

**Special Standing Committee on Members' Services**

10:02 a.m.

[Chairman: Mr. Schumacher]

THE CHAIRMAN: The chair sees a quorum. I wish you all a very healthy and prosperous and happy 1996. It's nice to see all of you here this morning for the discussion of the budget for the Legislative Assembly.

MR. BRASSARD: It's nice to be here.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The first matter to be dealt with is the matter of approving the agenda. What is the committee's feeling towards the agenda that's been proposed?

Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY: If you need a motion to accept the agenda, I'll do that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Henry. Any discussion? All those in favour? The agenda is approved.

The next item the chair would like to bring before the committee is the matter of the minutes for the meetings of Tuesday, September 26, 1995, and Monday, November 27, 1995. We must have had a little lapse at the last meeting.

MRS. DACYSHYN: I was a little busy.

THE CHAIRMAN: First of all, the minutes for Tuesday, September 26. Is there a motion to accept?

MS HALEY: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ms Haley moves. Any discussion? All those in favour? Carried.

And for our last meeting November 27, 1995.

MS HALEY: So moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ms Haley moves. Any discussion? All those in favour? Carried. Thank you.

The next item on our agenda is the beginning of the consideration of the 1996-97 Legislative Assembly budget estimates. In order to introduce this subject, I'd like to call upon Dr. McNeil, our Clerk, for an overview of these estimates.

Before doing that, could we have agreement of the committee to receive the Hon. Murray Smith at 1 o'clock, who wishes to make a presentation with regard to funding re the Tuxis Parliament?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, Mr. Chairman, 1 o'clock may not be appropriate.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, when we resume.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Is there a time limit on his presentation?

THE CHAIRMAN: Fifteen minutes.

MR. HENRY: Have we not dealt with the item? Does he want us to revisit the item?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, he does.

MR. HENRY: We could be here next week and the week after and the week after if we keep doing that.

MR. BRASSARD: May I ask, Mr. Chairman, if it's been the practice of the committee to receive, for want of a better word, lobbying for funding like this?

THE CHAIRMAN: Maybe you've been a member of the committee longer than I have, Mr. Brassard. Nothing like this has happened in my experience, which has been about the same as most of you, I believe, on this committee, but that doesn't mean it hasn't happened, I don't believe.

MR. BRASSARD: Well, I certainly have no trouble with it.

THE CHAIRMAN: He brought the matter to me, and I said: "Well, I really can't make a decision on this; it's a budgetary item. You have to speak to the committee." I personally think it's fair enough for a member if he has a concern. This committee is Members' Services.

MR. BRASSARD: I have no objection to that. I'd so move, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: So when we resume after the lunch break, we can devote 15 minutes to Mr. Smith. Thank you.

MR. HENRY: Just a question. Is his presentation about budgeting for '96-97?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, for this budget.

MR. HENRY: Not to revisit the decision we made earlier?

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, no. No. It's revisiting that subject but not the decision.

MR. HENRY: Not the decision. Okay; that's fair.

THE CHAIRMAN: So with that, Dr. McNeil.

DR. McNEIL: You can see that the budget is divided up into three general components. The first is the Legislative Assembly Office component, which has the various elements that the Legislative Assembly Office has control over, the budget. Then there's the MLA administration budget and, finally, the caucus budget. So most of my remarks will be directed at the Legislative Assembly Office budget per se, and I have a couple of comments about the MLA administration budget as well.

The branches of the LAO have developed plans to maintain as far as possible and in some instances improve the level of services provided to members, staff, and the public while focusing on achieving the target of a 20 percent reduction in expenditures from the 1992-93 actual expenditures by the end of the '96-97 fiscal year. The proposed '96-97 budget for the elements within the direct expenditure control of the LAO projects a 19.1 percent reduction from the office's '92-93 actual expenditures.

A number of factors have entered into the development of the '96-97 budget in the ensuing two years. One of the most critical elements has been that the downloading of the accounting and payroll activities from central agencies, with a consequent reduction in their staffing levels, primarily in Treasury, has resulted in a significantly increased workload for the Assembly administrative staff. We've handled that workload without any increase in staffing levels.

To deal with this workload, a conscious decision was made in the last couple of years to deal with this overload through technological

change. You've been involved in the decision to plan and implement a Legislative Assembly management information system, which will provide accounting and payroll services for the Legislative Assembly Office. This will result in savings of \$25,000 in '96-97 and another \$30,000 in each of the next two fiscal years as well as much better control over our financial situation than we've had in the past being dependent upon the central government system. So we'll be able to provide you, the individual caucuses and individual members, with better information about financial operations.

Our inability to reach the 20.8 percent reduction projected last year for this envelope is based on a number of factors. First, the possibility that we could obtain question period coverage at no cost to the Assembly was not realized. In fact, changes in ownership of Access television along with the desire to provide higher quality coverage of question period, including closed captioning, as well as the decision to continue radio coverage of question period have resulted in a 44 percent increase in the cost for providing these services since 1992-93. As discussed at our last meeting, the possibility that the Assembly will have to allocate additional funds in the future in order to continue providing coverage of question period is highly likely. We'll deal with that specific question when we get to the House services budget.

Secondly, in terms of this upcoming fiscal year the secondment of Senior Parliamentary Counsel to the Information and Privacy Commissioner has resulted in a net cost increase of approximately \$10,000 for '96-97. Depending on the final outcome of this secondment, this may be a onetime cost only.

Finally, at the request of the committee the budget for members' travel related to attendance at parliamentary conferences is being increased to more accurately reflect actual costs and ensure that the decision as to who attends a particular conference is not dependent on whether that member has accumulated special travel points. That was the direction provided at the last committee meeting.

There are a number of onetime expenditures for this next fiscal year which are not included in the calculation of the target budget reductions which are requested to be appropriated next year. The balance of the total amount of funds approved for the Electoral Boundaries Commission to be expended in '96-97 is \$288,994. We estimated the cost of that commission for 1995-96 as a little less than \$300,000. At this time it's our estimate that we should be able to absorb that out of unexpended funds. In other words, we will not have to request a special warrant or a supplementary estimate for those funds. Now, that is on the assumption that there'll be some funds left in the caucus budgets and in the committee's budget, but that's predicated on historical expenditure patterns.

#### 10:12

As well, once every 14 years the Assembly is asked to host a number of professional development seminars. In August of '96 the professional development seminar of the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Canada is scheduled to be held in Edmonton. In January of '97 the Speaker will be hosting the annual Canadian Conference of Presiding Officers. So all the Speakers and Deputy Speakers and Deputy Chairmen of Committees will be attending the regular annual meeting and development seminar for the Speakers. There's some \$15,000 being requested to fund each of these conferences.

In terms of the Electoral Boundaries Commission and other legislative offices, the Assembly office continues to provide services to those offices as required. We do the accounting and human resource work for the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Ethics Commissioner as well as information systems work for them. We've consulted with other offices as well with respect to information systems; namely, the Chief Electoral Officer and the

Ombudsman. We've probably saved the Electoral Boundaries Commission between \$50,000 and \$75,000 in terms of Corinne providing administrative support services and doing all the travel arrangements and so on for that commission rather than the commission hiring an executive director. That was a conscious decision on their part. Since the other services were being provided by the LAO, they did not have to hire an executive director for their operation.

I just want to make a comment about the MLA administration budget. Although it doesn't show up in the numbers, by my calculation a conservative – and that's a nonpolitical statement here – estimate of the savings from the elimination of the MLA pension plan is that we saved between \$6 million and \$7 million over the past three years. If we had budgeted for the full cost of the pension, the MLA portion of the pension under the MLA administration budget, that budget would have seen a reduction of about 14 to 15 percent. So although the numbers aren't showing up in the budget, the actual savings, the real savings to the Assembly are, as I say, between \$6 million and \$7 million. That's money that's coming directly out of the members' pockets since June 15, 1993, when that plan was eliminated.

Just another comment. You will be pleased to note that in this budget we have not requested funds for either management pay increases or capital expenditure for furniture, as was the case in some other instances.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions or comments for Dr. McNeil?

Mr. Woloshyn.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Yeah. His last comment about not requesting capital or pay increases as in some . . . Is he willing to elaborate on what he means: as in some other?

DR. McNEIL: Well, I note that one of the other officers of the Legislature has requested such items in his budget for 1996-97.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which were approved.

DR. McNEIL: I'm not certain of that.

MR. BRUSEKER: Actually, I believe the Leg. Offices Committee did approve that budget.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Are you on that committee?

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah. It was the Auditor General. He looks at the fact that in his view much of the computer hardware and also the furniture hardware is so dated that it needs to be replaced. In fact, he says the seat of the chair that he sits on is worn out, so he's asked for – and it has been approved by the Legislative Offices Committee – money for furniture replacement.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Just out of curiosity, do you know the numbers, Frank?

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, off the top of my head I think it was around \$700,000 over a three-year period.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: For computers and chairs?

MR. BRUSEKER: And desks and so on, yes.

MS HALEY: And you guys approved it?

MR. BRUSEKER: Uh-huh.

MR. WOLOSHYN: This is perhaps out of line, but if you would indulge me, Mr. Chairman. Was there any suggestion made that with the amount of downsizing that has occurred in the upper levels of government, I would think there would be furniture coming out of our ears.

THE CHAIRMAN: Not ergonomic furniture, though.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Oh.

MR. BRASSARD: I think it's fair to say that at the Leg. Offices Committee it was dealt with quite extensively, Mr. Chairman. As a matter of fact, it was carried over to the next meeting so that the Auditor General could provide more details, more specifics, and give some of the members an opportunity to actually view the furniture. I think it was felt that the request was justified in the long run. I think it's safe to say that the initial reaction was much like our vice-chairman's reaction.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I have another question. Which group wanted the pay increases? I understood that the government wasn't into pay increases at this time unless there's something very, very specific.

DR. McNEIL: I don't know the specifics on the allocation of their costs.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Which section was it under? Was it something to do with the Legislative Offices too?

DR. McNEIL: Yes, that's my understanding.

THE CHAIRMAN: Anything further?

MR. STELMACH: Mr. Chairman, just a point of curiosity. In the presentation: "once every fourteen years the Assembly is required to host a number of professional development seminars." Whom do we participate with? Why is it every 14 years?

DR. McNEIL: Well, it moves around to each province, the territories, and the federal government. There are 13, so you get your kick at the cat every 14th year.

MR. STELMACH: Okay. Then it's just our turn?

DR. McNEIL: Yeah, it's our turn on the roster.

MR. STELMACH: Then it's an understood protocol?

DR. McNEIL: Yes. Definitely.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, not wanting to belabour this point, but following up on Stan's questions, I kind of hate to leave that matter sort of in the air, not knowing any department possibly being the department that did receive increases, because it could very well be that it's a reclassification involved. Who knows what? So maybe the Clerk could somewhere down the line just supply some additional information.

DR. McNEIL: I'll see what I can find out.

MR. WICKMAN: Sure. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Anything further? Then to proceed to the budget itself, I'll ask Mr. Gano to introduce the financial management and administrative services element.

Bill.

MR. GANO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you'll all turn to your tab financial management and administrative services, on the first page there's a little bit of an overview to indicate what has happened within the budget of FMAS. You'll note that under salaries and wages there is a 5.5 percent decrease. This is as a result of a transfer to another branch of a .6 position, transferred to information systems services, and is directly related to freedom of information legislation and records management requirements. So that's what happened there.

Under supplies and services there is an 18.5 percent decrease, which looks good until you recognize that it's a \$2,300 decrease, which isn't terribly significant but is due basically to some decreases in usage for some of the services and whatnot that admin services requires.

10:22

In order to provide a little bit more insight to the committee on the kinds of services that the LAO branches are providing to you, we have taken a little bit of a different approach this year and provided you with some goals of what each branch intends to accomplish over the next year and also some performance measurements to indicate the types of services that are being performed by the areas. Looking at the goals for FMAS, although there has been an 8.3 percent decrease since 1992-93, the services being provided have actually increased, and we expect to be able to increase those services even further with the implementation of LAMIS in 1996-97. With LAMIS, financial management information system, we expect to be able to provide some more timely and comprehensive services to the clients, which include improved responses to any queries, better reporting, and better turnaround for questions that the branch receives from members and staff of LAO. This increase in service will be accomplished even though we will be in the process of learning a new system and will also be at that time reviewing and streamlining any manual and computerized processes that we are currently looking after.

Because of the downloads that are occurring within government, we are having to increase our knowledge in the telecommunications area, specifically related to cellular products services and security issues, and also in the areas of insurance and risk management and asset and supply inventory management. So that's another goal of FMAS. We also will be in the process within the next couple of months of updating any orientation materials related to Legislative Assembly dissolution policies and procedures in the event that there is an election called.

Looking at performance measurements – we certainly won't go through all of those. That provides you with some kind of an idea of some of the services that are provided by financial management and administrative services.

Looking at page 1 of the budget itself, FMAS is requesting a budget expenditure this year of \$332,697, which is a decrease of 6 percent, as mentioned previously, due mainly to the transfer of that .6 position.

Now, I'll leave it to the committee: do we want to go through page by page? How do we want to proceed?

MR. HENRY: Speaking just for myself, Mr. Chairman, the information is here, and I think most of us have had a chance to peruse it, so perhaps we could just go through the front page and see if there are any questions.

MR. GANO: Okay. On page 1 then: any questions there?

THE CHAIRMAN: No questions there? Page 2?

MR. BRASSARD: Well, I have a question. I'm not sure what page it's going to fall under. I happened to read an article recently about the conundrum that the year 2000 is going to create for worldwide computerization because it's never been built into the system. Because the computer only recognizes the last two digits of a year, to reprogram the computers is going to cost in the order of millions. Could I ask Mr. Gano if that's going to affect us and, if so, to what degree and also whether that's going to have an impact on this budget?

MR. GANO: In terms of budget impact, no, there will not be an impact. This is due mainly because we maintain our systems fairly up to date. With any of the software that we acquire now, that conversion to the year 2000 has already been built in, so that should not be too much of a concern for us. The systems that are affected are systems that are fairly old, the 10- to 20-year-old systems that no one expected would be around that long. As a result they do have some concern.

MR. BRASSARD: The system I am most familiar with is the automotive, and they figure it's going to cost in the neighbourhood of hundreds of millions of dollars to program this computer to recognize the year 2000 and beyond. Anyway, if it's not going to affect us, that's fine.

MR. GANO: No. We should be all right there.

MR. BRASSARD: Good. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Anything further on page 2?

We'll move on to page 3. Anything arising there? Nothing there. Page 4, page 5. Page 6?

MR. HENRY: Just one question on 6, I believe, with workers' compensation, if I may, Mr. Chairman. Does the Leg. Assembly ever receive rebates from workers' compensation? Are they netted out? Is that how that operates? Perhaps Cheryl . . .

MRS. SCARLETT: To date we are piggybacking on the experience of the government of Alberta. We personally have not seen any rebate, but the premium for our administrative people was reduced a year ago to .20 percent from, I want to say, .90 previously.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Chairman, this is just a thought for the future if Treasury is insisting that we cover all of the real costs in the Leg. Assembly in this budget, including payroll, et cetera. In my experience with workers' compensation, for those units that have a low accident rate there's quite often a rebate, and I wonder where our share of that rebate is going, if we're going to be budgeting in the nature that Treasury would like us. I don't need a response; I'll just leave that one for consideration.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That's a good point.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Henry.

Anything further on page 6? Page 7, page 8. Page 9, newspaper advertising. Page 10, postage.

MS HALEY: I think I still have some left.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 11, photocopying. Page 12, tolls. Page 13, repairs on miscellaneous equipment. Page 14, stationery purchased for use by the Legislature. Page 15, replacement of obsolete equipment, typewriters, et cetera.

That concludes that element, Mr. Gano?

MR. GANO: Yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any decision on that element? Could there be a motion in regard to that element of financial management and administrative services?

Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would move that the amount for '96-97 for financial management and administration services of \$332,697 be approved by the committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any discussion? All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

Human resource services. Mrs. Scarlett, welcome to the table.

10:32

MRS. SCARLETT: In section 2, human resource services, similar to the format that Mr. Gano presented, we start by looking at the first page. Under salaries, wages, and employee benefits our budget reflects a 4.3 percent increase, which is due to incremental salary adjustments and an increase in employer benefit contributions. The overall manpower requirements of 3.6 staff years still remain constant. That has not increased.

On the supplies and service side, last year was the first year that we actually had our individual budget, and this year you'll notice that there's a 68.6 percent increase in expenditures, which is in the amount of \$2,625. This is strictly shown as an offset against finance and admin and is a proper reflection of actual expenditures which are expended through human resource services.

Fixed assets: there are no changes.

Again, in human resource services we've identified some of the goals for this upcoming year. As Mr. Gano mentioned, one of our primary emphases is relative to the implementation of the new LAMIS and, on that, building continued HRS experience relative to changing technology and directions in human resources. We also need to continue to develop the extended benefits option program from an administrative and systems tracking point of view for our retired members. We provide and promote a corporate identity for the LAO which involves extensive liaison with all the government departments and agencies on behalf of members, members' benefits, so that they best understand the facts. Prime emphasis is ensuring that the individual needs of members and staff are addressed, continuing to provide HR services for the Info and Privacy Commissioner and the Ethics Commissioner and their office.

Continuing on, then, to page 3 are again some examples of performance measures which indicate the kinds of services that we continue to offer. I think it's important to note that since 1991 all the services offered by the HR branch were provided with 3.6 person-years. However, the level and type of service that has been provided continued to increase, based upon the identified needs of the members and the staff.

In terms of the actual budget, looking at page 1 our budget being proposed this year is for a total of \$177,628.

MR. WICKMAN: I just have a question on page 1. Are we to go through page by page?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Page 1, Mr. Wickman.

MR. WICKMAN: On page 1, to Cheryl, I just want a reassurance that the out-of-scope employees are treated in the same fashion as those that are protected by contracts in terms of whether you call it incremental or merit increases; like, they're not at any disadvantage by being out-of-scope.

MRS. SCARLETT: The pay application for employees that are in nonmanagement is that except for contract employees in caucus and constituency, which is a different situation, other nonmanagement employees in our organization are hired and set into a classification that has an attached pay scale. Within that, there is room for them to move within the scales and receive increases based upon that until they get to the top of that scale.

MR. WICKMAN: A grid system, very similar to what the unionized employees have.

MRS. SCARLETT: A similar structure, yes.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Anything further? Moving on to page 2, page 3, page 4, page 5, page 6. Page 7?

MR. BRUSEKER: Just a quick question as to the nature of the advertising you do, Cheryl. Could you please tell me what it is you're spending \$1,500 on?

MRS. SCARLETT: That would be related to advertising costs for recruitment advertisements if required.

MR. BRUSEKER: So although you're budgeting \$1,500, you wouldn't necessarily be spending it, then, if you don't need to recruit anybody.

MRS. SCARLETT: Not necessarily, no.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

MRS. SCARLETT: On the other hand, if there's a year where there are expenditures over \$1,500 because any branch or an area has had to run an ad and it was more than \$1,500, then normally that expenditure is then transferred and found within the individual branch.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 9, page 10. Page 11?

MS HALEY: Just a question on the telephone expenditures going up by 500 percent. Is there something I'm missing there? What would be the reason for that?

MRS. SCARLETT: That has a direct relationship to the actual costs incurred. Last year was a best guess based upon first-year budgeting. This year is a reflection of the actual costs to cover those charges.

MS HALEY: Okay. All right. So it could have been this amount last year, but that's not what we budgeted for.

MRS. SCARLETT: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 12, page 13. Page 14. Is this a similar

reflection of actual?

MRS. SCARLETT: Yes, it is.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 15. A motion with respect to the amount requested of \$177,628?

MS HALEY: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ms Haley moves. Any further discussion? All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried.  
Now a very sensitive area.

MR. BRUSEKER: Is this a conflict of interest for you to chair this portion of the meeting?

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, as chairman I won't make the presentation. The chair will ask Mr. Jung to read us through this.

MR. JUNG: Well, I think before we start, I'd like to say for the record that the last time we went through the budget, the Speaker's office certainly took the lead and took a whopping 10 percent in the first year. So I just want to bring that to the attention of the committee members.

Under salaries and wages and employee benefits there's been a slight increase of .8 percent, due primarily to employer contributions, and then a substantial decrease in the supplies and services section of almost 27 percent, 26.9. In terms of the other expenditures, they've remained constant. So under page 1 is the overview of the budget estimates. Under page 2, there's no change there. On page 3 it again remains constant; likewise for page 4.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Could we go back to page 1 for a minute?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah. We should spend most of our time on that one.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Now, travel expenses. What does that pertain to?

MR. JUNG: That involves travel for presiding officers as well as between various conferences, travel allowances.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Is that number sufficient to take care of the needs?

THE CHAIRMAN: This is primarily for myself, I believe, not for other members. That's not the item that we were talking about.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Okay. Again I'd ask the question: is this number sufficient?

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, we feel it is.

MR. JACQUES: Do you want to knock it down?

MR. WOLOSHYN: No. I want the budget to reflect reality.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, we feel we've produced in this area something that is practical and necessary and not extravagant.  
Mr. Jacques.

10:42

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to clarify in

terms of the issue brought up by the member. As I understand it, the outlook for this fiscal year is expenditures of \$5,200. Is that correct?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, \$5,211 is the forecast.

MR. JACQUES: The forecast: that's our best estimate for '95-96?

MR. JUNG: Correct.

MR. JACQUES: So there's sufficient room if indeed we're estimating at \$7,800, which is the same as last year, but we're only anticipating to spend \$5,200 this year.

MR. JUNG: The fiscal year-end hasn't come to a close yet though.

MR. JACQUES: I understand that, but the '95-96 forecast is the best estimate for '95-96.

MR. JUNG: Yes.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you.

MR. HENRY: But one never knows when the Speaker will go deer hunting.

MR. JACQUES: There are only two and a half months left, assuming that we're fairly accurate on our travel claims.

THE CHAIRMAN: Anything further on page 1? We'll move to page 2. Nothing on page 2? Page 3, page 4, page 5, page 6, page 7. Page 8.

MR. BRASSARD: Yes, Mr. Chairman. It's my understanding that the government self-insures its vehicles. Is this an arbitrary figure that's assigned to this here?

THE CHAIRMAN: This is what Alberta Treasury . . . Dr. McNeil or Mr. Gano?

MR. GANO: Sorry. This is a \$500 deductible. The government insures the vehicles, yes, but with a \$500 deductible, however. So we're allowing for one more deer hit here.

MR. BRASSARD: Okay. Thank you.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure all members are aware of the fact that you recently had a car accident and ran into a deer.

THE CHAIRMAN: But I have to point out that that was with my own personal car; it wasn't a government car. The \$500 deductible in this case would be coming from my pocket, not from this budget.  
Page 9.

MR. BRASSARD: It would appear that this is quite a significant reduction. Were you able to cut back on mailings to that degree?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think this was just the experience. This was the experience, down instead of up, as we experienced before.  
Page 10.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just a question on that. Did the '95-96 estimate include the purchase of a photocopier that year? Is that why the . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: No, no. What happened was that that photocopier was purchased about five or six years ago on lease and

the lease matured, so we're now just paying for copies and service and not any lease payments, because we now own the machine.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Is there somewhere else in the budget, then, an allowance for repairs and so on on a seven- or eight-year-old machine?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that's what this \$800 is to cover, the copies and the service.

MR. BRUSEKER: Copies and service both.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.  
Page 11. Page 12.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just a question on that. I was wondering if you might know what the projected actual is for '95-96. You've got an estimate of \$3,000. I'm wondering if that 50 percent reduction is sort of a reflection of what's actually happened. Again, it looks like a fairly significant drop.

MR. JUNG: Primarily, beginning with the fiscal year, we're reducing the use of calligraphy and have done some in-house changes with respect to reducing the outside professional technical services.

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess looking back on page 1, we see that the actual projected is \$5,300. You budgeted \$3,000, and now you're going down. I'm just wondering how realistic that figure is since the first figure was out by 70 percent or whatever it was.

MR. JUNG: That was primarily the reason we decided to go in-house with this particular element, because of the substantial savings that could be realized.

MR. BRUSEKER: But the savings you're realizing are, if you look at the forecast compared to the estimate, more than what you budgeted last year.

MR. JUNG: That would be the fiscal year-end. It would be realizing the new fiscal year-end.

MR. BRUSEKER: So you're thinking that you can go from \$5,300 down to \$1,500?

MR. JUNG: Yes.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I wish you well, I guess.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, to maybe clear it up. I would just assume that what's happened is that a lot of the functions that would be carried out under this category will continue to be carried out under one of the other budgeted areas, like in-house. You mentioned it would be done in-house.

MR. JUNG: Yes. A lot of it is the advent of, I think, increasing the use of our computer capacity and what the printer can do. So a lot of the services that we contracted, that required outside service, we're able to do now with colour printers that provide a better finish. Therefore, utilizing that in-house service results in substantial savings in that area.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that a lot of scrolls that we used to get printed outside were really quite expensive. We can do actually a better job on our word processor now.

MR. BRUSEKER: These would be those congratulatory birthday scrolls and anniversary scrolls and those kind of things?

THE CHAIRMAN: And even the scrolls for unanimous motions under Standing Order 40 are like that too. There are a lot of those.

MR. WOLOSHYN: We can get that eliminated; can't we, Frank?

MS HALEY: If we could just eliminate Standing Order 40s, it would save everybody a fortune.

MR. WICKMAN: You know, if we could eliminate government members, we'd save a big chunk with that.

THE CHAIRMAN: We're looking to save wherever we can.

Page 13.

MR. BRUSEKER: I just hope this means the Speaker won't be 23 percent less hospitable than he's been in the past.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Is that possible?

MR. BRUSEKER: Oh, that was your member.

MR. HENRY: Remember who that was, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 13. Even hospitality is going down. Funny you should say that. It'll be warmer, then, if it's less.

Page 14. Page 15.

MR. BRASSARD: I would move acceptance of the budget for the Speaker's office of \$260,547.

THE CHAIRMAN: Discussion on that motion? All those in favour, please signify. Carried. Thank you very much, hon. members.

Public information branch. Dr. Garrison, welcome.

DR. GARRISON: By way of introduction I'll just highlight what's proposed as changes for '96-97. One and a half percent increase in salaries, wages, and employee benefits, mostly because of benefit increases and a few merit increases.

Under supplies and services, we have 11.9 percent as a decrease. The main ones there are two items that we'd included in our business plan last year; namely, the discontinuation of the school photograph program and the congratulatory scrolls. Another factor in there, of course, is the decrease in postage costs because we're now going to be mailing *Hansard* weekly instead of daily.

On the revenue side we're forecasting a slight increase in gift shop revenues.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Can I ask a question? You have in here that *Hansard* staff no longer have cab fare paid for them to travel home at night.

10:52

DR. GARRISON: It was a long-standing practice since before I came here, 15 years or so anyway, where we paid the cab fares for people who worked late if they didn't have cars and they needed transportation. It was mainly a security thing. What's happened recently – it's not just because we're trying to reduce expenditures but because this had been used less and less over the years. The fact is, as I understand, that no one else in the Assembly pays for cab fares for their staff, except maybe for the pages. Just to recognize that fact and the fact that people were rarely using it, we're not budgeting any money for that anymore.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, if it's required, will you find money for it?

DR. GARRISON: If it's required in an emergency, of course we'll find money for it.

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. WOLOSHYN: My concern is the security of the women.

DR. GARRISON: I mean, that's happened in the past, too, where people have taken ill or their car has broken down or something. In an emergency of course we'll cover that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman?

MR. WICKMAN: No. That's fine. I'll wait until we get to page 1.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jacques.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A question regarding the discontinuing of the school group photographs. I somehow thought that when a class attended, if there were photos, it seems to me that the MLA constituency allowance bore some of the cost involved. Is that correct?

DR. GARRISON: Yeah, that's right. Up to now the constituency has paid half and we've paid half.

MR. JACQUES: Okay. So has a policy decision been made yet, or is this a proposed policy?

DR. GARRISON: Well, this is a proposed decision. It was initially proposed last year, and the committee talked about it briefly then.

MR. JACQUES: Okay. So that's the proposal: if there were to be photographs, then the MLA would cover the cost.

DR. GARRISON: Would cover the whole shot.

MR. JACQUES: Okay. Thank you.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, that was the point I was going to raise under 1. Seeing it's been raised now, the concern I have with that, Mr. Chairman – and we spoke about it last time – is that it really, really creates an additional hardship on the constituency budget. You're simply transferring in that area an additional burden to the constituency, particularly in the Edmonton area where I probably host 12 different school groups a year. So to me that's a \$600 hit in my budget to your benefit. That was the same argument we made last year, and the Members' Services in their wisdom recognized that the hardship was mainly to the Edmonton and surrounding MLAs like Stan, for example. So for that reason that request was rejected last year.

DR. GARRISON: Well, I don't think that's exactly right. I don't think it was rejected. It was just talked about.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, it wasn't approved. Okay; let's put it this way: it wasn't approved.

MR. BRASSARD: In fairness, Mr. Chairman, it's an arbitrary decision made by the members themselves. There's nothing mandatory about having the pictures taken of children coming to the Legislature. If the member sees the benefit to such photo-taking,

then he or she makes that decision and pays for it. I see nothing wrong with that at all.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Chairman, how much money are we talking about here per session, per photo opportunity?

MS HALEY: MLA school photos, \$19,000. Page 13.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: So that's what's spent in . . .

MS HALEY: For the whole province.

DR. GARRISON: I can give you the actual breakdown. It's \$30.80 per sitting, so that's just for the photographer being here. For five by sevens it's \$1.40 apiece, and it's assumed that each student in the group would get a photo. Quite often there's an eight by 10 that's given to the school or to the teacher, and that's \$15.70.

THE CHAIRMAN: Anything further on that?

Dr. Garrison, you may continue with your overview.

DR. GARRISON: That's all I was going to say by way of overview.

MR. JACQUES: I just wanted clarification under revenues, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the gift shop, are those revenues the gross amount of the sales, or is that the net after allowing for the purchase of the materials that are going to be sold?

DR. GARRISON: Well, the amount that's shown in here – the last page, 16, shows an estimated \$50,000 for '96-97. That would be gross revenues. The cost for gift shop supplies or gift shop stock is shown on another page, and I believe it's on page 14.

AN HON. MEMBER: Page 15, Gary.

DR. GARRISON: Oh, right. Yeah, it's on page 15: gift shop inventory, \$32,000.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just on that same topic, Mr. Chairman, if I might. On page 13 there's a section that's entitled interpretive centre maintenance. Is that also related to the gift shop partly or totally?

DR. GARRISON: No, it's not. It's related to the space as a whole, and this addresses the fact basically that there will have to be upgrades made to the displays from time to time. Right now we've got a couple of display panels that we're working on. This would be covering that. It also covers things like the cost of moving the Fort Edmonton model out of the display space into the hallway outside the interpretive centre. That's the kind of stuff it covers. It doesn't cover regular maintenance stuff like vacuuming the floors and cleaning the glass and that kind of stuff, because public works covers that. You know, I'm talking about if we had to replace some chairs or do something to the furniture or to the displays; that's what that covers.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ms Haley.

MS HALEY: I'll wait.

THE CHAIRMAN: Maybe we should just start page by page now. Page 1. Page 2.

MR. JACQUES: Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, sorry. Mr. Jacques.

MR. JACQUES: Yeah. A question in regard to presentation. On the other budgets that we've seen the '95-96 forecast has been a recast of the best estimate. I notice here that it's the same as the '95-96 estimate, which raises the question as to why there wasn't a recast at this point.

DR. GARRISON: One of the difficulties we have with that in this branch is that our expenditures are very directly related to how much the House sits, not just how many days the House sits but how late the House sits and how many issues of *Hansard* there are, how many hours of *Hansard* wages there are. So at this point with probably a month and a half of session left to go – I mean, I could have adjusted these figures a little bit, but so much of the expenditures is still to come that the forecast that I've shown here is still a reasonably accurate forecast, it seems to me, based on how far we are in the fiscal year.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11:02

THE CHAIRMAN: Anything further on page 1? Page 2, page 3.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just on page 2, before we leave that. Is one of the persons identified on page 2 the person that staffs the gift shop then?

DR. GARRISON: No.

MR. BRUSEKER: Or would that be on page 3?

DR. GARRISON: That would be on page 3.

MR. BRUSEKER: Both of them deal with persons.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 3, then, Mr. Bruseker?

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess, Mr. Chairman, if I may. I'm having a little difficulty trying to wrap my head around this whole gift shop thing. We see that the revenues are listed on one page, and we see that the expenditures in purchasing the gift shop inventory are listed on another page. Then I'm wondering what the cost is for salary. Some of the other departments that we've seen in Legislative Offices are also being asked to cost out their actual rental costs and so on in terms of operating that as a business, and I guess what I would like to see would be the gift shop identified as a separate page in total where we have revenues and expenditures so that we can see in fact what the total cost of operating this thing is. My guess would be that it's a negative figure at this point in time.

DR. GARRISON: If you were to include all of the staff costs, I would imagine it would be around a break-even point. It could very well be a negative. We could be in the red on the operation of the gift shop.

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess what I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, is that with the way it's presented right now, we really don't know whether it's a positive or a negative figure. That's where I'm having a little difficulty in trying to identify the total costs of that particular item as it covers several pages in here.



MR. BRASSARD: While I recognize that it would be very concise to see it all on one page, as Mr. Bruseker suggests, my understanding of the intention of the gift shop was to offset some of the expenses, not necessarily to become a moneymaker per se. Is that not so?

DR. GARRISON: Yes, that's true, but that's only part of the reason for the gift shop. There had been a desire expressed by visitors to the Legislature for many years of the need to have an outlet where they could buy souvenirs or gifts or anything, especially things that were specific to the site. Up until a couple of years ago there was nothing. So we initiated the gift shop basically as a service to the visitors, and that's the primary purpose. Of course, by providing MLA promotional gifts through the same purchasing operation, we're also serving the MLAs.

MR. BRASSARD: So together with offsetting the staff costs and a public relations exercise and promoting the Legislature, that's basically the intent of the gift shop. I agree that it would be nice to have it all very concise on one page, but I think we need to keep the intent of the gift shop in mind.

THE CHAIRMAN: Dr. McNeil would like to contribute to this.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. The other factor here is that in setting up the gift shop, we did not hire an individual to run the gift shop. We had a staff member in that position in that location prior to the gift shop ever being there. So what we've done is add the duties to that individual's role with the addition of the gift shop. We didn't increase our staff complement in order to set up the gift shop. That was part of our visitor services function down there before the gift shop opened. So we have to be careful there in terms of just what proportion of that person's salary we allocate to that particular purpose. You know, we can't just say: oh, that's the gift shop person, period.

DR. GARRISON: A lot of that would be guesswork. If we didn't have a gift shop there, we would need a person there to receive visitors in any case.

MR. BRASSARD: That was my point exactly, Dr. McNeil.

MR. JACQUES: Well, I have a certain amount of empathy with Mr. Bruseker's position in terms of costs and revenues. It may be that the history was such that that's the way it developed. I think it also begs the question or the issue as to whether indeed a contract—I hate to use the word “privatization.” Basically, is this the business that the Legislative Assembly wants to be in per se, or is it something that would be better off handled by the private sector with some form of financial contribution back to the Legislative Assembly as opposed to being primarily responsible for it? I don't expect a decision on this today, but it would seem to me that it would be something that could be looked at as we progress through the year.

DR. GARRISON: When we first opened up the gift shop in the interpretive centre a little over two years ago—I hope it was about two years ago; I've lost track of the dates. Anyway, when we first opened it up, we did have a contract with a private-sector operator to run the gift shop. They discovered that it basically wasn't worth their while because they had to have a staff person there, and it just wasn't paying for their staff person, even if we didn't ask for any rent. We basically had a contract with them whereby we asked for about 10 percent of the gross, and the amount was so small that they were really glad to get out of it.

DR. McNEIL: That's where the fact that we have other functions going on there enables us to run that operation and, I think, at least break even. I think we need to do what's being suggested here: do a more comprehensive accounting of that operation alone and allocate a realistic portion of that individual's wage to the operation of the gift shop and just see what it is operating at. I think that's a reasonable request.

MR. BRUSEKER: Certainly I would like to see that kind of a presentation and whether it's 40 percent of the salary or 25 percent of the salary, whatever it is, so that we can get a real accounting of the services provided. I'm not saying that we shouldn't provide the service. I'm just saying: let's see what the numbers are.

MR. BRASSARD: Yeah. But I hope we bear in mind that the person who is running the projector for the school classes while it's going on is also looking after the store and so on. So the sales are basically underwriting that service we're already providing, and that's the point.

Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: We're on page 3. So we'll move on to page 4. Page 5, page 6. Page 7?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Page 7. Is this where we're talking about sending members to conferences?

THE CHAIRMAN: No. What element will that be under?

DR. McNEIL: It would be under House services.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Way down there. Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 8, page 9, page 10, page 11. Page 12?

MR. BRUSEKER: Just on page 12. With respect to the cost of printing *Hansard*, is there a corresponding revenue received from *Hansard* subscriptions?

DR. GARRISON: Yes, there is, and that's on page 16: \$47,000.

MR. BRUSEKER: So I take it, then, that the difference, which is \$37,000, would be basically those *Hansards* that are printed for members and House services, that sort of thing.

DR. GARRISON: That's right.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 13?

11:12

MR. BRASSARD: I have a question, more of an informational question. I notice that the seating plan, the teachers' guide, so on and so forth have been eliminated: \$18,000. I have no difficulty with that.

DR. GARRISON: No. It's not been eliminated.

MR. BRASSARD: Oh, pardon me. We have eliminated that coil-bound booklet giving an overview of the government.

DR. GARRISON: The Citizen's Guide?

MR. BRASSARD: Yes.

DR. GARRISON: No. That's covered under other public education materials. I just didn't itemize everything.

MR. BRASSARD: Is it still available?

DR. GARRISON: Yes, it is.

MR. BRASSARD: And do the members purchase it outright? I use it in classroom discussions a great deal. Is it still available then?

DR. GARRISON: Yes, it is.

MR. BRASSARD: Okay. Thank you. No questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 14, page 15, page 16. Is there a motion with respect to the amount shown on page 1, \$1,219,376?

Mr. Wickman.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, can I just back up to page 13 for a minute?

THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

MR. WICKMAN: The two items, the scrolls themselves. By approving this budget, the program of course is discontinued. Are the scrolls themselves, the blank scrolls, still going to be provided for caucus offices, whatever, to complete?

DR. GARRISON: Well, if we don't budget anything for scrolls, the idea is that we would not be providing blanks. What we would do is provide an electronic file that constituency offices and caucus offices as well, I guess, could use to produce their own scrolls.

MR. WICKMAN: I just want members to really think about this, because these little things mean so much to people. For somebody that's been married for 25 or 35 years or is turning 80, to get that in an envelope, one from the MLA, one from the Premier, one from the Lieutenant Governor, and so on and so on means a great, great deal. It's not just a question of saving \$7,000, but my fear in doing this is that there isn't some alternative for caucuses or constituency offices to go to; for example, there isn't some central place where the blank scrolls can be obtained.

MS HALEY: Yes, there is.

MR. WICKMAN: But there wouldn't be any longer. That's the trouble, Carol. If each constituency office has to have them made from scratch themselves, you're looking at a horrendous cost. Again, with the school photos I can see what will happen. Some MLAs will drop out of the program entirely, and then for Ken, who takes the pictures at the present time, it is no longer profitable. Pretty soon the whole thing is no longer an option for MLAs. These types of things mean a great deal to those that participate, like those students. It means a great deal to those people that receive the scrolls. It means a great deal.

MS HALEY: Well, I don't disagree with my hon. colleague over here, but I do have a problem with his conclusion. The one thing that concerns me when I look through this budget and see that it's been cut by \$42,000 is that the bulk of it is once again coming away from MLAs and things that we do. You know, we're going to quickly run out of things that we can cut off MLAs, and the rest of

it is actually going to have to get looked at, and that bothers me.

But having said that, I make the decision. I was asked when I became an MLA if I wanted to participate in the photo program. I didn't want to participate in the eight by 10s, but I participated in the five by sevens. I agreed to that. When I have groups come in, I'll shoulder that cost. I may have to make a decision on whether I want to go a five by seven for every student that comes in or if I want to go one eight by 10 for a whole classroom. That's a decision that I'm going to have to make.

The congratulatory scrolls. I get them from someplace else because I didn't like the ones that we had. We had downgraded from a very nice white, heavy scroll to something that was about as thick as this. I personally felt that they were not reflective of this office and endeavoured to find another place to get them. So I'm getting them from someplace else now.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, could I at least make a request that some office, whether it be your office – you mentioned that you've already come up with an alternative. I don't mean if that's right back to square one, but if somebody could come up with an alternative that could be shared with all the constituencies rather than having constituency offices all running off on their own to different suppliers at a much greater cost than the benefit of volume.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I think I would have to agree with Percy on this one, and whether it's a cost recovery or not is quite immaterial. I would say the quality of the scrolls has degenerated already beyond the acceptable point. With all due respect, I won't use that because that is something that I would not send out of the Legislature. I would like to see the reinstitution of those thicker scrolls that used to be around. I know there's some problem with having some printers print on them. That was a part of the problem with it, with the raised section of it.

Also, on the area of the photos, I think we have to have some good thought there. Those photos are not generally political as such; they're something that is a service to young Albertans. On the one hand, we want to promote knowledge of the democratic process. One of the biggest keepsakes kids get out of this is a school photo. Whether the MLA is in it or not is quite immaterial, and various MLAs use it differently. So, quite frankly, rather than just discontinuing the program, I see this as a straight downloading onto the constituency office budget.

I would move, if the motion would be in order, that we leave these items in. If there is an alternative to them, certainly at a subsequent meeting we could look at some alternatives. I'm looking at the provision of the service, and that hasn't been addressed. There aren't any alternates provided. If good quality scrolls are provided at a particular cost to various constituencies, fine. I don't have a difficulty with that.

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah, that would satisfy me fully. Come back next year with a plan for us. Don't just leave us out there in limbo.

MR. HENRY: Maybe just a point for some, and I know this doesn't apply for every constituency or every part of every constituency. Certainly in terms of the educational value of the school photos, of groups coming and having a memento and whatnot, one of the things that I picked up in the last year that I didn't know before was that there are a couple of schools in my riding that are in low-income neighbourhoods. One of the things that they actually do, one of the motivations for bringing their children to the Leg. Assembly is that most, by far, of the parents can't afford the school photos, and it's the only photo the child gets. I thought, well, if for nothing else, for that particular school this is worth while.

I know that this particular school came here, and it was a very major event for the school. Mind you, they also were able to go visit with the Premier, which was a real treat for them, and he took some time out of his schedule for them. They have those photos as well. If you go to that particular school, you'll see photos of them in various parts of the Legislature displayed prominently, but everyone has their photo at home, and I think it's worth while keeping that service, if we can, for schoolchildren.

I think in most constituencies, because there is a cost control in there, the constituency budget pays half of the cost of the photo. I think in other times, when there was more money floating around, MLAs, including Edmonton-Centre, my predecessor and myself, would say that any group coming could get their photo taken, et cetera. Now that's been reduced, for cost reasons, only to school groups. I think for schoolchildren it's worth keeping that amount in the budget.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, we have a motion, then, whether for this year some element of this function will be retained.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I would like to suggest – it's a suggestion for the committee to make a motion on if you so choose – that it be retained as is, with last year's numbers I mean, with the provision that a proposal or a position, an alternative, be brought back not to next year's budget but to the next Members' Services Committee meeting, whenever that might be. We could certainly adjust in midyear if need be, but let's have a look at the service we're providing and the most effective way of doing it. If that's a midyear adjustment, so be it, but I just don't want to see that disappear off the table.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would the committee want to defer a decision on this particular element for tomorrow?

MR. WOLOSHYN: I think, Mr. Chairman, I'd be in favour of adjusting this upwards by the \$26,000, with the provision being that for the next meeting we have an opportunity to look at some cost-effective alternatives. I, like some of the other members indicate, don't want to see the service lost. What we are doing here is trying, with very good intentions, to cut budget, but we've overlooked something, and that is the effect of that cut on all of the 83 constituency offices. I'd like just a little bit more background before we take that step, and enlarge more behind it. We're looking at \$26,000, and it is significant in one way, but in the overall budget of this whole department it is not that significant.

11:22

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Woloshyn, when you say the next meeting, do you mean tomorrow or Wednesday?

MR. WOLOSHYN: No. I mean the next batch of meetings after the budget meetings.

THE CHAIRMAN: I see; okay.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I don't think it's fair to the staff to ask them to in 24 hours come up with innovative alternatives that we can again debate and likely send them back once more.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Chairman, if I follow Stan correctly there, are you saying that this should stay in this budget?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yes.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Okay.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That's precisely what I'm saying. That was a provision that we had.

THE CHAIRMAN: Then the number that someone would be moving for this budget would be \$1,235,376.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Chairman, I'd gladly do so, assuming your calculations are correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: Maybe we should have that double-checked. The Clerk will double-check it.

DR. McNEIL: It's \$1,245,376.

THE CHAIRMAN: So Mr. Van Binsbergen's motion is that the budget for the public information branch for '96-97 will be \$1,245,376. All those in favour, please indicate. Opposed? Carried.

MR. WOLOSHYN: And that will reflect that we will be getting a proposal back to look at that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Dr. Garrison.

DR. GARRISON: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Legislature Library. Mr. Buhr.

MR. BUHR: Mr. Chairman, I'm having Corinne hand out our comparative statistical chart which we compile every year. You'll see as you get it that it has attached to it the one from the previous year to give you an idea of how we have done in terms of cost reductions and what the moneys are being paid out. We compare the budgets amongst all the provinces and the federal government in terms of their parliamentary libraries, the number of staff in each case, the cost per parliamentarian, and the cost per capita in terms of the population of that jurisdiction. In the last three categories I believe we have increased the number by one in each case. I know that Ontario has taken quite a reduction, so it will be a little different next year around. When we get into discussions, if people have any questions about that, I'd be prepared to answer them.

Our budget submission for '96-97 shows an overall decrease of 1.7 percent, and we achieved that in two ways. We have reduced our manpower costs by \$12,881. That's 2 percent lower than in the current fiscal year. The major part of that is the \$10,000 reduction in our sessional and relief wages budget. As well, our student pages will work fewer hours.

In terms of supplies and services, just a slight decrease there, overall, of around \$1,000. A number of our accounts are coming in at a lower amount, postage and freight and our photocopy rentals, and we'll have a reduced requirement for training for our library automation system this coming year. The total savings are \$3,000, but we've had to make a few increases to reflect actual costs, so that's where you come up with the \$1,000.

I won't necessarily go into the goals that much, but I would like to refer, on the performance measures, generally to our automation program. When I went back to look at the history of that, it was in '92 that this committee agreed to the library automation program. We saw the first part of that come onstream in April of '94, and last week we saw the second part of it with our automated circulation system coming into play on January 3. So we're very pleased that the committee made that decision back in '92. The money was paid out at that time, and we are now able to reap the benefits of that decision. In the coming year we hope to be able to provide dial-in access to our on-line catalogue as well.

I won't go into the other details on the performance measures. You can read those as you wish. You may have questions on them. I'd be prepared to answer questions on any part of our submission.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 1, page 2. Page 3.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Chairman, I have a question. I would like to know the impact of the reduction to the student page hours. Are we implying that we would reduce the number of hours they were here or the number of pages involved? I guess the reason I ask that is that I look at these young people, who carry what I consider to be a very heavy workload as it is, trying to do their studies and everything else, and I would hate to see us do something that is going to increase their workload. So if we're going to reduce the number of hours overall, then that's one thing, but if we're going to reduce the numbers collectively, which is going to actually cause fewer pages to have more time, then I do have some concerns with that. So could you address that, please.

MR. BUHR: Yeah, I'll address that, Mr. Brassard. It's the same number of people that are working. They'll be working somewhat reduced hours from what they have been working now.

MR. BRASSARD: I see. So they'd go home at, say, 9 o'clock at night rather than 10 o'clock or something along those lines?

MR. BUHR: These two fellows don't work in the evening. They work during the day.

DR. McNEIL: We're not talking about pages in the Assembly.

MR. BUHR: These are library pages.

MR. BRASSARD: Oh, pardon me. I apologize. Okay. I'm sorry.

MR. BUHR: Well, that's fine.

MR. WOLOSHYN: On that same topic, you indicated in your performance measures that your library is getting an increased workload due to the Privacy Commissioner, due to the Ethics Commissioner, due to freedom of information legislation. If you are, then I would assume that these pages are there in a supportive role.

MR. BUHR: Yes.

MR. WOLOSHYN: How do you justify, as your workload is going up, taking and reducing what is probably one of the most economical sources of labour that you might have?

MR. BUHR: Well, we haven't reduced our full-time staff, and generally the kinds of areas where we have increased are professional and technical staff, the people who are doing the work, and we haven't made a reduction in that area.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I guess the question I'm asking: by reducing these hours, what impact would that have on your library operations?

MR. BUHR: It should not be a visible impact to people who use us. Some of the things have to be scheduled a little differently. These people work for us in summer as well, when the university year is not in session. So part of the time we can make the adjustment is during that time period. They'll be working fewer hours in the summer than they have been in the past.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 4, page 5. Page 6?

11:32

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Chairman, I was interested to note that the public information branch, I think, wiped out the traveling by cab, and this one still has it. Is there any reason?

MR. BUHR: Yes, there certainly is. We have two individuals who do not have vehicles of their own, and they're required to work in the evening. In our case we have put it forward as a safety factor. These folks do not feel safe going home either walking – one works in close proximity to the building, and one is farther away. This is during session time, and we have included it in our budget again this year.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: I'm kind of surprised because I would assume, Mr. Chairman, if I may, that other employees have their own cars and incur certain expenditures, certain expenses, and these people get their transportation for free then.

MR. BUHR: They get the home trip free if they work at night.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: If they work at night.

MR. BUHR: Yes, but they have to make their own way here at the beginning of their shift.

MR. WOLOSHYN: And this is done for a security measure.

MR. BUHR: Yes, only safety.

DR. McNEIL: The reduction in the other budget was related to the fact that it wasn't being used more than it was a policy decision not to provide it. If there's somebody working late at night who requires that, we will pay it, as we do for the pages, for example.

MR. HENRY: So, Mr. Chairman, we can rest assured, even if it's not in the public information budget, that if there's a need for it, the Clerk will find the money.

DR. McNEIL: Exactly.

MR. HENRY: I wouldn't want to see employees, especially young people or females, having to leave this building sometimes at 11:30, 12 at night – and there's no public transit at that time.

DR. McNEIL: Well, in the case of *Hansard* sometimes it's 2 in the morning, 3 in the morning.

MR. HENRY: We can't have that happen.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jacques, followed by Mr. Wickman.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm really concerned about the type of discussion we're having in terms of precedent. Before we said, well, we're not going to do it, but we said we might do it in the case of safety reasons, and I fully support that. What I'm disturbed about, in terms of reflecting these policy decisions, is that we're not consistent in our approach. Now, if indeed we believe – and I think there should be provision for *Hansard* employees or pages or whatever. If the circumstances are reasonable, then there should be a reasonable amount included in the budget to provide for that, and assuming that this is a reasonable amount, then so be it. But to me it just elevates the fact that we screwed up in the past if

we go back in terms of how we want to handle that.

MR. WOLOSHYN: No, that's not true. The question was posed by Duco. I put it very clearly that if it was a security issue . . .

MR. JACQUES: Well, then let's put the money in there.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Well, they don't need it because they don't have anybody using it.

MR. JACQUES: Well, then you put some money in there. I mean, what is the policy issue?

DR. McNEIL: The policy issue is: do we pay for transportation late at night for staff to return home? The answer is: yes, we do. In the case of the *Hansard* situation it's not being utilized because people have cars. What we do is provide security staff to escort them to their cars in the parking lot. If we did have a situation where there were individuals coming in on public transportation during the day and having to leave on public transportation late at night, then we would provide that, but I understand the case is now that we do not have individuals in that situation and therefore it's not budgeted for. But the policy is that we do provide transportation for security purposes.

MR. JACQUES: I agree with the policy. I just . . .

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. That's what the policy is.

MR. JACQUES: Okay. So we're not talking about a question of dollars then.

DR. McNEIL: No, no.

MR. JACQUES: I just want to make sure.

DR. McNEIL: No. That's the policy.

MR. JACQUES: The response has been different here in each case.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, the facts are different.  
We'll move on to page 7 then.  
Page 8.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, just a question. Is this for the purchase of new photocopy equipment, or is that the actual cost of producing copies?

MR. BUHR: These are rentals, and there are a lot of copies made. We have three units in this building and one in the other building, and then we also operate a couple of fax machines, and those rentals come under that as well.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 9, page 10, page 11, page 12, page 13, page 14, page 15.

Page 16. Does the committee have a motion with respect to the Legislature Library budget?

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, I would move that we accept the estimate of \$810,376 as presented on page 1.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any discussion? All those in favour? Thank you, members of the committee. Carried.

Now, instead of moving to House services at this time, because Mr. Smith's item will be under that tab, maybe we could move to 7, information systems services. Would there be agreement to that?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. STELMACH: Before we go back, Mr. Chairman, would you be able to inform me what the co-operative government library services are, the main library and then the co-operative? Who do you co-operate with?

MR. BUHR: We break it out. We have two sections. The main library is the larger numbers, and the section in the Annex – and I have an office there; I work there part-time as well – works with the co-operative programs with government libraries, mostly in Edmonton but any government library throughout Alberta. So we were asked to break out the budget to show how much each costs, and that's why they are shown in two ways.

MR. STELMACH: So when we say government, we're talking municipal?

MR. BUHR: No. Just government of Alberta.

MR. STELMACH: Just government. And other libraries? Does it have anything to do with law libraries, et cetera?

MR. BUHR: Well, the provincial courts have some law libraries, and we would relate to them, but it's mostly providing services that we've agreed to, and some of those are cost recovery, that they pay for.

DR. McNEIL: Lorne, maybe you can emphasize the cost savings that we've demonstrated through that unit, just what it does provide in terms of cost savings to the overall system.

MR. BUHR: One of the things that happened maybe about 20 years ago is that the Clerk of the Executive Council and of the Assembly asked that a study be done on how library service could be done more economically, and at that time this unit actually was put into place. So it's been in existence for quite a while.

What we do is provide a photocopy and loan service to the University of Alberta so that government libraries don't have to approach the university on their own, have their own staff member go there and do that kind of work. We have a person who goes there every day and brings the material back. That's one of the savings. We operate a union list of serials which allows us to help people find materials quickly rather than, again, phoning to all these different places: "Where might I be able to get this?" Those are two of the things we've done. We've done a calculation to show how much money it actually would cost if those services weren't provided, and it runs into the hundreds of thousands of dollars really, so we think we're getting a fairly good bargain. In addition to this, of course, the Assembly benefits because we can also serve members really quickly with things from the university.

Was that helpful?

11:42

MR. STELMACH: Excellent. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Then if we could move to tab 7, Mr. Gano will give an overview on information systems services.

MR. GANO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In information systems services we are showing a budget increase of plus 4.7 percent over last year. As indicated previously under financial management and administrative services, there was a .6 position transferred to information systems to assist with freedom of information and records management functions, and that's the bulk of the increase right there. We're showing an 11.5 percent increase in salaries and wages due to that; however, that's partially offset by a 10.7 percent decrease under supplies and services due mainly to a decrease in requirements for data-processing services as a result of moving some functions in-house. We are requesting a 3.4 percent increase in fixed assets due mainly to increasing costs for the hardware and software of computers. This increase was in the three-year plan last year, so it's not something that hasn't been expected.

One of the headings there, payroll/accounts payable off-load – the dollar amounts in there are not included in that 4.7 percent. This is as a result of dollars that were transferred last year to Legislative Assembly as a result of the off-loading of payroll and accounts payable services from Treasury. Last year the transfer amount was \$85,200. This year, however, because of the move to LAMIS, moving payroll and accounts payable in-house, we see almost a 30 percent decrease there to \$60,000, and over the next two years that will decrease even further as we gear up that particular system.

Looking at the goals and whatnot broken down into two specific areas, administrative/information systems services, this relates mainly to FOIP and records management with respect to the establishment of some appropriate policies and procedures for records management within the next few months. Under information systems we'll be looking at full implementation of Internet. We'll be continuing our enhancement of the Legislative Assembly information system and just basically continuing to maintain our position as it relates to newer technology.

It's interesting to note under performance measures, looking at the three-year plan, that although we see an 18.66 percent overall decrease from '92-93, if you compare that to the actual number of workstations being supported, you end up with a 37 percent decrease from '92-93. The number of workstations that we're actually supporting have increased even though our budget has decreased.

A comparison of costs to the private sector versus what's being provided through in-house services – you can see that there's almost a \$500,000 savings there. The cost calculation to the private sector was based on current market rates, which are basically \$250 per year per workstation for hardware maintenance and then \$100 per hour for manpower or software maintenance. So that's how those numbers were arrived at.

Moving to page 1, information systems services is requesting an overall budget of \$645,306. This includes the \$60,000 being requested for the payroll and accounts payable functions. Ignoring that, we're asking for \$585,306.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 2.

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. On page 1, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 1.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry, Bill. You'll just have to walk me through that again. Let's look here specifically at salaries, nonperm: \$115,000 to \$142,000. Then I look at page 3: transferred from FM and AS. It refers to FM and AS several times. My ignorance: what is FM and AS?

MR. GANO: Financial management and administrative services. That's the other branch that I'm responsible for.

MR. WICKMAN: And that's what you're referring to earlier. The corresponding figure is going to be assuming that other component?

MR. GANO: That's right. That was in the first budget that we covered, and there was a corresponding decrease there.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can we move to page 2?  
Oh, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY: A question to Mr. Gano on data processing services. You indicated that you're doing more of that in-house. Can you give me an example or two of exactly what kinds of services those are?

MR. GANO: The main ones are certainly payroll and accounts payable. Let's just refresh my memory here a little bit. We have completed a number of projects for the library. We've a number of services on the in-house system, so they don't require services from PWSS or the University of Alberta.

MR. HENRY: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 2, page 3, page 4. Page 5?

MR. BRUSEKER: Page 5. Do those courses deal with things like training for WordPerfect and such, the new WordPerfect 6.1?

MR. GANO: That's correct. WordPerfect, electronic mail. It will involve Internet next year. It's for all caucus staff as well as Legislative Assembly staff.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just a question. I'm wondering what kind of response you've had by and large, particularly from the MLAs, in terms of taking this. Or is it largely the constituency staff that are taking the courses?

MR. GANO: For the most part it's constituency staff and caucus staff. We have not had a lot of members actually take training. The way we handle training for members for the most part is a one-on-one type of thing, when on request we'll go in and sit down with a member and show them how to use it.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 6, page 7. Page 8?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, on page 8. How close are we . . . Oh, this is a different program. I'm sorry.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 9. Page 10?

MR. WICKMAN: Yeah. This is the program I was going to make reference to earlier, Mr. Chairman. All the constituency offices now have been upgraded to the new equipment; right, Bill?

MR. GANO: They're not all there yet, but they will be.

MR. WICKMAN: Within this fiscal period?

MR. GANO: We'll be at about 75 percent the next fiscal year, so there will still be a few left after the next fiscal year.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bruseker.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, on this page, page 10, and on page 14 there's a section dealing with data processing equipment, which I presume is similar. I guess my question is of a policy nature: how do you define "obsolete?" There's obsolete technically, but an old 386 or 486 computer can still do the task quite admirably for which it was originally purchased. I guess I'm wondering how it is and when it is that you decide a piece of hardware is obsolete and needs to be replaced.

MR. GANO: A very good question. Basically there are a number of factors that come into it. Certainly the 286 versus the 386 versus the 486 is one of them, and we still have some 286 machines out there. However, they have been upgraded to a 386 through upgrade chips that are available to put into them. In terms of obsolescence a machine is considered to be obsolete after about three years. So we try and keep to that type of program and keep them upgraded. There are no longer any 286 machines out there. Although they were originally 286, they have been upgraded to 386. So we try and replace about 30 percent of the machines every year and keep everything up to date that way.

Certainly a lot of it depends on the activity within a constituency office. A lot of constituency offices are more familiar with their hardware and software and tend to drive their machines a little harder than some other constituency offices. So we are continually in contact with the constituencies to ensure that the machine is still performing the job that they require it to do, and if it isn't, then they get on the list for upgrading perhaps a little quicker than other offices.

11:52

THE CHAIRMAN: Dr. McNeil wishes to supplement.

DR. McNEIL: I just want to emphasize that the policy decision that this committee made a number of years ago with respect to our EDP strategic plan was to allocate – and this is on page 14 – a certain amount of money each year to provide for the upgrading of equipment so that we wouldn't be in the situation where, if we didn't do that, every three or four years we'd come in with a half a million dollar or a million dollar request for funds for new equipment. So what we've done: we've moved from the 286 to the 386 and in some cases a 486 and I guess in the future the Pentium technology just through budgeting in this manner and attempting to maintain and upgrade the level on an ongoing basis rather than having this incremental kind of process where you wait for three years and then spend half a million dollars to do that, and I think we've been relatively successful in doing that.

The other thing that impacts on what's obsolete is what the software requirements are. They sort of drive the need for certain kinds of technology as well. For example, in the building here and in the Annex there's a requirement for upgraded wiring before you can actually access the Internet in terms of accessing the Worldwide Web. So there are a lot of things that this amount of money on page 14, \$127,000 for next year, pays for.

I just wanted to emphasize that. I think it's important for members to note that. Because of that decision of the committee three or four years ago and the continued support of that policy we've been able to maintain and really upgrade the services to members at I think a fairly reasonable cost.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, if I may, with respect to the issue of software. Software, as you said, keeps changing and that in part will drive the hardware. For example, WordPerfect: does the Legislative Assembly purchase enough copies of that program or do we purchase a broad licence to cover all the constituency offices and

so on? How is that dealt with?

MR. GANO: Specifically, WordPerfect doesn't offer a site licence type agreement. What they do offer is discount rates for bulk buys, and that's what we do for WordPerfect. Other types of software offer site licences, and we purchase those when it's cost-effective.

MR. BRUSEKER: Good. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: On page 11. Page 12?  
Mr. Bruseker.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Another issue that springs to the fore there is CD-ROM applications. With the advent of more CD-ROM technology is there the intention at some point to equip constituency offices with CD-ROM technology as well? We have the disk technology, certainly, and E-mail.

MR. GANO: Yes, that's certainly in the plans. Most equipment that we buy these days comes standard with a CD-ROM drive, and that's what will be happening over the next two or three years.

MR. BRUSEKER: So that figure, then, will have to increase, I take it, over the years. Or is that sort of estimated, one of those ongoing figures that will continue?

MR. GANO: It will continue to be addressed, but this particular figure here is a specific requirement for the library to install CD-ROM technology in the library itself so that they have access to CDs.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

MR. WICKMAN: Can I ask what CD-ROM is? I'm not a computer whiz by any means.

MR. GANO: CD-ROM stands for compact disk, read only memory. It's basically the newer technology, a newer way of storing data and figures on a laser disk.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. So it's not a new service. It's an improved upon existing.

MR. GANO: That's right.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 13. Page 14.

MR. BRASSARD: I would move the budget presented by information systems of \$645,306.

THE CHAIRMAN: Having heard the motion by Mr. Brassard, any further discussion or questions? All those in favour, please signify. Carried.

DR. McNEIL: I just want to make one point. If members have a concern about the EDP services being provided, we do have an EDP management committee on which each caucus has a representative. Some of the managers are representatives. That's the vehicle through which any concerns about EDP or ideas about EDP, especially as it relates to specific members' needs or services – they should contact their caucus representative to bring that forward. The mechanism's there. If there's a need to change a policy, then it would come to that EDP management committee and then from there, if necessary, to this committee for consideration. I just wanted

to emphasize that. That's the management mechanism for specific issues or concerns that you have, and that would come here for a final decision. For example, if members decided that every member should have a desktop computer, then that would be something that would come through that committee to here.

THE CHAIRMAN: It being 12 o'clock, according to the carillon, the committee will stand adjourned until 1:30.

[The committee adjourned from noon to 1:32 p.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, members of the committee, it's nice to have with us the Hon. Murray Smith, who would like to address the committee on a proposal, as the chair understands it, for a continuing grant, I suppose, to Tuxis Parliament.

The hon. Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Happy New Year to everybody here today. What a thrill it is to be back up in the halls of the Leg.

I know that everybody has diligently read through all the background and the memorandum that talks about Tuxis and how it's a uniquely Albertan institution and how it's survived for 77 years and the number of people that have come out of it, including the Speaker and Mr. Coutts and myself and, I believe, Gary Dickson, Dave King, and a number of other individuals. This group has survived over the time primarily through the United church and through sponsorships from the private sector. It uses about \$26,000 a session. It's gone from a high of some 100 young people between 16 and 21 attending to a low of 29, and it's back up now to about 63 to 65.

I'm proposing this because I see us, as the provincial Legislature, being the only institution that really has much to do with politicians and parliamentarians in Alberta. I think it recognizes the contribution they have made, and I also think that it is something we can do to ensure its continuance. They have not asked for this; they have not lobbied for this. It's something that I felt we could actually do as a group united towards promoting leadership in Alberta, an area that there isn't much of, and also reflecting the importance that we feel for the parliamentary system and democracy itself in Alberta.

So with those opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, I'd be pleased to respond to any questions. I know it's an interesting task ahead of us on looking at this. I see it as being, again, uniquely Albertan. I see it as being one of the only five-day mock Legislatures that goes on annually. I know that the high schools have their own programs, and they're generally two-day sessions. I believe that this would be a contribution well made to aspiring young parliamentarians.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Smith.

MR. BRUSEKER: I take it, Mr. Smith, since you were talking about a 77-year history, you can talk about that personally as well.

MR. SMITH: I am an alumnus from 1965.

MR. BRUSEKER: But you attended all 77 sessions.

MR. SMITH: All 77 in spirit. In fact, I believe Mr. Dickson attended the one in 1965. We're going to have to check the picture.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Just a question, I guess, perhaps of mechanics. You've asked for a \$2,000 annual grant, but did you give any thought as to the mechanism, what this might come from in terms of a budgetary line item or where it would come from?

MR. SMITH: No, I haven't. I mean, that's why I thought of this committee and their skilled utilization of handling legislative funds.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, could I just speak to the concept in general? I wear another hat as well, somewhat related to this. For the last six years I have been one of the trustees for the Forum for Young Albertans, which has a similar goal. I think that certainly one of the reasons I jumped on board with that particular organization was that it seems to me that we do very little to support involvement in the political system by our young people. Certainly that's the goal of the Forum for Young Albertans, and that's also the goal of the Tuxis Parliament, from what I understand to be the prospect here. So from that standpoint I guess I would simply say that I would support this request for an annual endowment.

I think that we need to help foster that interest in the political system amongst our young people. Mr. Smith mentioned 60 students attending on an annual basis, but we also need to consider that there's a broader impact. There are the 60 students themselves, but then they go back and talk to their classmates and their friends in their respective schools, and they talk with their parents. So, quite frankly, a \$2,000 annual endowment to perhaps instill more of an interest in potentially hundreds of Albertans on an annual basis in the provincial political system to me seems to be a good investment.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just for the purpose of clarification it would be a grant rather than an endowment. An endowment, the chair feels, is something that builds up a capital fund that pays the interest. We're talking about a grant here really for operations on an annual basis.

MR. SMITH: They have an \$800 annual bursary from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association that they hand out to the most aspiring young parliamentarian. This would be in fact \$2,000 to cover operations.

THE CHAIRMAN: To help with their annual session.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HENRY: Just for the record, in 1965 I was still playing marbles, Mr. Chairman, in the backyard and didn't know that Parliaments existed, I don't think.

My question is really a simple one. If I recall, Tuxis had their Parliament in our Legislature. Was that just for the 75th anniversary, or is that a common practice?

MRS. SCARLETT: They don't normally have it here.

THE CHAIRMAN: They like to move around the province, I believe. They don't meet here every year.

MR. SMITH: They've met actually at McKay school. They're using Currie barracks in Calgary this year. The one I went to was in a United church in Red Deer. They've used the facilities in Lethbridge, the exhibition. There's talk about moving into Camrose. So one of the ways of generating interest among youth is to have it move around through the province.

MR. HENRY: So on occasion we might be able to help with this facility. I'm sympathetic to the notion, Mr. Chairman, but I'm having a little bit of trouble with it. I'll listen to more debate. I'm wondering what parameters we use to fund groups that perhaps have similar interests to ours. What would happen if the Alberta Debate and Speech Association came and asked for an annual grant? They



do the same kind of work with young people. Would we then have set a precedent and be somewhat obliged to fund that group? There are other groups out there as well. That's my only concern, not about the nature of the group itself.

MS HALEY: Well, with all due respect to my colleague I appreciate his interest in this organization. It is with regret that I can't support his request, and I base that on a number of different things. Number one, they haven't asked. You know, I think that's kind of telling, that they managed to survive for 77 years without coming and asking for operating money from the Alberta government. They have sent out letters requesting donations from organizations and individuals.

As we discussed here in November when we discussed this issue originally, there was the thought that perhaps the individual caucuses might want to work with these people through their constituency budgets or some other way. I think that needs to be explored. But to have it as a grant, I think we open the door to a lot of other requests. We simply don't have the funds to help everybody. I for one don't want to start picking the winners and the losers on this issue.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Chairman, I had one question. I think it has been answered. To my understanding the Legislature is not supporting via donations any other causes such as this. I don't think it is normal that the Legislature is being solicited. That's one thing.

The other thing is that I'm thinking of precedents as well. I read that Tuxis has a Christian focus. I would wonder: what if the Muslim Albertans decided to establish an organization like this? Are we not setting all kinds of precedents? I would like to suggest instead that the alumni, who I think are all very prominent citizens these days, just dig a little deeper in their own pockets perhaps.

1:42

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would take a slightly different approach to it than the last member. I recognize the benefits of this particular organization and other organizations like the parliamentary Forum for Young Albertans, the Alberta debaters, and so on and so forth. If we are to seriously consider a request like this – and I think there is some merit to these types of requests in that they can't go to the Wild Rose Foundation or any of these organizations – and provide equal opportunity for other similar groups, I think what we should do is to have the Speaker's office come forward with a recommendation saying that there should be a component within the Speaker's budget of \$5,000, whatever, and then invite groups that fall under similar criteria to make application so that we don't have a whole bunch of groups all coming forward helter-skelter. If there is X number of dollars earmarked, then they know that they can apply, and then it becomes like any other avenue of funding. I don't want to pass it off on you, Mr. Speaker. I use the term "Mr. Speaker" now instead of Mr. Chairman because it does fall within that particular office. I think it's appropriate that your office deal with this type of thing.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Brassard, followed by Mr. Coutts.

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are very few things that go on in this province that impact as significantly on Albertans generally as what happens in this Legislature and by us parliamentarians. I might add that to a large degree most people don't understand what does happen here, which is really a sad state of affairs.

Here's an organization that has survived for 75 years. I don't know how many people it has impacted, but certainly I have to honestly

believe that it has broadened that understanding of just what does take place in Parliament, in literally the highest court in the land, and I don't think we can overlook that. I think there's a difference between supporting an organization that's been around for 75 years and one that may start up tomorrow, but I think it certainly behooves us as parliamentarians to foster this kind of understanding of what we do and what goes on and better disperse the information into the general population. I think it's a good organization. I think it warrants support by parliamentarians, and I support the move for many of the reasons that were mentioned by Mr. Bruseker. I think it's a worthwhile project; I really do.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Coutts.

MR. COUTTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of course I support this particular initiative because I believe that this organization – and I probably can't say it any better than Mr. Brassard here, who just preceded me – this particular model Parliament follows exactly what we do here in the House as government and what the effective opposition does on a daily basis. The model Parliament Tuxis has its opposition; it has its government. They have their own individual caucus. The year that I went I happened to be in the opposition, and we brought resolutions directly from our caucus right onto the floor and participated in the debate. It certainly brought young people from all over the province to participate in that debate and made them a lot better public speakers. I think they benefited from it because they found out one more thing: they found out where our basic democracy comes from. They dealt with the Lieutenant Governor; they dealt with the Speaker. I would have to say that it resembles what we do here on a daily basis most appropriately.

So that's why I believe that this gives our young people their first chance at seeing democracy in action, and I would like to see us support that as parliamentarians, support that initiative in our young people.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to state categorically that I think it is an important organization and that it serves a very important purpose, but I don't think we should get into the business of funding this as a Legislative Assembly. What I'd like to suggest instead is that Mr. Smith approach all individual members for a contribution. I would gladly pay 25 bucks, which I think would come to about \$2,000 in total. I think that's the way we should do it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jacques, followed by Mr. Bruseker.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I don't want to debate the merits of Tuxis itself, but I think that the decision-making that we're faced with is whether or not \$2,000 be given to this organization out of legislative moneys. I am concerned with regard to the issue of precedent. I think the last time it was at the table, which I recall was the latter part of last year, 1995, there certainly was a lot of empathy for it but again back to the individual members and perhaps even the caucuses. Quite frankly, I have not changed my mind in terms of the decision that we reached last time.

Thank you.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, I just thought I might perhaps provide a few insights for members of the committee with respect to fund-raising. I don't know exactly how Tuxis has worked in the past, but with respect to the Forum for Young Albertans, over the years certainly we have approached the alumni. There has not been necessarily a great response from the alumni in terms of getting money from them. Certainly with respect to asking each of the MLAs to contribute, within the Liberal caucus I recall the

discussion, and I think it went to the Conservative caucus at the time when Brian Evans was one of the trustees. We were asking for \$10 from each of the MLAs to support the Forum for Young Albertans, and that received a rather poor response as well.

Raising funds is a perennial problem for these kinds of organizations. We even went to the point one time for the Forum for Young Albertans where we sold tickets to a wine and cheese in Calgary held at McDougall Centre. Both Premier Klein and Laurence Decore were to be there to bring greetings and so on, and there was a silent auction and all of that sort of thing happening. So I would suggest that certainly many of the things that have been happening in the past or that at least have been suggested today have been done.

I have some sympathy for Ms Haley's point, though, that the organization itself perhaps has not written a letter, and that might give more credence I guess, if you will, to the request as well. Conceptually, though, I would certainly say, as I said in my opening comments, that I would support the concept of supporting the Tuxis Parliament because I think there's no question that the return on the dollar investment is worth it.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I think everybody here would support the merits of the Tuxis Parliament. I believe the decision we should be focusing on is: is it going to be a policy of Members' Services to make a donation to these groups? That's the first question. The second one would be: if the answer to that is yes, then what is the process for doing so? One of the fears that I have is that we may set a precedent, that once you've allowed one group, we could be spending an inordinate amount of our activities here looking at the merits of groups and who should get what and going well beyond.

I think the value of Tuxis is there. The question that is left for this committee is: are we going to be supportive of it? Again, I repeat: if the answer is yes, then how? Assuming that it went yes, I would be very, very supportive of Mr. Wickman's suggestion or some form of it but that that then be handled with a budget-definite item of X number of dollars for a given year and administered by the Speaker's office, and if he chooses to pick and choose two or three groups or one group, that would be his prerogative. So I guess I'd like to see us settle how we're going to deal with this, because we'll go around and around. I think it's a given that Tuxis is a good activity. It's a matter of how we give them some assistance or if we should be in fact involved in that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the committee wish to deal with that now or deal with the debate as background for dealing with the entire budget? The chair is in the committee's hands as to that question.

1:52

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, to get the show on the road, let me make a motion

that this be referred to your office to come back with a report recommending a process where a small amount of dollars can be established on an annual basis to allow this group and similar groups to make application to you.

Speaking to it, Mr. Chairman. The point has been made that they have not made a written request for \$2,000. So even if the timing isn't such that we can accommodate them in this particular fiscal period that we're dealing with, at least for future years there is a mechanism that they can go through and access, and the same opportunity would hold true for the other groups.

MR. BRASSARD: In fairness, Mr. Chairman, I can't support such a motion. I believe that we're reviewing the budget today. We're in that process. It's very appropriate that we look at this request at this time. I think that there has been a formal presentation made, albeit

through the member who attended the Tuxis session last, and I think that's an appropriate vehicle to bring it to this table. I still say that I think it's very appropriate for parliamentarians to be supporting this kind of initiative, and to put it off and open it up into a whole new granting formula is, to me, just stalling it even further. I think it should be dealt with today during our budgetary process.

MR. SMITH: Can I get a crack at this?

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Stan. The private sector does donate to this. They bring forward some \$10,000 to \$12,000 a year, depending. The kids pay \$150 a session. It is, as the members have stated, a unique thing. We have these other spin-offs, but this is really a model Legislature unique to Alberta and to the parliament side. They have not asked us to do this, and it's one of the things that I guess I appreciate the most about Tuxis. In fact, it's an opportunity for us as the Legislative Assembly to take a proactive approach to a model such as this. I think this is an opportunity to do that.

As a Member of this Legislative Assembly it was my decision not to have them ask, not to have them start that lobby that we've all seen so many times, and to take this quietly through to this committee and ask this committee to reflect on leadership in Alberta, on what programs we have available for leadership for our youth, and to see if there's a place, as I think Mr. Brassard and Mr. Coutts have so eloquently put forward, where we can in fact do something for those kids out there, some of whom might even be too young to vote.

Thank you for having a look at it. I appreciate it.

THE CHAIRMAN: The question then remains: does the committee wish to reflect on this debate for a while while hearing the overview of the general budget for House services and then deal with this when we come to the appropriate spot in this budget, or do we wish to make a decision now?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, with due respect, I do have a motion on the table.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, sorry. The motion then?

MR. WICKMAN: The motion was to refer it to your office – I say that seriously – and have you come back with a report outlining a mechanism not only for this group but for other groups.

Again, Murray, what you're saying is fine. But why don't we give the Alberta debaters \$2,000, the group that Frank's involved with \$2,000? That's the difficulty we have.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Then we'll deal with Mr. Wickman's motion. If there's no further debate on that motion . . .

MS HALEY: Just a question with regard to that. If this in fact does get referred to your office, will it be done so that we have a comparison with what the Forum for Young Albertans does, what it costs, what our actual expenditures are on that so that we have a clear understanding of what we're already doing, starting something new?

MR. BRUSEKER: Were you asking a question about what the Forum for Young Albertans costs the government right now?

MS HALEY: No, just on an overall basis, because it actually gets

done here, so there are costs involved in it.

MR. BRUSEKER: Oh, I see. Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion proposed by Mr. Wickman, please signify. Opposed? The motion fails.

So now the question remains whether hon. members wish to deal with the request now or at the appropriate time in a motion.

MR. BRASSARD: I'd move that this proposal as put forward be part of our budgetary consideration of this department.

THE CHAIRMAN: House services.

MR. BRASSARD: House services. I'm sorry. Yes.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry. Read that again.

MR. BRASSARD: I move that this proposal be a part of our budgetary considerations for House services.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which is the next element.

MR. BRASSARD: Yes.

MR. BRUSEKER: There is a section in there already that's labeled grants, so presumably it would be considered under that orientation.

DR. McNEIL: That's where it would be.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Is the committee in agreement with that motion by Mr. Brassard?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.  
Thank you very much, Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: Thank you and thank all members of the committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are now at element 6, House services. The chair will ask Dr. McNeil to provide the committee with an overview with respect to this element.

DR. McNEIL: This budget is projected to increase by 2 percent in '96-97 primarily due to increases in travel costs and a reflection of the direction of this committee's budget for some of the travel that had been paid for by travel points in the past two years as well as additional costs because of the situation with respect to secondment of Senior Parliamentary Counsel. Those costs were offset to some extent by the ability to eliminate one Legislature security position due to some technological changes that are being implemented presently. I think, in terms of the overview, that the numbers under this budget look a bit funny because there are funds transferred from the salaries, wages, and employee benefits budget to the supplies and services budget because of the nature of the secondment agreement for the Parliamentary Counsel.

I think the goals in this area are pretty straightforward. It's pretty well a function of the House services branch to support the members and the House in its operations both in terms of providing services to the House and its committees; to provide legal services to the House, the members, the Speaker, and the staff; to provide security for the members primarily while the House is in session; and also to provide support to the constituency offices.

If you go to page 1 of the budget, you can see there that the salaries and wages budget is decreased from \$806,000 to \$736,000 and supplies and services goes up from \$133,000 to \$222,000. When we get into it page by page, you'll see the specific reasons for that.

Just for Mr. Bruseker's interest – last year he raised a question about management salaries in the Legislative Assembly. I don't know whether you've noted this time around, but all the managers' salaries are listed there by position so that you have a sense of what's being paid.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any questions or comments with regard to page 1? If not, how about page 2?

Let's try page 3. Not much there. Page 4, page 5, page 6, page 7.  
2:02

DR. McNEIL: This really covers training as well as the memberships in the parliamentary organizations and the memberships that we pay for, especially the Canadian Bar Association and Law Society of Alberta for our counsel.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 8.

DR. McNEIL: On pages 8 and 9 you'll see that the increase in the travel costs relate primarily to budgeting for some conferences that we didn't provide travel for last year, specifically the CPA regional seminar, which we sent three delegates to. They paid their own way as far as the air travel was concerned out of their travel points. The same with the CPA Washington conference and NCSL as well. So this year the funds as indicated there are included in the overall travel budget.

THE CHAIRMAN: That results in a \$10,000 . . .

DR. McNEIL: Well, no. It's about \$4,000.

THE CHAIRMAN: It's \$4,000.  
Mr. Jacques, followed by Mr. Wickman.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I assume that this probably is a delicate issue at times in terms of even querying these particular types of expenditures. In doing so, when I look at the listing of them, they seem to be significant in the sense of the number of conferences that there are and the number of people who are attending them. I raised the basic question as to whether this is in keeping with the terms of the spirit of good fiscal management versus benefit. I to some extent maybe even challenge it, but I challenge it on the basis of ignorance, on the basis that the precise nature of some of these associations and their activities versus the benefit that the member or the employee may gain as a result of attending these is somewhat cloudy to me. I'm not sure exactly how to approach it other than I do have a concern with it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think I'm called upon to try to respond to that. The biggest element of this is the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. There are a couple of other organizations, but the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is the basic one. A long time ago it was decided that every member of the Alberta Legislature would be a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, probably in recognition of the fact that we use the Westminster model. It gives an opportunity to members, probably not as many members as we would like, to meet with their

confreres in other parts of our country and in other parts of the Commonwealth.

It has always fallen traditionally in Canada that the Speakers are the presidents of each Legislature's branch and are expected to participate in that organization, but Speakers like to involve as many other members as they can. It has always been traditional here, at least for the regional conferences, that government and opposition are represented at those meetings. I suppose this committee could take the decision that we do not want to be involved in such things, but it has become part of the tradition of this Legislature that this happen.

Now, there is one new organization here, and that's the AIPLF conference. As a matter of fact, we are still not a full member of that organization. We have applied to become a member. That is the francophone side of parliamentary life in Canada, and there was some interest in our Legislative Assembly from both sides in being associated with that. I was also contacted by the Speaker of the House of Commons, who has an objective of involving all of the Legislative Assemblies in Canada in this organization as a counter against the separatist point of view from Quebec. I was happy to take that up. I thought it would be a good thing for our country if we did broaden our parliamentary relations in that area at this particular time. So that is an increase there, because in order to even have our application for membership decided, we're going to have to keep showing some interest in the organization.

The other thing that is non-CPA would be the NCSL, which is an American organization. That's the National Conference of State Legislatures, with which we've also had a very tenuous relationship. It's always just been the Speaker that has gone to that. Alberta's connection had been through the government rather than the Legislative Assembly when Mr. Horsman was Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs for the long period he was, but when he left government, a suggestion was made that it really is the National Conference of State Legislatures, not of state governments. So I've gone the last two years with a view to trying to get it reordered towards the Legislative Assembly rather than the government, and my report in that area would be that I'm now co-chairman of the Canadian side of this thing. The other chairman is a minister in the Manitoba government who seems to be losing some interest, so I've been trying to encourage the Speaker of Manitoba to take his place in there to further this business about the relations between the legislators of Canada and the U.S., rather than as it has been.

I'm quite willing to respond to any questions in this area.

MR. HENRY: I just have one question, Mr. Chairman. The CPA, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association: I take it that most Legislatures in Canada are members of that, the majority. Is that correct?

DR. McNEIL: They all are.

MR. HENRY: They all are. Including Quebec?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we should recall that Alberta was the host of the plenary session of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Banff in 1994. We will not have that opportunity again, but certainly we had quite a few members attend various functions of that meeting, and the reports I got back from them were that they found it well worth while.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, just briefly on the National

Conference of State Legislatures. That's in fact one that I had attended in Oklahoma in 1989 as a rookie legislator at the time. I guess in response in part to Mr. Jacques query of is it worth it, certainly I can see it from a personal education standpoint, in terms of both my understanding of how state Legislatures work and perhaps to a certain extent some of the members that I met, a bit of an understanding. They were very intrigued with our question period process and the fact that we'd even have a question period. So that was one that I attended.

2:12

At that point, just in response, I believe there were four delegates sent to that particular convention when I attended it in 1989, so the cutback we have to one is certainly a significant cost reduction. This says one delegate. As I recall, it used to be delegate plus spouse typically, so where we could have four delegates, we could in fact have eight people traveling. Now we've reduced it to just the one individual as well, and if the spouse wants to travel, I believe it's at the delegate's personal expense. So we've reduced costs significantly on this issue. I think to abandon it completely would be shortsighted.

DR. McNEIL: Just to add to that – I'm sorry; I don't have it here – I recall that this budget allowance in 1992-93 was around \$90,000. That's where it was at that time, and that included pay for spousal travel as well and significantly more delegates than you see here under any of these numbers, any of these conferences.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I can recall, going back to 1989-1990 during my first sessions at Members' Services, as the Clerk said, \$90,000 a year: four delegates going to Australia, four delegates going to Africa, spouses paid for at those particular conferences. That all changed two years ago. I thought that two years ago when we tackled this, we made it very, very clear that, with the exception of yourself, no other MLA would be paid to go outside of the country, and I assume that still holds. On that basis I thought they'd settled on a very, very nice policy which reflects the reality of today in terms of the economic conditions. Am I not correct that any international conferences are attended only by you, if at all?

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I was trying to get a little change there for the NCSL so there could be government and opposition members able to participate in that. For example, there's a seminar starting on Thursday on NAFTA and GATT in Monterey. I canvassed both sides about people to perhaps attend that. We were able to find some interest on the government side; they said nobody wanted to come from the opposition side. But I think we've moved a little bit from having absolutely no opportunity, and of course there was the parliamentary exchange in Washington last September. Every September it's held. This past September there was both opposition and a government member there.

MR. BRUSEKER: And there's PNWER, the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, which has both government and opposition.

THE CHAIRMAN: That's not parliamentary; that's government.

MR. BRUSEKER: But it's international in its scope.

DR. McNEIL: That's under FIGA.

MR. BRUSEKER: That's true.

MR. WICKMAN: Maybe I should have used the term "overseas." That's the discussion I recall. Anyhow, the bottom line with my point of view is that this thing has been cut, cut, cut. I think it does reflect today's reality, and I'm comfortable with it.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Would this meet the needs of this particular area of travel? Will that be sufficient funds where you can send the people you want to go without problem?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that's what it's been designed to do, yes.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Then I would suggest that we acknowledge that that's the way it's going to be, and I move that we go to the next page.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 10, page 11, page 12, page 13. Page 14 is vehicles getting repaired.

MR. BRUSEKER: Which vehicle is this?

THE CHAIRMAN: It's the Clerk's vehicle.

MR. HENRY: And you only have \$320 for repair? That's only \$320. I want the name of your mechanic.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 15. This is a large item.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah. When I look at page 15, I see the secondment agreement there for \$85,000. Yet when I flip back to page 2, I see there is a significant discrepancy between the forecast for '95-96 as compared to the estimate that was proposed earlier in the year. The discrepancy is nearly \$70,000. I have to then question: if you're transferring \$85,000 into professional, technical, and labour, I just would like a little explanation of how those figures all add up.

MS HALEY: It's on page 2.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, but it's not all there.

MS HALEY: Well, most of it is. Frank Work is gone.

MR. BRUSEKER: So that accounts for the reduction further up the page, but the reduction is only \$14,000 in wages and \$50,000 . . .

[Mr. Woloshyn in the Chair]

DR. McNEIL: That transfer didn't take place until a quarter of the way through the fiscal year. The agreement didn't come into place until the beginning of July or August. So it's not a full fiscal year. There's an overlap.

MR. BRUSEKER: So to paraphrase, then, what you're saying is: the \$161,000 reflects three-quarters of the fiscal year and the \$179,000 figure reflects the entire fiscal year.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah, the full year, exactly.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Were you on the list for this topic, Wayne?

MR. JACQUES: No.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Page 15 then.  
Are you happy, Frank?

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah. My question's been answered. Thank you.

DR. McNEIL: The other thing there in terms of 15 is the whole issue of question period coverage. The Access TV line charges and the production costs for the TV coverage are there. So that budget assumes continuing for another year with what we have now.

MS HALEY: There was some concern raised – I don't know if it was at the last Members' Services meeting – about this.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. That's why I wanted to raise it.

MS HALEY: I appreciate that. The concern was – maybe my memory is faulty here – that we're spending more money than we were before basically for less coverage. Are we content to have that go ahead this way, or is there an option to do something about it?

DR. McNEIL: The option would probably be existing coverage or no coverage. I think that's the option. The problem is that neither of the cable broadcasters is any longer interested in providing it, as Videotron did in the early '90s and previous to that, at no cost. Then we got into the situation with Videotron paying the production costs, and then last year the committee made a decision to go with another company to produce it and provide the closed-captioning because of the issue of the deaf being included.

One of the questions that came up last time was: who's watching; who's viewing? We did get some information on that. I'll pass it around now.

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. JACQUES: Mr. Chairman, just for clarification. On the broadcast measurement: is that 2,700 per day of coverage, or is that an average that would include an uncovered period?

DR. McNEIL: That would be a day of coverage.

2:22

MR. JACQUES: Actual coverage.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you.

DR. McNEIL: The conclusion you can draw from that information is that there is an audience.

THE CHAIRMAN: Not a large one, I'm sure.

MR. JACQUES: It does raise the question whether . . .

MS HALEY: Yeah. What's the point?

MR. JACQUES: What's the point?

MS HALEY: Maybe it should just be left on the radio or something.

THE CHAIRMAN: We're not getting our 10 percent, the 10 percent rule for Alberta, having 10 percent of the national population. The

House of Commons gets a lot bigger participation.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Yeah, but that's during prime time.

THE CHAIRMAN: That was live; wasn't it? That was live, so that wasn't prime time.

DR. McNEIL: This information relates to audiences seeing the broadcast live on Access.

MS HALEY: Well, when question period was rebroadcast during prime time, it revealed that the audience ranged from 1.3 million to 2 million per week compared to when it was live at 80,000 to 100,000.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah, but at 80,000 to 100,000 we're not even getting 10 percent of that.

MS HALEY: That's right. We have a population that goes out and works every day. That's interesting. You could just go with the radio and save yourself \$80,000 a year.

MR. BRUSEKER: What is the time frame now for when this is broadcast?

DR. McNEIL: Well, this past year it was done live at 1:30. Coming up, it will be a delayed broadcast, for a short period mind you. I think it would be broadcast from 2 to 3 o'clock, during that hour.

MR. BRUSEKER: This is in the afternoon. You're talking 2 or 3 o'clock.

DR. McNEIL: This is in the afternoon, and there's no rebroadcast. There's no delayed broadcast at 11, as there was when Access did it and it was broadcast on Videotron. The issue that the committee will have to deal with a year from now, let's say – or it may be sooner – is the issue of having to buy time from Access, because at some point in time we have to give up this time that we have now that the Department of Education is in effect providing us.

MR. BRUSEKER: When we bought into these production costs, did we not lock into a multiyear contract with CFRN on this?

DR. McNEIL: We did, but there's an escape clause in that in terms of changing circumstances and so on.

MR. HENRY: How long is the contract?

DR. McNEIL: Three years.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Van Binsbergen, followed by Mr. Henry.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Yes. Mr. Chairman, the Clerk was talking about the payment coming from the Department of Education. Are they purchasing this amount?

DR. McNEIL: No.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: This is in addition to?

DR. McNEIL: This is the cost of production: to have the cameras provided, to have the people who put it together produce the program, which is then provided to Access. The cost of the time on Access is paid for right now by the Department of Education as part

of their educational programming mandate. This is included in it.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: That is how much?

DR. McNEIL: That's \$127,750 for 1995.

THE CHAIRMAN: And if Education won't allow us to have that time anymore, then the question is: is this committee willing to go on the hook for \$125,000?

DR. McNEIL: My suggestion would be to continue this for another year but be in a position, when we know what our future's going to look like in terms of the costs we would have to pay for Access, to have a better read of the audience and possibly look at some alternatives. For example, if we decided to not broadcast question period in the afternoon at all but just broadcast it at 10 or 11 at night, what would the cost implications and the audience implications be of that kind of approach? We haven't had a chance since the last meeting to explore all the alternatives, and we really don't know what the Department of Education's timing is as far as them wanting more of this time that they now purchase.

MR. HENRY: Just to follow up on Dr. McNeil's comments. I'd want to continue what we're doing for a year – we have made some production changes in terms of the style of production and whatnot – and see if that increases the viewership. I think everyone at this table would like to see more people in tune in terms of what happens, but we have to look at the bottom line: is it worth it for the amount of people? Before we make that decision, I'd like to see the BBM figures for '94 as well, '95, and then look at '96 to see if there's any growth there. I'd like to see the BBM figures for radio coverage as well. Who knows? Maybe even less listen to the radio coverage. I'd also look at other creative alternatives such as: if we broadcast it at 10 o'clock at night, could we reduce costs and increase viewership at the same time? As Ms Haley said, people work during the day and maybe don't have the opportunity to watch it, but they might at night, and we could reduce our costs at the same time. So I'd like to continue for another year. I appreciate the numbers, but I think I've given you some hints as to other kinds of information I'd like to see in the next year as we consider this some more.

DR. McNEIL: Just for information. We don't have and we won't be able to get BBM figures for 1994. We have BBM figures now because it's produced by CFRN and they're a member of the BBM and therefore have access to that information.

MR. BRUSEKER: In looking at your sheet that you just handed out here, would I be correct in assuming that Manitoba and P.E.I. and so on don't broadcast at all? You only have half of the provinces listed here, it seems. Are there other provinces that just don't broadcast them at all?

DR. McNEIL: Yes, there are, but I can't tell you those off the top of my head.

MR. BRASSARD: Much along the lines of what Mr. Bruseker and Mr. Henry just pointed out, I'm beginning to question whether or not we even need this, to be very honest. It seems that when it was broadcast live and rebroadcast in the evening I used to get all kinds of comments about things that took place in question period, but I have to be honest and say that it has dropped off dramatically since we changed the time and lost those spots. I question the expenditure at this time as to the value we're receiving. I really do. I have no difficulty with taking a look at it for a year, but I would strongly recommend that we re-evaluate this whole program and whether or

not we want to continue it.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Anything further on page 15? Then we'll move to page 16: the Clerk's hosting.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Before we go further on that particular topic, Mr. Chairman, can we get something specific out of this committee? The TV broadcasting keeps coming back, and I'm sensing, amongst the group at any rate, the feeling that if it doesn't get a better listening audience, perhaps we should be looking at getting out of it. We have all sorts of things we could look at now, even negotiating a nighttime slot or whatever it is that appears to be the problem. If we're spending the time and effort for 2,700 people and rebroadcasting at 3 in the morning, I guess it begs the question of: we either improve the service – because this would be a service to the people. We must look at a way to improve the service or look at in fact if we want the service to continue at all. I'd like to see us come up with some sort of a firm thing with a time line on it. Maybe we should be looking at terminating question period on the 1st of April or the middle of April and see if there is a public response to that. What would happen if for a month we didn't broadcast it, without a big hullabaloo? Would you notice any reaction from the public? Would Percy still get 2,700 phone calls?

2:32

MR. WICKMAN: I have to admit that I fibbed about 2,697 of those.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: But the point I'm trying to make is: at what point do we make an honest assessment of this whole issue? It may not be desirable at all to get out of it, and it may be. I don't know. I just don't have the answer, and I don't see us working towards it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, as I understand it, it wouldn't mean that there wouldn't still be the publicity on the daily dinner hour news. There still would be a feed to the other stations for their links. Or would the Assembly go dark?

DR. McNEIL: If we didn't have that \$71,250 in there, then we'd have four or five cameras in the Chamber.

MR. BRUSEKER: Standing up in the corner like we had before.

DR. McNEIL: Exactly. Yeah. In other words, there'd be no feed at all from the Chamber. It would be entirely private-sector or individual news-gathering units in there picking up whatever coverage they wanted to pick up.

MR. BRUSEKER: Did we pay for the renovations to the Chamber to build those boxes where those remote cameras now sit?

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. That was done when the Chamber was refurbished in 1986-87.

MR. BRUSEKER: So we just had to take a front panel off.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. That was a minor expenditure to put those cameras in there because they'd already been provided for in the renovations that were done in 1986.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, to deal with this item or to sort of conclude it, possibly we could move  
that the Clerk be requested to come forward with the interim report  
at our next regular session of meetings,  
which will probably be after the spring session, whatever. At least that will give us a bit of a handle and some time in preparation for

the '97-98 budget. Does that give you enough time, Dave?

DR. McNEIL: I think that's reasonable. In my view it's reasonable to try to get all of the numbers together, to get the alternatives together. We'll have a lot better information about Access by then. We'll have some idea as to the cost of time at various times of the day and evening if we want to broadcast question period at a particular time. Then we can just lay out the alternatives, including the no-cost alternative, to the committee and bring in whatever expertise we have to bring in to the committee and then let the committee decide what they want to do with all the information available. Today we don't have that, but I wanted to raise it because it was raised at the last meeting. It's an important issue in the long run to deal with.

MR. WICKMAN: So that's the motion I'd move, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any discussion on that motion? On the motion, Mr. Jacques. I had you down on the list for yourself.

MR. JACQUES: Yes. Thank you. Well, along the issue of the motion, I support it, although I would like to see a specific time frame that we come back with that. It seems to me that if we're going to take action, we'd want to take action in advance of the fall sitting, for example. I'm suggesting that that report, say, would come forward by June 1 or thereabouts. I feel very, very uncomfortable supporting the continuation of 71,000-plus dollars when less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the population appears to be watching it on a daily basis. I don't think we can just let it slide, but I do appreciate the member's motion. I would support it. I would ask that a definitive date be attached.

MR. WICKMAN: The reason I didn't attach a date is because there's no way of telling for sure when the session will end. We normally don't meet during session. So, Mr. Chairman, if we had an understanding from you that, say, within two or three weeks after the conclusion of the spring session you will call a regular meeting of Members' Services, that would resolve it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, certainly the chair will endeavour to do its best.

MR. WICKMAN: Normally we do that anyhow, you know; we tidy up everything that's come up during the session.

THE CHAIRMAN: The chair will endeavour to do its best to have a meeting in a timely way.

Mr. Jacques, did you have another matter?

Then any further discussion on Mr. Wickman's motion? All those in favour? Carried.

Now page 16. Hearing no response, page 17. Anything on 17?

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Bruseker.

MR. BRUSEKER: If I might, just a question on the \$3,000. What kind of computer supplies are you looking at purchasing there? That's not the computer itself, I take it.

DR. McNEIL: Oh, no. That's just paper, cartridges for the printers, things like that.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just ongoing operations of the computer.

DR. McNEIL: Yeah. A lot of that relates to producing the House documents: the *Journals*, the Votes and Proceedings, the Order Paper, and so on.

MR. BRUSEKER: You do that, not *Hansard*?

DR. McNEIL: We do that in House services.

MR. BRUSEKER: Oh, I see. Okay. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now we get to the grant area.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to reiterate all of the discussion that took place earlier regarding the Tuxis organization and its merits, but in reviewing the budget, I see that on page 7 we spent \$24,152 on various memberships that we belong to: CPA international and so on. On pages 8 and 9 we discussed the various conferences we attend, \$19,000. In total we have spent \$43,152 just promoting the whole aspect of what we do here and interacting with our other organizations of similar bent. I think a \$2,000 expenditure here at home for an organization that's been around for 75 years is not out of the way. I would like to move

that we add a \$2,000 grant to this organization to this budget outlined on page 18.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any discussion?

MS HALEY: Well, once again I appreciate what's been said about this organization. Obviously it's a very good one. But earlier there was a comment made about the difficulty in raising funds for organizations such as this or the Forum for Young Albertans. I appreciate that.

I have two sons who are involved in numerous organizations, and there's not one of them that I don't have to personally get involved with and try and raise money for. It's to help them travel. It's to help them develop their characters. It goes all the way from junior football here in Edmonton to volleyball, basketball, football, badminton: you name it. We've hit them all, and there's not one of them where I haven't had to pay a fee or raise money for it.

This organization is a very good one, but so are thousands of others. Yes, this one is geared to parliamentary work for young people to learn how to be parliamentarians. But there's nothing that my sons have done in sports that doesn't help them develop leadership ability, the ability to work in a group, the team concept. All of those things add to character development as well. I'm not coming here asking for \$2,000 for the Edmonton Huskies, which is also a very good organization, which keeps 60 young men from throughout the province off the streets and involved in a very good organization.

So I just caution you on this not because it's not a good organization, because obviously it is, but because there are a lot of other very good organizations out there too that do a lot of good for a lot of young people. Before we pick one, maybe we'd better be careful that there's not another one out there that should be considered as well.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Chairman, I totally concur with what Ms Haley has said. I think she has said it far more eloquently than I could. But I'd like to add one more thing. It seems to me that we are thinking about establishing a precedent here primarily because that particular organization had the advantage of having a minister amongst its alumni who personally made the plea. If it hadn't come to us that way, I don't think we would spend much time on it at all. So for that reason as well, in addition to not wanting to

establish a precedent, I have to oppose this.

2:42

MR. HENRY: Again, I don't want to repeat what the previous two commenters have said, but I do want to point out that it is a worthwhile organization. If we were looking at a budget for grants and aid to community organizations, I'd be the first person to champion this particular grant, but the reality is that all governments in this country are facing cutbacks, not just here in Alberta.

There are many organizations that used to receive money that no longer receive money or that would be worthwhile receiving money that further the ends of democracy and the parliamentary tradition. I guess I'm thinking of one organization, the Canadian association of young political leaders, and I'm a former member. It used to receive substantial support from provincial and national governments. The last thing I attended with that organization was a conference in Moscow on furtherance of democratization of the former Soviet Union. At that time government money had all been withdrawn, and individuals were required to pay their own share. Five years prior to that time, six or eight years ago, it was government sponsored, or publicly sponsored.

I think we have to also ask ourselves the question. If we're going to fund this particular group because we support their ideals and their objectives 100 percent, what happens when a young persons' group who is established for the democratization of Vietnam – we have a group of young people of that sort in Alberta – comes and says: we would like some money to help educate our young people here about why it is we need democracy throughout the entire world?

So I caution members against setting a precedent. I won't be supporting this, although the organization is certainly worth the \$2,000 and many more. I think it's inappropriate to use our money to do this at this point in time.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to move an amendment to the motion. The amendment will read:

Secondly, that the Speaker's office be requested to bring forward a report prior to the '97-98 budget recommending whether a special category of granting should be established for future requests for this group and similar groups.

If that can be approved, Mr. Chairman, then I will support it. That at the same time, then, would prevent next year five or six groups all coming forward asking to make presentations here.

THE CHAIRMAN: The chair really regrets to take the position that that question has already been determined by the committee, and really we can't accept it again at this meeting.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, then unfortunately, because there are similar organizations out there, I cannot support a special status for one organization without equal opportunity for the others.

MR. COUTTS: I was going to call the question on the original motion, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: The chair doesn't want to be really in any way involved in this, but just before the vote on that motion, does everybody understand who the recipients are of the present \$1,600 in scholarships? Does everybody know who those organizations are?

MS HALEY: Eddy doesn't know.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Alberta Girls' Parliament gets \$800, and a member of Tuxis, not the organization, gets \$800. It's a scholarship.



So it's a member of the Alberta Girls' Parliament and a member of Tuxis.

DR. McNEIL: Actually the Alberta Girls' Parliament divides the \$800 into two \$400 scholarships for two members of the Alberta Girls' Parliament. Tuxis chooses the one \$800 scholarship.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Is Tuxis for males only?

DR. McNEIL: Tuxis is coed now. It used to be Tuxis and Older Boys' Parliament. It's no longer that.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: But Alberta Girls' is not coed.

THE CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. COUTTS: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. That goes to a scholarship chosen by the alumni?

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, by the organization.

DR. McNEIL: By the organization. I'm not sure what the mechanism is.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Alberta Girls' Parliament chooses two members of their parliament to receive each a \$400 scholarship. The Tuxis Parliament chooses by some mechanism one person from their ranks to receive an \$800 one.

With that, is everybody still ready for the question? All those in favour of the motion proposed by Mr. Brassard, please signify. One, two, three, four. Those opposed? One, two, three, four, five. The motion fails.

MR. BRASSARD: Could I ask the member that was absent to vote?

MR. HENRY: Only if we can use that as a precedent in the House.

MR. WOLOSHYN: What was the end result?

MR. BRUSEKER: Five-four.

MR. WOLOSHYN: For what?

MR. BRUSEKER: Against.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Just to keep the fight from going, I'll vote against. Had it gone the other way, I'd have voted that way, guys.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Then we will revert to page 1 and see if there's a motion with regard to this element.

MR. COUTTS: How much is it for? I'd move that the budget for House services for \$961,619 be approved.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is the motion before the committee. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Now, the next one is Legislature committees, number 8. We'd ask Louise Kamuchik to come forward, please, and grace our table. The chair would invite you, Louise, to give the overview of this element.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The major decrease in the overview in the committees budget stems from the change of venue of some of the conferences that are attended by the Standing Committee on Leg. Offices members as well as the completion of

the mandate of the Information and Privacy Commissioner search committee. The completion of that search committee's mandate also has some consequential reduction in budgets in the area of hosting, rental of property, equipment, and goods, and pay to members. The chairman of the Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform also instructed us to reduce that committee's budget by 20 percent overall.

Other than that, the other committees have pretty well maintained the same budget as they had last year. There is a decrease in revenue from the Standing Committee on Private Bills, and as noted in the overview, that's a result of the reduction in receipt of petitions for adult adoptions, which results from the Adult Adoption Act passed in May of 1994.

Did you want me to go through all the different committees individually?

THE CHAIRMAN: No. We generally just go then after the general overview to page by page, and the members will ask their questions.

MS HALEY: Do we need to do that with all of these committees that are listed already on the one page? Like, is there a need to do that? Can't we just move it along?

THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly the committee can vote on the bottom line of the first page right now if they wish, unless they have any questions in regard to any.

MR. JACQUES: I'm trying to clarify if we're going. If we're not going, I have some questions. If we're going, I'll save them.

MS HALEY: Why don't you just ask those questions?

THE CHAIRMAN: The chair gets the sense from the committee that if people have questions, they should raise them now, no matter where they are, and then we'll deal with the bottom line.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of issues. Number one, it's my understanding that by precedent or some form of policy decision members' remuneration on these committees is effectively budgeted on some assumption that all members would claim. If you look at the '95-96 best estimate today, which is on page 1, it shows, for example, about \$42,000 being paid out, whereas we're going to be budgeting for about double that. I guess I understand the rationale for it; I don't agree with it. It seems to me that if our best estimate is 40 some odd thousand dollars, then I would suspect that's probably going to be our best estimate for '96 and '97 as well. So that's one particular item that I would like to see changed.

The other thing I require clarification on is with regard to the parliamentary reform 1993, because I don't quite understand what it is and, again, the fact that our dollars this year are only going to be about \$2,300 but we're forecasting about \$24,000.

MR. BRUSEKER: Where'd you come up with the first \$40,000 dollar figure? I don't understand that.

2:52

MR. JACQUES: Page 1. Well, there are two pages 1. The second page 1.

MR. BRUSEKER: The second page 1. Okay. That's why I was confused. Okay.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: If I may, Mr. Chairman. In the pay to members

you will recall last year that some of the committee chairmen, although eligible to receive chairman's pay, elected to not take it either throughout the year or for part of the year. Last year we had taken the figure out, and then the committee thought it better to leave it in in case a chairman had a change of mind. So part of that pay to members comes out of – you know, for the forecast we are assuming they won't take pay again for this year. So that's part of the reason for the difference in the numbers between \$41,000 and the projected \$85,000 for '98.

MR. JACQUES: No. I understood that to be the case. It's just a question, again a policy issue, as to the most appropriate way of doing this.

THE CHAIRMAN: Parliamentary Reform Committee. Is there a question on it?

MR. JACQUES: Yes, there was.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The Parliamentary Reform Committee were budgeted some figures for last year but did not meet at all last year. We have no way of predicting when the chairman will call a meeting of that particular select special committee. There is one scheduled for this coming Wednesday, which would require the expenditure of some \$2,300. Again, that committee chairman has chosen not to collect the salary that is allotted to him to act as chairman of that particular committee. So in the year 1995-96 that committee did not meet once. Although it can call a meeting, it hasn't happened.

MR. JACQUES: Maybe you could help me then. Did they prepare their budget? Like, did the chair of that committee submit their budget?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: The chair of that committee instructed us to submit a budget with 20 percent less of budget expenditure than last year for this coming year. But they didn't use any of the funds last year except for what we forecast for this year: \$2,300 for this meeting that's scheduled for this Wednesday.

MR. WOLOSCHYN: So they will be using a portion of the committee's budget.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's right. The \$2,300 worth we figure will be travel expenses for the members to attend that meeting. Otherwise, the committee did not meet, the chairman did not collect a salary, but we had no way of knowing that last year when the budget expenditures were presented.

DR. McNEIL: I just wanted to make the point that these proposals reflect the committees' submissions and not Louise's suggestions as to what their budget should be. My understanding is that at least the chairman and vice-chairman have approved these proposals as they come to this committee.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's correct. The committee chairmen were all contacted before and asked what they wanted their budgets submitted as, and most of them said to keep the status quo. The chairman of the reform committee said to reduce it by 20 percent.

MR. JACQUES: I don't know. It just seems strange, Mr. Chairman, that we're increasing it by \$80,000 over what we think we're going to spend this year. I mean, we figure we're going to spend roughly \$60,000 or, say, \$70,000, and then we're going to spend \$150,000 next year.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Last year's figures were projected to require \$176,000, so this year we're down to \$149,700.

MR. JACQUES: No. I'm looking at the current year, or the best estimate for the current year, the \$70,000. It's just the logic of saying, well, we're going to provide another \$80,000. I mean, there's something fundamentally wrong with it.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Could I also submit, Mr. Chairman, committee members, that in the travel portion of the committee budgets we allocate some funds for members to travel to various committee meetings throughout the year. If members tend to be coming to Edmonton to attend caucus meetings, to attend other business and they may claim their travel to that venue, they do so. So we have a saving in the travel element of the various committees, but we have no way, again, of knowing in the next year when that's going to happen. So even though the travel portion you'll see is budgeted for \$37,000, we have an expenditure of just under \$7,000. That's a saving that the members themselves passed on to the various committees by not claiming the travel.

THE CHAIRMAN: I don't know whether members of this committee would feel it would be more proper to have the chairman of each of these committees come to discuss their budgets.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Members have been very frugal in claiming expenses against committees, but, again, we never know what could happen between now and next year. We have seen a slight increase in travel claims but not a great deal because, again, the members have passed on the saving by claiming the travel expenses against other budgets.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any further – sorry. Mr. Bruseker.

MR. BRUSEKER: No problem. Just following up on the travel expense issue, because it is certainly a significant portion of the budget being projected. Being one of the out-of-town MLAs, of course I can travel back and forth on aircraft as needed, back and forth between Edmonton and Calgary, where my home constituency is located. Now, for example, I quite frequently don't bother saying, well, this was for this committee or that committee; I just throw it into the general pool. Does that create a problem for your budgeting? I mean, it all comes out of the government kitty anyway, so it doesn't matter a whole heck of a lot how it . . .

MRS. KAMUCHIK: It doesn't create a problem. It just means we have a better expenditure output at the end. We show a greater saving because of that, so it doesn't create a problem as such. As you say, it comes out of it somewhere. It just doesn't happen to be the committee end of it.

MR. BRUSEKER: So really what's probably happening to a certain extent is that there is some travel that is occurring to attend committee meetings but is not being claimed against those committees.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's correct.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

The other issue, if I could just back up to the middle of the three pages we have here. You have a heading for the information and privacy search committee. Was not the Chief Electoral Officer search committee that same fiscal year?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: No. That one had to finish before the 1995-96 fiscal year. The Information and Privacy Commissioner search committee had a budget of \$21,000, but they didn't claim anything against it, so, again, there was a saving of \$21,292 from that.

MR. BRUSEKER: So I take it, then, you've looked at the other legislative officers, and it's not likely that we'll need to have a similar committee constituted to replace any of the current officers that we have.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Only if someone resigns.

MR. BRUSEKER: Or gets hit by a bus or a deer hunter.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Or that, yes. We won't even mention that.

MR. JACQUES: Will you accept a motion on the budget amount?

THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

MR. JACQUES: I would move that we approve a total of \$75,000 for Legislative Assembly committees for the year 1996-97. The rationale I've used, Mr. Chairman, is simply a projection figure back again to '95-96, allowing for some rounding up and, rather than using \$69,335, saying it's \$75,000. The issue, then, is for the chairs of the committees to get together and figure out how they're going to calculate their particular budgets so that the amount is not exceeded.

3:02

MR. BRASSARD: I have to speak against this motion, Mr. Chairman, for the simple reason that it allows absolutely no flexibility whatsoever in formatting next year's meetings. The \$69,000 forecast for '95-96 was predicated on a set of circumstances that may not exist in the coming year. It was already pointed out that there are savings to be had based on the scheduling of these meetings, just based on circumstances. I don't think we can count on that. I think we have to bear in mind that this budget has not been abused in the past, that any surplus over and above the budget will indeed be returned, so it's not as if it becomes a cash cow of any kind. I believe that we have to have the flexibility to allow committees to meet. We don't even know the types of demands that are going to be put on some of these committees in the future, so I think it would be wrong to restrict it to a set of circumstances that we may not be able to duplicate in the coming year at all. So I have to speak against the motion.

MR. HENRY: I'm going to speak against the motion as well. Besides what Mr. Brassard said, which I support wholly, I wouldn't want to leave a public impression that this committee would want to hamper or restrict any of the work of the legislative committees because we didn't give them the resources to do their jobs. It's wonderful that some choose to try to save the taxpayer money and be able to contribute that way, but I wouldn't want there ever to be sort of a lingering perception left in some people's minds that when a legislative committee needs to do the work or a task that they've been challenged to do by the Legislature they have to come hat in hand to this committee partway through the year if they don't have enough to carry out their duties.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is the committee ready for the question? All those in favour of the motion proposed by Mr. Jacques, please signify. Those opposed? The motion fails.

MR. BRASSARD: I would move acceptance of the Legislative Assembly committees' budget of \$149,700 for the coming year.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any questions or comments or debate on this motion? Is the committee ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion proposed by Mr. Brassard, please signify. Those opposed?

MR. JACQUES: Opposed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Carried.

Would hon. members like to consider doing the electoral boundaries matter, number 13?

MS HALEY: Why?

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, it's not a large one that we may wish to carry over till tomorrow morning.

MS HALEY: We can finish this today.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, you're going to do this today?

MS HALEY: You bet, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, are you? Well, then, you want to take it seriatim.

Hon. members, the rationale behind going to 13 is that Louise will be able to respond to questions. She's at the table now. So what's the feeling of the committee: that we go to number 13?

MR. WICKMAN: I move it be brought forward.

THE CHAIRMAN: The chair gets the sense of the committee that it's willing to deal with number 13, summary of budget estimates for the Legislative Assembly Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Have you anything to lead into this, Louise?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: I was just going to mention, Mr. Chairman, that the Members' Services Committee approved the commission's budget of \$586,000 last fall, and what was done here was break the budget for this committee into two fiscal years, 1995-96 and 1996-97. The breakdown you see under tab 13 relates to wages, travel expenses, advertising. The interim report of the commission is now ready. It's been approved and will be distributed shortly. They are scheduling another round of public hearings in the spring, probably in April. The final report is due at the end of June of this year. The funds required for '96-97, although already approved by the committee, are expected to be the \$287,653, which will cover the travel, the public hearings, the expenses, freight and postage, materials, and so on and so forth.

MR. HENRY: Given that we've already considered this item in considerable detail in the fall when we went through the budget, I'd like, if it's appropriate, Mr. Chairman, to move that we accept the estimate for '96-97 of \$287,653 for the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is the committee ready for the question? All

those in favour of the motion proposed by Mr. Henry, please signify. Opposed? Carried.

Now we'll revert to MLA administration, number 9. We'll ask Dr. McNeil to start this one off.

DR. McNEIL: This just implements the existing Standing Orders. The one page there is the increase in premiums to the CPP and some of the costs of the benefit programs.

I indicated when I made my opening remarks that I'd done an analysis of the real cost savings from the pension plan. They're not really reflected in here, but members have made a significant contribution to savings in this area. You may want to take a look at this. I think it's important that we're aware of the contribution.

MS HALEY: I'm aware of it.

DR. McNEIL: I'm sure you're aware of it every day or every month anyway.

All this does is it assumes that if we'd budgeted for the full pension liability in '92-93 under the MLA administration budget – and this is just strictly for the MLA pension, not the ministerial pension – in effect we'd be saving \$1.7 million a year. Nobody gets credit for that.

MS HALEY: No. Absolutely not.

DR. McNEIL: The people who should get credit for it are the people sitting around this table, and that hasn't happened. I thought it was important to make that point under this particular item.

MR. HENRY: Stan, how come you didn't arrange for the media to be here?

MR. WOLOSHYN: I thought that was your job: getting the media in here. Mike, you blew it.

3:12

MR. JACQUES: Mr. Chairman, are we just going to ask questions? Can we just ask questions, or are we going to go through it? How are we going to handle this?

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you like to go through it page by page or just ask questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hearing no other suggestion, we'll just ask questions. Would Mr. Jacques like to ask the first question?

MR. JACQUES: Yes, sir, I would. It's relative to page 3, MLA telephone directory advertising. It says, "Includes listings and features in addition to the standard directory listings." I'm thinking back on the communication in the past. It said that if you wanted it, then this would be charged to your constituency allowance above and beyond anything that was provided as a standard under . . . Am I missing something here?

THE CHAIRMAN: Jacquie Breault.

MS BREault: I knew I couldn't get away with being quiet back there for too long.

In this instance the addition is for a constituency office. For their main constituency offices we've designated it. We put a listing that is, I believe, covered free by the telephone directory. For instance,

it could be the Edmonton-Centre constituency office with the address and telephone number, but we also have a listing that the Assembly pays for, which is, for instance, Michael Henry, MLA, with the constituency office address and telephone number. That would be for all members. So that is the additional part. We can't receive that free from Edmonton Telephones or AGT. We have to pay for that second one.

MR. JACQUES: And then anything above that is what you're paying in the constituency.

MS BREault: Yes.

MR. JACQUES: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes. Mr. Chairman, my questions pertain to page 13, which is the Members' Services allowances in the constituency offices. We've, I think, done a good job of demonstrating financial responsibility, fiscal restraint, as we've asked the departments to do, and we should of course continue to do that. Now, the two problems that I have and some other members would have as well, I would assume: we continue to get increases in utilities, rent, and so on, and we manage to juggle that in there and somehow make do, which is fine, but the one that we don't have any control over deals with the communication allowances and the promotional allowances that are based on per capita, per constituent. My question to the Clerk is: is there an annual adjustment made to take into consideration that some constituencies decrease in population and others increase?

DR. McNEIL: No, there's not an annual adjustment in there. It's made based on the enumeration figures after an election. That's the basis on which the communications portion of the allowance was set.

MR. WICKMAN: I guess, Mr. Chairman, there's really no other way of dealing with it; is there?

DR. McNEIL: That's really the only uniform set of information about the number of electors in each constituency, the number of individuals in each constituency.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two areas, one I'm not sure where it's included. In the current fiscal year there's an allowance of \$750 per member for postage out of the Legislative Assembly post office. Is that correct? Where does that show up in the '95-96 estimates?

MS BREault: Page 4.

MR. HENRY: That's the \$62,000. So we're suggesting that that would stay.

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MR. HENRY: Okay. One concern has been raised. I'm not sure when it's appropriate to raise it, but one of our members raised an issue with me that it was his understanding that when the postage was used, it had to be for first-class mail. Or could a member use that for bulk mail as well? Just a clarification.

MS BREault: If it's relating to a question I had probably from the same member . . .

MR. HENRY: Probably.

MS BREault: Last year when the committee decided to institute the postage cap, it was – and I'm paraphrasing – for individual member mailings through the Legislature mail room. The Legislative Assembly Office really has no way to dictate, I guess, to the Legislature mail room what rates they use for mail-outs. My office has only monitored the rate of usage by members through the billing from Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services, who handle that particular function. We have no idea what they charge. We don't tell them what they charge. That's a function sort of outside of our purview. So that's the only comment I can make on that.

MR. HENRY: Perhaps I'll give you the name of the member, and if the Clerk could follow up in terms of dealing with PWSS to ensure whether it be through bulk mail or first-class mail, it shouldn't be a problem.

DR. McNEIL: No, I can't see that it would.

MR. HENRY: I'll follow that up, and thank you for your answers.

The next question has to do with the insurance premium. It's paid, I understand, to the Treasury, and there's a \$5,000 deductible as it stands now. My question has specifically to do with constituency offices. Maybe I can put my concern on the table, and then you can tell me if it's a valid one and if there's a way of rectifying it.

It seems to me that for our operations generally a \$5,000 deductible is probably a prudent way to go in terms of insuring the Leg. Assembly. But if we're talking about \$5,000 per occurrence, if somebody broke into a constituency office and took a pile of equipment and all of a sudden there was a \$5,000 deductible and that had to be borne by the constituency office budget, you're talking about 10 percent of your deductible being 10 or 15 percent of your total budget. We all know that for most of us probably 75 percent plus of our budgets in the constituency offices is staffing. So in the event that there was a break-in and \$5,000 of equipment was stolen, it could have a very significant effect on the services that were available.

However, again assuming there was a break-in or a fire or something, if it was interpreted that the \$5,000 deductible was the responsibility of the Leg. Assembly and not the individual constituency budget, then I think the \$5,000 is reasonable. If it's applied to the individual incident in the constituency budget, then I think we even need to look at a smaller deductible or co-insurance, or we should be advising members that perhaps they should go out and purchase extra insurance out of their constituency budget, because I don't think most of them realize that.

So my first question then: if an incident happened in a constituency office – with one incident there'd be a \$5,000 deductible – is that deductible borne by the Leg. Assembly budget as a whole or by the individual constituency budget?

MR. GANO: This deductible came in about two years ago, and there not being any clear policy, the way we have been handling it till now is on kind of a 50-50 shared basis, where the constituency office is responsible for \$2,500 and the Legislative Assembly Office pays the other \$2,500. That seems to have been working fairly well to this point.

MR. HENRY: I'm going to put a suggestion on the table. It seems to me that maybe the way to go here is that for those items that are

provided for out of the Leg. Assembly budget generally, such as the office equipment and the computer equipment, the deductible for those would be borne by the Leg. Assembly and that for those items that are purchased out of the constituency budget, such as the fax machine and whatnot, the constituency budget might be responsible for insuring those.

MR. GANO: Just a point of observation there. A number of constituency offices have, for example, gone out and purchased additional computer equipment or replaced their existing computer equipment with newer equipment. So there might be a gray area there as to what LAO is responsible for.

MR. HENRY: Okay. My objective here is to ensure that if there is such an incident – of course we hope it never happens or seldom happens to people – the constituency office service to the people can continue without laying off staff, that we have the basic package still there. If we have to do without a fax machine for a little bit or the coffee machine for a while or the extra chair, whatever, then that's okay, but I wouldn't want to see even a \$2,500 deductible for a constituency office budget. If it were to happen in January and you have a fire, Stan, in your office and all of a sudden you've got to replace the basic desk and that sort of thing and you've got to come up with \$2,500, you may have a staffing problem. You may not be able to carry your staff to the end of the fiscal year. I'm not sure what to do with this.

MS HALEY: Maybe your caucus will help you then.

MR. HENRY: Okay. But you can't transfer caucus money to a constituency, but you can do the opposite.

MS HALEY: I was saying that I think if there were a problem, there is probably a solution as well.

3:22

MR. WOLOSHTYN: I think the policy that Bill has outlined of 50-50 is a good one, provided the first \$2,500 is Leg. Assembly. I think I made that very clear. Then it wouldn't matter what kind of equipment, Mike; the \$2,500 is there. We know that constituency offices as a group always turn money back into the fund because they don't expend it. Some are tight; some are otherwise. If there is such an occurrence whereby one office is handicapped – and I happen to agree with you – I don't think it would be that hard to have something maybe worked out between the members of that particular caucus, between each other, or if that is not feasible for whatever reasons, bring it back to this group. We can always on a onetime discuss it and help him out if need warrants it. I agree with you totally: you wouldn't want an act beyond the control of the member inhibiting his or her ability to provide service to his public.

MR. HENRY: Because I didn't know the answer to the question that was raised by a member – and I recognize it's a new situation because we're now having to self-insure and all that sort of thing – perhaps I can ask, then, if administration could perhaps write a memo to all members explaining the policy and how it would be implemented. Some members, this one particularly, may want to go to a private insurer and say, "Can you cover the deductible, and we'll pay for it out of the constituency budget."

THE CHAIRMAN: Jacquie, you had something to offer?

MS BREault: Just maybe a note of clarification. Anything that Members' Services has dictated as standard equipment or standard

furniture the MLA administration budget has covered. For instance, with furniture I believe that public works covers that to date as it is.

MR. HENRY: Well, then, that's different.

MS BREault: So if it was your standard allocation of furniture – steno desk, chair – I believe that would be taken care of in that respect. Also each constituency is entitled to a photocopier and some other standard issue equipment. I believe we've always covered that in its entirety. I think what Bill was referring to in the 50-50 split was extra computer equipment, a fax machine, cell phone, which is borne completely against the Members' Services allowance.

MR. BRUSEKER: So the basic computer, though, is covered under that as well as part of the standard package?

MS BREault: Yes.

MR. WOLOSHYN: It's a good system. Let's not tinker with it.

MR. HENRY: Sure.

Mr. Chairman, because there obviously was some confusion in some of our minds and, I daresay, outside this room, perhaps this policy as articulated simply could be written and sent to each member so that we know. Some members in my caucus did think that for the replacement of the public works furniture, the constituency budget would cover part of that deductible. If this was written down clearly, then I don't think we'd have a problem.

That's the last of my questions. Thanks.

MS BREault: We have been lucky, since the last election especially, to not have that many claims. Knock on wood. So that's the other thing. Luckily we haven't had to deal with many of these issues.

MR. WOLOSHYN: On the previous topic of the postage, if you could get us a bit of clarification for the heads of both caucuses with respect to what would be covered. In addition to your member being satisfied, Mike, I'd like the rules clearly understood so that we have this issue going out. We've got \$750, as I understand it now. The member designates its use through this building, and it's nontransferable. If you go beyond the number, your constituency budget is liable for it. If you go below the number, it goes back into the pot without any recourse. Is that correct?

DR. McNEIL: That's my understanding.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Then if you could get us some clarification as to the kind of postage that would satisfy everybody, that would be super.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Chairman, I'm back to page 3. I'd like to ask Jacque: is it possible to get a 1-800 number?

MS BREault: Yes, it is, and you can have it listed in directory advertising. I believe that is a number that would have to be paid for if it was to be listed in a directory. I think we have some members that do have 1-800 numbers, and they are bearing the cost of that directory advertising through their Members' Services allowance. If AGT is providing it free, then it's not an issue. I believe they charge though.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. BRUSEKER: Just on page 4, the issue of the MLA freight. That certainly doesn't include the courier service that has now been privatized; does it? Where does that show up in terms of the courier service to each of the constituency offices? I have a chap who comes in regularly around 10:15 and drops off a bag and picks up a bag.

MS BREault: I believe that's being borne by PWSS.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay.

On page 6 there is a figure of \$300,000 to cover MLA tolls and so on. I forget which of the budgets it was that showed a significant reduction through increased use of the RITE line. I'm wondering if there's any mechanism to perhaps reduce some of those tolls through increased RITE line services. Is there any way we can save on that \$300,000 figure, I guess, by using equipment and software that we already have in place?

MS BREault: Well, at present RITE line usage is still being borne by Public Works, Supply and Services, and that has helped significantly to keep the cost down, especially, I guess, as it concerns the network, because all the computers are on the RITE line.

We've also put the Legislative Assembly on the advantage preferred program and have been able to achieve fairly significant savings that way. For the purposes of this budget we simply rolled the numbers ahead this year in terms of actuals. I'd have to consult my notes a little more specifically to check on tolls, but I think there may be some room to move there.

The thing that members may want to keep in mind, though, is that with AGT moving in new directions, there may be increased charges as concerns the line rentals. So those two things may balance each other off. At this point because the CRTC hasn't, I don't think, made a definitive ruling yet, we're not really sure what type of line charge programs will be available to us. AGT, I believe, has written to the Speaker, has communicated with my office anyway, and proposed a few plans, but those certainly haven't been approved by the powers that be at the federal level yet. I guess I'm just a bit hesitant to suggest anything when there's so much gray area.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah. You've anticipated my next question.

I have one more question, if I could. On page 11 there's a formula below the line that deals with sessional residence allowances. I wonder if you could just explain what that means: \$100 per day times 100 times 62 times 5.25 divided by seven. I wonder if you could just explain what that means to me, please.

MS BREault: Well, during session members are entitled to \$100 a day with the exception, I believe, of weekends. However, it's at the member's discretion. If they are in Edmonton on public business, they can claim those days, and again it's completely at the member's discretion. If they submit a claim, we simply process it based on their form.

In terms of the 100 days, I think that was basically a best guess. Right now about 62 members are on the program. I must admit we have been spinning forward these numbers from year to year, and these are numbers my predecessor used, so what was in his mind at the time of calculating them I'm not sure. We simply haven't adjusted those numbers, I think, for the past two years.

MR. BRUSEKER: Okay. So the 100 is 100 days. There are

currently 62 members who are on that program, and you're saying that on average it works out to about five and a quarter days out of seven that get claimed.

MS BREault: I believe that's what my predecessor was getting at, yes.

MR. BRUSEKER: All right. Thank you. I just didn't understand what the formula meant.

DR. McNEIL: I don't have the actuals with me, but in going over the actuals on the weekend, it was pretty close between the two, the sessional and the nonsessional, meaning that we're budgeting just about the right amount, at least last year's.

3:32

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, it is a bit of a moving target. I appreciate that. Thank you.

MR. JACQUES: Mr. Chairman, it was just an observation when Mr. Bruseker was asking about the \$300,000. I had just noted that the projected for '95-96 is \$380,000 versus a budget of \$517,000. I am assuming, when I look at it, that most of it was in that area on the basis that the equipment rentals and the equipment installations are probably a lot closer in terms of budget than actuals. So it appears that there already are some significant savings accruing in that area.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Chairman, I have a question regarding security equipment in constituency offices. That's not covered by the LAO at all?

DR. McNEIL: No.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: I'm wondering, though, how many offices have that. If it's significant, should it not be an LAO expense?

DR. McNEIL: My understanding is that right now there are – what? – 42, Brian, or 44?

MR. HODGSON: Forty-four.

DR. McNEIL: Forty-four offices have security equipment installed, which is paid for out of the constituency office budget. We're encouraging members to make the decision to do so.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Well, my point is that if it's considered to be that important, should we not consider making that part of the LAO expenses?

MS HALEY: No. It's your own choice to put it in or not.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: I think we have the choice to put many pieces that have been provided by LAO in our offices. Okay. It's a question which obviously fell flat.

THE CHAIRMAN: It fell on deaf ears.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Let's carry on.

DR. McNEIL: That question's been raised in the past, and in the past the policy decision has been that individual members will make that decision and fund it out of their constituency office budgets. So it has been addressed here in the past.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any further questions, comments? Are we ready to deal with the global budget for MLA administration?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE CHAIRMAN: I don't think we have a motion.

MR. STELMACH: I'll move the budget as presented under tab 9, MLA administration.

THE CHAIRMAN: That's \$12,860,265. Mr. Stelmach moves. If there are no further questions, comments, or observations, all those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried.

So government members' services, number 10. Are there any observations by anybody?

MS HALEY: They look pretty much accurate.

MR. JACQUES: Mr. Chairman, I would move that we approve the amount of \$1,456,730 as proposed for the 1996-97 government members' budget.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any discussion? Is the committee ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried.

Number 11, the Official Opposition services. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY: I was just going to record the decrease in expenditures.

MS HALEY: Give me a break.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I would like to add to that: in direct proportion to the loss of members.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there a motion arising out of all this?

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Chairman, I'll move that we accept the budget as presented of \$1,586,421.

THE CHAIRMAN: Having heard the motion proposed by Mr. Bruseker, all those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried. Independent members' services.

MR. BRUSEKER: Let's defeat this one.

MR. HENRY: I'm shocked.

MS HALEY: And appalled.

MR. BRUSEKER: Tongue in cheek. Tongue in cheek. Find somebody to move it.

MR. WICKMAN: Ah, come on. I'll move the independent members' services budget as presented.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wickman moves that element number 12, independent members' services, in the sum of \$42,845 be approved. Any questions, debate, observations? Is the committee ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE CHAIRMAN: All those in favour, please signify. Opposed? Carried.

Hon. members, if you look at page 1 following – it's the third sheet in the estimate summaries at the front of the book. Get the tab “estimate summaries” and go to the third sheet, the third page 1. There are two items there that need to be moved. The Association of Clerks-at-the-Table professional development seminar for \$15,000 and the presiding officers' conference for \$15,000 need to be . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: What does presiding officers' conference refer to?

THE CHAIRMAN: That is the meeting that's held at the end of January each year. This year it's in Whitehorse. Last year it was in Yellowknife. Next year it's in Edmonton.

DR. McNEIL: The presiding officers are the Speakers, the Deputy Speakers, and the Deputy Chairmen of Committees.

MS HALEY: Just a question for clarification. Why wasn't it included back there? Is it a different thing?

DR. McNEIL: We included it here because it's one time only as opposed to a recurring item. So we separated it out.

THE CHAIRMAN: It comes every 14 years.

MS HALEY: I thought we discussed that.

DR. McNEIL: I mentioned it in my overview. We didn't discuss it.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Chairman, this is for us hosting the conference. This is not for us to send members to one.

THE CHAIRMAN: It's just for hosting the conference. It's not for delegates.

MR. WOLOSHYN: I so move.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Woloshyn moves both items totaling \$30,000, \$15,000 apiece. Is the committee ready for the question?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yes.

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

Now we have the grand total. Do we have to have a motion for that grand total?

DR. McNEIL: Yes.

MS HALEY: How do you know your grand total is accurate?

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, the Clerk had certified it to be so.

MS HALEY: We made a couple of changes.

MR. BRUSEKER: One was for the photos and the other was for the scrolls.

MS HALEY: Yeah. We added them back in.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yeah, they're added back in.

3:42

DR. McNEIL: It's \$20,847,163.

MR. BRASSARD: I would move the acceptance of the Legislative Assembly's budget of \$20,847,163.

THE CHAIRMAN: Having heard the motion proposed by Mr. Brassard, are there any further questions, comments, or observations? Is the committee ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of Mr. Brassard's motion, please signify. Those opposed? Carried.

The chairman wants to thank all hon. members for their collegial attitude today.

MR. HENRY: I daresay, Mr. Chairman, that if the government were more co-operative, we could do this in the Legislature.

MR. WOLOSHYN: And the government, Mr. Chairman, will become more co-operative as they become more rational.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Now, is there any other business that we have to discuss before we adjourn? Any new business? Any suggestions as to the date of the next meeting?

MR. WOLOSHYN: You already have it set as soon as you can after the House.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. That being the case, the chair will call for a motion of adjournment.

MS HALEY: I move to adjourn.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ms Haley moves that this committee now adjourn. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried. The committee stands adjourned until the next meeting can be arranged.

[The committee adjourned at 3:44 p.m.]