difference if you pay up to 65 whether you're an MLA or not. We're just saying that those that retire before 65 or get fired before 65 should be allowed to continue as long as they pay, at no cost to the taxpayer, up till 65. So they must have actuarially – that's the word I was looking for – ground into the formula everything at 65. We're not talking about carrying people to 90. Actuarially it would be more likely thrown out by old crows like myself and the chairman that go way beyond 65, let me tell you. They're not going to cover the ones prior to that, because they only do it up to 65. So that's already ground in, I think.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee prepared to make a decision on this motion of Mr. Taylor's that those members whose extended benefits are due to expire be allowed to maintain those extended benefits at their own expense for as long as they wish to maintain those benefits?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Or to a maximum age of 65: do you want to put that in?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yeah, that should be quite clear.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To a maximum age of 65.

MR. BRASSARD: Why?

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's all that's allowed now anyhow.

DR. McNEIL: That's what the plan requires.

MR. BRASSARD: So the plan automatically ceases when you're 65?

MRS. MIROSH: Yeah.

MR. WOLOSHYN: And we don't want to imply that the plan is being changed.

MRS. MIROSH: That's only after the five years; right?

MR. CHAIRMAN: To a maximum age of 65.

MRS. SCARLETT: Just to clarify. The plan for current MLAs in terms of the benefit coverage that you can get provides for coverage in some cases over age 65. However, the benefit for members after they retire as it presently stands allows them to stay on the plan for up to five years or age 65, whichever comes first. So there is a difference between current member restrictions versus retired member restrictions.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's an added incentive for us old buggers to campaign for . . .

MRS. MIROSH: Does that mean you're covered, Nick?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. Ms Haley wants to ask something.

MS HALEY: I just wanted to ask, Nick, if you would consider putting a clause in that motion or amending it in some way to ensure that it is monitored and that the cost that they pay actually reflects their cost so that it doesn't turn into a subsidization by other MLAs.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Sure. I think that's a friendly amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We could add the words "at their own expense to be monitored by the Clerk's office."

MS HALEY: Actual cost.

MR. CHAIRMAN: "To be monitored by," we're going to say. Who is it monitored by?

MRS. SCARLETT: The administration of the plans both for current members and retired members and the premiums that go with them are administered and approved through Members' Services Committee. So it would be this committee that we come back to with information about premiums and potential increases both for the current member plan and for a retired member plan. So the administration of the benefits is with this committee; the setting of the appropriate premiums would be with this committee.

MS HALEY: Okay. That's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that is what has to happen; is that right?

HON. MEMBERS: Correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So we don't have to say something that already has to happen.

MR. WOLOSHYN: The safeguard's already there.

MR. BRASSARD: Just for further clarification, Mr. Chairman. A member retiring at, say, 67 or 68 can remain on the plan for five years?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. BRASSARD: You can't?

MR. WOLOSHYN: No. You remain until you retire, Roy. If you're 66, then you're finished.

MR. WICKMAN: You only stay on if you're an active MLA over 65.

MR. BRASSARD: Oh, I understand.

MR. N. TAYLOR: That's why it can't actuarially affect the price: because it automatically quits at 65.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yeah, and that's where your point is well made.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those in favour?

MR. WICKMAN: What's the motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's Mr. Taylor's motion that those members whose extended benefits are due to expire be allowed to maintain those extended benefits at their own expense for as long as they wish to maintain those benefits to a maximum age of 65.

MR. WICKMAN: "Maximum of 65": I wanted to make sure that was in there.

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

MS HALEY: A motion to adjourn.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there a motion to adjourn? Ms Haley moves that we adjourn. All those in favour? Carried.

[The committee adjourned at 4:45 p.m.]

