

2:16 p.m.

Wednesday, April 7, 1993

[Chairman: Mr. Gogo]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's call the meeting to order.

Mr. Jonson has had to fly to Calgary. I think I mentioned that Mr. Evans had to go with the Premier to Fort Chip. I don't know if he came back.

Bettie.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, I'm discouraged, and I'm sure you are, about the meetings and our inability to get attendance. I wonder if in the interest of getting something going in the committee – and I realize that the ministers who are members of this committee are exceedingly busy right now – perhaps we could ask the Premier if he might appoint two alternates for the ministers. I'm not going to stay today. I don't mean this to be critical of the three of us here, but I really don't think we can usefully do what we need to be doing unless we have better attendance. I hope that's taken in the way it was intended and that it doesn't draw any comments from outside.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just in responding, and we should have this on the table, at this time of year that we're into unique things are taking place. As you know, Bonnie Laing is chairman of Private Bills; she's also chairman of the Calgary caucus. They, like both the New Democrats and the Liberals, are in pre-session meetings. So that's why Bonnie couldn't be with us today. Kurt Gesell is facing nomination in his riding a week today; he just called a few minutes ago before we came in. The two ministers of the Crown: I well recognize how busy they are. As you know, they were not ministers when they were appointed. I think you make a valid point. We have half the one caucus here.

In fairness, if you recall, our intent was to deal in a general way with topics we'd hoped to address when we got presentations, and I'm sure you'll agree that that's when the bulk of the discussion's going to take place, when we've received those.

MRS. HEWES: Well, Mr. Chairman, perhaps, then, what we should consider are those two things: one, asking for alternates, and the other, discontinuing our meetings until such time as we do begin to hear from our public. I'm not sure that with a very small group, with poor attendance, we can do anything that will be really profitable in advance of that.

MR. FOX: If I may, we have a meeting scheduled tomorrow from, I believe, 10 to 3.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

MR. FOX: I know Mr. Hawkesworth was not able to be here today, but will be here tomorrow, and I believe he'd indicated that at the meeting on Friday. So Bob will be here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not on Friday.

MR. FOX: Tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tomorrow, Thursday.

MR. FOX: Yeah. He'd indicated that on Friday last.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah.

MR. FOX: He'll be here, and I'll be here.

MRS. HEWES: Once again, Mr. Chairman, I was holding 2 to 4 each of these days, and I can't be here until 2, which leaves me here for an hour tomorrow. There are no more of me on this committee.

MR. FOX: Yeah, it's a problem. Then the dates that are proposed for meetings next week . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I want to come to that, really two items.

MR. FOX: Two separate items.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's one, and the other is the budget that I wanted to comment on. I've been to Members' Services this morning to briefly present our budget, and I wanted to report to you what the Members' Services Committee has raised with me.

However, just dealing with today and tomorrow, I had really hoped that where this committee would be extremely valuable is the very item that's on the agenda today, and that's the Standing Orders. That's really an internal thing that concerns members of the House and members of each caucus, more so perhaps than access to information and free votes, because we think the public is vitally interested in those areas. So with regard to the rewrite of Standing Orders, we have in our binders a strong presentation from the Clerk of the House as to what to consider. I thought that would be very important today.

With regard to the budget, I met with the Members' Services Committee this morning. They pointed out the following points and made the following suggestions. Where we had based our budget on 10 meetings – you correct me if I'm wrong here, Louise – they made several observations. One of them was that perhaps we should only look at five meetings as opposed to 10 meetings. Well, we'll have used up our five next week.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Tomorrow actually.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Tomorrow will be our fifth. So looking at next week, we'd have used up our 10 if we had our meetings next week. That's one point.

They made observations on the travel, not so much was it necessary to travel, but they got very uptight about our bringing people in from around Alberta. If you recall our discussion, we had planned to have perhaps two members to Victoria, two members to Ottawa, et cetera, et cetera. The flip side of that, based on Bob Hawkesworth's suggestion, is that we either consider a symposium or have presenters come to us and that we build that in the budget: four from Medicine Hat, four from Lethbridge, four from Peace River, and so on. The observation was made this morning by the Members' Services Committee, by one member anyway: "How on earth could you judge who should come? What if two and a half million Albertans want to come?" I tried to explain that it would depend on the briefs we've received. We would make the judgment whom to invite. I mean, surely that's within the ambit of this committee. Another member objected to us traveling at all, as I recall, didn't think it was necessary, that we could use a researcher to do all that. The case was made, I think by Kurt Gesell, that it's one thing to read the McGrath report; it's another thing to meet the people who are actually putting that in practice. As I recall, Kurt Gesell said that we should only travel and meet if their Houses are sitting, that we shouldn't be traveling otherwise.

I make those observations. I'm asked to go back to Members' Services tomorrow morning with a revised budget.

The final point is the advertising. Now, people said: "Well, how can you advertise? Your budget hasn't been approved." If you look at the transcript, I believe we decided March 31 to do that advertising, which is last year. Now, surely if you look at this committee, the resolution of the House tells us to do something. We make the assumption that we determine that, and then we go ahead and do it. We must have the budget to do it; I don't question that. However, it's been very awkward because of a lot of factors — the leadership is one and so on — to have a budget before Members' Services there today in the new fiscal year meeting on budgets. I mean, I don't know how we could have done it otherwise. So to me it's almost absolutely essential that we proceed with the advertising. How are we going to seek the views of Albertans? I mean, that's the comment I'm going to make tomorrow, you know, when I appear before Members' Services. I said that the committee is not firmly established, but we've drawn parameters and said we may travel. So I don't have near the problem with the travel that I do with the advertising. I mean, we've approved this ad and so on. To me, it's almost essential that we put it out across Alberta and get the written presentations. They made those comments.

Do you want to add to this, Louise?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: No. I think you're capsulizing pretty well what was said this morning. You were upset about the advertising because they were saying you were going to advertise without having your budget approved by the committee first, which is . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Technically right.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's right. That's the point that we're making.

MR. FOX: What would have happened, just for information's sake, if this committee had been working sort of on schedule, uninterrupted by some of these political events that occurred over the fall and early winter, and we'd just gone ahead with this? Then there would have been a requirement for a special warrant of some type to cover the work of the committee, because, you know, the budget had been put in place last year. Would that have gone through Members' Services at that time or just through cabinet?

2:26

MRS. KAMUCHIK: What could have happened if there had been no interruption is that the Parliamentary Reform Committee could have established a budget earlier on and would have had to have a meeting with Members' Services to get that budget approved at that time, whether they did it by special warrant or by using funds that were unexpended in the overall committee envelope, if you want to call it that. So it would have then been left to be determined. Because there were no meetings, no budget, the operations of the Parliamentary Reform Committee were able to be absorbed by the overall committee budget surplus, if you want to call it that, because the expenditures were minimal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As you see in the budget, they were absolutely minimal.

Anyway, the other item was the meetings next week, which would essentially mean we've had 10 meetings. Now, I need your guidance. It seems to me there's no question that we should proceed with the advertising and put the point to the committee in

the morning. As I said to one of the members, technically I don't know how the Legislative Assembly is going to approve a budget if the House sits April 19, 22 until mid-June. I mean, it's going to have to somehow be retroactive. The other point was that it was a government motion establishing it, so one would believe the intent of the government is to carry it through. So I recognize the technicality: unless the budget's approved, you can't spend. I'm well aware of that, but we're also, I think, making other expenditures on the assumption in many areas that budgets are going to be approved. What I need is guidance for when I go back tomorrow morning. I need your views. We as a committee said that if we're going to travel, this is how we should travel; i.e., two to here, two to there, and so on.

Members' Services, I assume, makes the final judgment and recommendations of budget for the Assembly to approve. I would think it's almost essential, after what we've done, to do our advertising and get written briefs. I don't think there's much option. I don't think there should be any option. If we want the views of Albertans, we must get them that way, in spite of the 800 letters we've sent out.

How do you people feel? I had intended, depending on your agreement, to go back to the committee tomorrow and say that if we meet next week as planned, we'll have done our 10 meetings which are in the budget, travel we can adjust or put on hold, and the advertising I think we should proceed with.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, I don't disagree with your position. The problem for me is that if, say, the Members' Services Committee, because of fiscal constraints, which we all understand, is going to truncate or wipe out any potential budget for this committee, then the committee de facto cannot function. Perhaps that is really what they're saying to us. If that's the case, then I think we should ask them to say it like it is. Do they want this committee to cease and desist because we cannot afford to have it? Then I think they should say so. I would suggest that you put it to them. That's okay. We can still meet and talk about reform, and the House leaders can still deal with these issues and so on. I think that if they are going to decide we have no funds to operate with, then fine, they are in fact deciding we are not going to function, if we can't advertise.

MR. FOX: I think we all must participate in the committee in good faith, assuming there's a full year left in the mandate of the government and they really do want to see a report from the committee and some of the recommendations we make will be embodied in legislation that would be passed before an election.

On the other hand, we all know we're in an imminent pre-election period. You know, it's really hard to know whether the work we do will be lost or forgotten or if the input we solicit will be shelved. So to that extent, Mr. Chairman, Bettie and I and Bob are in a little bit of an awkward position because we're not privy to the decisions of government. That may be the case for some other members of the committee as well.

It was the Legislative Assembly that mandated the committee, not the Members' Services Committee. We've been asked to do a job, and I think we should do our best to get it done. I think we need to advertise. I think we came up with a bare bones kind of budget that didn't involve any extravagant advertising but a basic notice to people who read newspapers in the province. So I think we have to stick with that item.

The other items there, I think, were put in sort of as safeguards. I didn't hear many people saying we should travel as a committee. In fact several of us said that we shouldn't, but in case we decided at some juncture that we needed to organize a symposium that

would involve Albertans or bring someone from another jurisdiction here to talk to us rather than us going to talk to her, or whatever, this was a sort of ballpark budget that would give us that freedom without any suggestion that we have intentions of using that budget, that it sit there, and portions of it would be used after careful deliberation. I suppose that could be reduced and we'd just adjust whatever plans we might make with that in mind. There's flexibility there that isn't in the Advertising budget, probably none in Freight and Postage, probably none in Telephone and Communications, but perhaps some flexibility in Professional, Technical and Labour services. The highest quote that was used there was the writing of the report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The writing of the report is half of that.

MR. FOX: Yeah, and we haven't decided, unless in my absence a decision was made . . .

MRS. KAMUCHIK: No, we're still looking for people to second.

MR. FOX: . . . about who or how or when that's going to occur. So again that's likely on the high end of things. Pay to Members of the Legislative Assembly: I think there's considerable flexibility in there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it's based on full attendance and so on.

MR. FOX: Yeah, and we're not getting full attendance, and not all of us will claim for these meetings. So that's a large amount or perhaps larger than it needs to be. In terms of the other things, I don't see where we've got room to fool around.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: I think, Mr. Chairman, that the committee was concerned, as you know, about the payment of expenses to presenters. Maybe that's one area this committee would like to address: how they are to be determined.

MR. FOX: Well, as I remember, we weren't talking about paying anybody to come here. Based on the input we received, if there was some particularly good stuff from a professor in Lethbridge, who was one of 10 people that seemed to have an interest in what we're doing from an academic point of view, rather than trying to absorb that through a letter or members going there, we might invite her to come here, and we'd buy the plane ticket. That would be a whole lot cheaper than MLAs traveling. So that's where I think that figure came from. Again, if that's pared down, we just work within that framework, you know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Live with it. Well, the case I tried to make this morning was that the committee would judge whether or not they wanted to hear people, and if they did, they could invite them. If we do, then it's not unreasonable that we would pay their expenses. That's the case I'll make tomorrow when I go back. I suppose we could cut that in half. I almost get the feeling that no matter what the budget is, people anticipate your cutting it by 30 or 40 percent. You see, unlike other Leg. committees which have forecasts of expenditures, we don't have forecasts because in effect we didn't spend very much.

2:36

Would it be accurate, then, to say we would reduce the travel expenses? Mr. Wickman made one point that we shouldn't be traveling elsewhere. Whether we should adjust that by half, I don't know. The advertising, I think we're agreed, should remain.

Let me go through the others first. *Hansard* is virtually mandatory for a legislative committee, and that's \$400 an hour. Based on our 10 meetings that was \$8,000; right? So I don't think you alter that part. We must pay our staff.

The report is still up in the air. If we can find someone in-house, that's what we're going to do. If not, the writing of the report . . .

MRS. KAMUCHIK: And the summarizing of the presentations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's even more important. I'm glad you made that point. You know, if we get 300 presentations in, this committee can't go through one after the other. We've got to rely on someone to go through those and summarize them for us, and if we advertise, I'm sure we're going to get that. I don't know how much we could adjust that box. I frankly don't know.

Payment to members of the Assembly attending a committee is based on full attendance. What will be will be. So far we've had 50 percent attendance.

If we don't travel, that's reduced as well.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: That's right, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, the only outstanding item, then, is the Travel Expenses question. I'm a little sensitive to the whole question. The Legislative Assembly has mandated us to do a certain thing. Now, if budget constraints prevent us from doing it, so be it. We can't do it. I don't argue that. I don't particularly like other people sitting in judgment as to how we might do it.

MRS. HEWES: Well, Mr. Chairman, can't the mandate be fulfilled? I don't have any problems. I've spoken to travel outside of the province. I think we can probably secure the information with phone calls and faxes and exchange of information. I don't have any real difficulty if Members' Services or this committee wants to take out the \$13,000, \$14,000 and the pay to MLAs that goes along with it, about \$8,000 more. As far as I'm concerned, you can negotiate, as long as we have funds in there for our requirements if we want to have telephone conversations, conference calls, and so on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Where the one is reduced, the other would increase. That's why we'd have to have some alternative.

MRS. HEWES: An adjustment there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. I should make the point that a member of Members' Services is the minister of public works, who is also the Government House Leader. So whereas it was a government resolution that established this committee, then certainly the Government House Leader, in speaking to these estimates, is very cognizant of what the plans of the government are. I would just assume that whatever comments he makes, he speaks on behalf of the government. So although the resolution says that certain things will occur, I can only assume it's the intent of the government, based on what he is saying, that they would alter it in some way. For example, his comment today about everybody coming to make a presentation. That's not the intent, and I'll defend that tomorrow morning.

So if I can go back tomorrow morning with the budget, then we would reduce the travel perhaps by 50 percent. Advertising would be the same. I don't know what we do about the professional services. Pay the membership when they travel. We would have

a substantial reduction in the budget. Is that generally understood? Louise now will prepare the budget for tomorrow morning at 9:30.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: So essentially, then, that will be deleting the travel by committee members to other jurisdictions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: We're going to leave the Alberta Presenters to Meet with Committee Members. You will explain to them that very, very limited, if any, people will be invited depending on their submissions to the committee, but that amount will stay in there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Uh huh.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Okay.

MRS. HEWES: The Telephone and Communications amount to be beefed up somewhat?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Beefed up, unless they use the RITE system.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Most of the time that's how communications are done. We just put in a small amount because not every area – though it is covered now by the 800 number. So if you don't mind, we can leave it at that.

MRS. HEWES: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I guess the final comment I'd make: I would be more comfortable if we were given a global budget and then mandated to operate under that, but apparently that's not the way they do the budgeting. They want to select each item and so on, and that's their responsibility and we live with what they do. So certainly our travel would be adjusted. The one thing I felt strongly about was the advertising; it's all planned to go. We promised to consult Albertans. I said publicly on television, as a matter of fact, that we would be asking Albertans for their views. So I don't see much option.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Another point I'd like to make, Mr. Chairman, that one of the members made at the meeting this morning is that all committee budgets – never mind that there might be an election coming soon – should be based for the next full year. As I recall, I asked you last time whether the chairman's salary should be adjusted for the full year or left at four months. Do you want to put it back to the full year based on what was said? You may have been out of the meeting at that time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wasn't there at that time. That wasn't in a committee, was it?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes, it was. It's based on the operation of the committee for the full year, and I don't know what the intentions are. That brings back the case: if we should budget for this committee to operate for a full year, are these 10 meetings going to be enough?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I indicated to Mr. Kowalski that we had hoped to have a interim report in shortly after the House reassembles, and a final report of the committee we'd base on four months, April, May, June, and July. I had hoped we could conclude, having received all the briefs and so on, in four months.

That's why we budgeted for four months. So I don't think that should change.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So I go to Members' Services in the morning with that proposal. We'll work out the figures.

MR. FOX: We don't have a figure we can vote on as a committee because Louise will have to do some preparation with that.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Give me a few minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, why not do it now?

MR. FOX: It might be easier than a motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Welcome, minister.

MR. JONSON: I thought I'd stop in and visit for a while.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we know how busy you are.

Perhaps we can go on while Louise is doing this. For next week's meetings, originally we thought we could get in 13, 14, 15, and 16. Now, government caucus will last all day on the 15th, so government members certainly can't meet and I can't meet. The alternative – and this would end up with meetings we've projected – is 13, 14, and 16, and hopefully we would cover, depending on our attendance, a fair number of the items we had pending and forthcoming.

After that, because of the House sitting, we're not likely going to have many, if any, meetings. I don't know how we'll deal with that, depending upon the schedule of the House. For example, I think of the two ministers. Halvar, the matter has been raised that when you and Brian Evans were appointed to the committee, you didn't have responsibilities of Executive Council. The suggestion was made that perhaps the Premier may give consideration to having alternate members for new . . .

2:46

MR. FOX: Even replacements.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Or replacements. I mean, it's very awkward. We get into the session.

MRS. HEWES: I suggested alternatives, Mr. Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How does next week look?

MR. FOX: Just on that issue, it seems to me some members on some committees were replaced by motion of the Assembly because of the changes made in Executive Council. I'm not sure why that wasn't done with this committee, but it wasn't. It would seem to me it's difficult for us to change members without a motion of the Legislature.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think we can without a motion of the House.

MR. FOX: Yeah, it would have to happen in the House.

MR. JONSON: We weren't sitting when other changes occurred, I guess.

MR. FOX: Uh huh.

MR. JONSON: We could have done it afterwards though.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We changed them in the House.

MR. FOX: In January, February we changed some of them in the House.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes, all the committee changes were made.

MR. JONSON: Yeah, that's right too.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: And that's when the changes should have been made.

MR. FOX: We didn't touch this one for some reason. Anyway, that can be corrected by a motion of the Assembly without much difficulty. In the meantime, we'll be receiving input from people, pending approval for the advertising budget. That was sometime in mid-May; correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The deadline was May 14.

MR. FOX: May 14. So if we're not on the hustings and the House is in session, the committee should meet during session to review the input and determine what use we make of it.

In the meantime, I can see merit for us discussing some of the issues we've been working on, but I would find it very difficult to free my calendar to be here for two hours sort of every afternoon. It's a 150-mile round-trip. I've got work here but lot's of work in the constituency as well. So, again, I make a plea for our meetings to extend for more hours on fewer days.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, just dealing with next week, how does your next week look? Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday are 13, 14, and 16. I hope we would wrap up a lot of what we're talking about. Standing Orders is going to take some time. To me Standing Orders is one of the most important elements for an interim report. I think it's very important. I know House leaders can get together and agree on certain things such as temporary Standing Orders. This is not something that will depend on outside people recommending to us. We will pretty well make a recommendation within here.

MR. FOX: We have caucus all day on the 15th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, that's out.

MR. FOX: Out of the days for consideration, we've got . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You see, we have the cabinet day. I assume cabinet's on the 13th. However, I don't know.

MR. FOX: That's Tuesdays.

MR. JONSON: Yup.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But you've been wrapping it up by 1 o'clock, I notice.

MR. JONSON: Yeah, that's correct. On average.

MR. FOX: We have caucus executive. There's an equivalent of an executive meeting on Tuesday at 3 p.m.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, with regret, I've given Corinne a memo from my keeper that says I'm not available any of those days.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, okay.

The following week, according to the Government House Leader — he said the week of the 19th. There's a rumour going around that it would be the 22nd. Traditionally it's always been a Thursday. So it's not likely we could have many more meetings until the House is well under way.

After the ad goes in on April 14, I don't know how quickly we'd get responses. The deadline being May 14, it's fair to assume we would have a fair number of responses at the end of April, certainly some responses.

MR. FOX: Let's talk for a moment about what's likely to happen with the information we provide or the recommendations we make. I was thinking about this in terms of the election of Speaker issue we were dealing with. If that's not presented to the Legislature this session in the form of an Act that would be debated and passed, then in some sense what we're doing is theoretical because an election will occur and a Speaker will have to be chosen or put in place. The current Speaker is the Speaker until the day before the House is convened . . .

MRS. KAMUCHIK: In the first session of the next Legislature.

MR. FOX: Yeah, the first session. But if we didn't have the new process in place, it would be pretty darned difficult, you know, to do anything different from what we've done in the past. So if we don't have an indication from government that they're willing to sponsor a Bill or pass a Bill that either of the opposition caucuses have introduced or will introduce, then all the talk about election of a Speaker through this new or expanded method is somewhat hypothetical until the next Legislature.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think it would necessitate an amendment to the Legislative Assembly Act because that's where it's now found . . .

MR. FOX: Yeah.

MR. CHAIRMAN: . . . which presumably would mean a government Bill to amend the Legislative Assembly Act.

MR. FOX: You see what I'm getting at? If we don't do that in this session . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's not done.

MR. FOX: . . . then the current process remains for the next.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, just a question on that. Have we had a legal opinion on whether the section in the Legislative Assembly Act is so constraining or sufficiently permissive to allow for a different process? That is, do we in fact need an amendment to that in order to change the . . . I mean, it provides for the election of a Speaker. Can we change the process without amending the Bill?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That I don't know. I'll have that answer by the next meeting.

MRS. HEWES: It occurred to me that it might be possible to do it in a different way, still maintaining the present Act, with no amendment necessary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, as you know, the present system is that the leader of government nominates the Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition seconds it, and the Clerk then puts the question "Are there any further nominations?" three times. I guess we've just assumed in the past that the Premier along with agreement from the Official Opposition does things a certain way. I guess that's the way it's always been done. I think it's enshrined in the legislative Act and we'd have to make an amendment. But we can get an opinion from Frank for tomorrow.

MR. FOX: The reason I'm raising this, though, is not to get back into the meat of the issue but to wonder what happens with the recommendations we make. That was one example. If we come up with a list of recommendations with respect to Standing Orders about procedural changes we recommend to the Legislature, if they're not dealt with, then our work is somewhat hypothetical as well. I wonder if it wouldn't be prudent for us to finish the schedule of meetings we have - which in my book means tomorrow, because that was scheduled - and deal with the issues at hand. We'll have a budget approved and know what we're doing - the advertising - or we won't have a budget approved and it won't matter from that point of view. If the budget's approved, the advertising goes out, the Legislature reconvenes, and we make decisions as a committee on what we do to live up to our mandate when we receive the public input rather than trying to schedule a series of short meetings next week that several people wouldn't be able to come to anyway. I'm just not sure what we would . . .

MRS. HEWES: Accomplish.

MR. FOX: Yeah. We're sort of debating in a bit of a vacuum, not knowing what's going to happen with all the effort the chairman and members of the committee put into the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, we have the position of both opposition parties to an extent - not with regard to Standing Orders - because there's been essentially two submissions. We have the Clerk of the House, who I presume speaks for Speaker Carter, with recommendations under tab L in the book; i.e., the recommended changes to Standing Orders. So depending on how many could show up at the committee, we could discuss those items and reach a tentative position. I sense that as being one of the more important elements for the working of the House in a short time frame. The ones that are important in principle, as I see it, are the question of the election of the Speaker, the question of free votes and voting procedure, and the access to information.

2:56

I've heard the Premier say he is going to introduce access to information in the new session. If we're going to have an interim report going in, there has to be something in it. As I see it, there could be essentially three elements: one, the recommendation of election of Speaker by secret ballot; two, voting procedures or so-called free votes; and three would be not necessarily access to information but perhaps amendments to Standing Orders. Now, if that interim report for change were to go to the House, I'm trying

to think of procedures in the House if the House were to receive and accept the report. Presumably it could be followed by a government Bill to amend the Legislative Assembly Act if that's necessary for the election of the Speaker. The temporary Standing Orders could be enshrined with the House process, the workings of the House, the Standing Orders side. Voting procedures are now under Standing Orders, so they could be incorporated. I think that would be evidence of something this committee has done. Following, then, the public response by presentation, we could meet during the sittings of the House each morning whenever, based on schedules, and come up with a final report of some type before the House adjourns.

Now, the caveat on all this is the one we observed earlier. What if the House isn't here; i.e., what if an election's called and so on? Well, we have no control over that, so there's no . . . I can only presume that if that were to happen, the subsequent government would authorize the committee to complete its work.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, one other item that's on our agenda and we've sort of not talked about is media relations. You put us together with the media for that meeting that I thought was a useful exchange. I think we need to recommend some changes there. Perhaps that doesn't go as part of a formal report. I'm not sure what your thoughts are. We have not heard back from them, have we?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You know, Mr. Graveland was going to give us a written response or presentation, and I reminded him of that not very long ago, several weeks ago, in a phone call. "Oh, we must get on to that, we must get on to that," but we've not received anything. Other than reading the transcript of the comments that went on, as I recall, most of them dealt with access in the building. That's why we haven't discussed it. We haven't received anything back.

MRS. HEWES: Is it your intention, sir, to keep that on the agenda and deal with it in the committee whether or not we hear from them?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, in terms of recommendations, I think we must deal with it whether we hear from them or not.

MRS. HEWES: I would agree with that. That, too, could be included in our interim report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. FOX: Just for the information of members of the committee, Mr. Graveland is now the western bureau chief for Standard Broadcast News and isn't part of the press gallery anymore. He's out of here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll follow up and see what recommendations they're making or would have made. But we must deal with them as they apply to the House.

Well, I would feel more comfortable if there's some way we could have enough members next week to deal with considering the submissions internally on the Standing Orders. You can't be here at all, Bettie?

MRS. HEWES: Not at those times.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What times could you be here?

MRS. HEWES: I'd have to get Othelia to talk with you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can you be here at all next week?

MR. FOX: Well, I could arrange for one day, either the 14th or the 16th, and shuffle things back and forth, but hopefully for longer than two hours to make up the meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was going to say that if we could make it a full day on the 14th, you may be able to make half of it.

MRS. HEWES: Is that Wednesday?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's Wednesday.

MR. FOX: That's your caucus day, isn't it?

MRS. HEWES: I think that one's out totally for me. On the 13th I'm gone all day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So it's the 14th or 16th.

MRS. HEWES: Yeah, it looks like the 16th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Could you make one of those days?

MR. FOX: The 16th would be better for me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't know about the minister. He's a question mark.

MR. JONSON: The 13th is good for me.

MR. FOX: You're in cabinet that day.

MR. JONSON: But I'm assuming we'll be done by 2 o'clock, and then - it's a rare day - I have the rest of the day to be at your service.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have to have our meeting just to have the minister.

Kurt Gesell says he can be here. Bob Elliott said that he can attend them all; he told me that. I don't know if Bonnie's got a problem. Well, if we can have a quorum, I think we should have the meetings. I don't want people to feel left out if they're not here; that's all. If we can get a quorum, can we go ahead and have the meetings, then, on 13, 14, 16? You're free on 13? I'm sorry?

MRS. DACYSHYN: At 2 o'clock. Is that what you're saying?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah. I want to try and put together the whole day on one of those days. I think that's very important.

We know we'll have you on the 16th if we meet the whole day?

MR. FOX: Yeah, I'd arrange to be here the whole day. Does that mean we wouldn't meet on the 13th or 14th?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. FOX: It doesn't mean that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it doesn't mean we will not.

It's okay with Bob Elliott. What about Bob Hawkesworth? Do you know his schedule?

MR. FOX: I was trying to schedule Bob to come to another committee that I chair in our caucus, and he was unavailable on both the 13th and 14th, and the 15th is our full caucus. Don't forget we're busy making plans to overthrow the government. It takes a lot of co-ordination.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, you've had so much practice in making plans.

MR. FOX: I can't speak for him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'll have to talk to the individuals then.

MRS. DACYSHYN: I can do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, leave it with us to talk to the individuals. We now have our master phone list with people at the other end of the line; right? Okay, I'm going to make those phone calls later. Today I'll be talking to some of these people.

I've always felt that one of the most important items is the internal workings of the House, which is the Standing Orders, and how members feel.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Before you go on to Standing Orders, would you like the budget . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, the budget information. That's why we interrupted. Go ahead.

MRS. KAMUCHIK: By deleting travel of committee members to other jurisdictions, that would take \$20,799 from the overall budget, leaving a projected budget estimate of \$102,593.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is based on us still requiring the professional services; right?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes, that would remain in there until we have a final answer. I'll follow that up with a phone call today, because I still have to hear from two people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, can I ask a question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Uh huh.

MRS. HEWES: If Members' Services has the jurisdiction to do this line-by-line budget, does this mean we're locked into it? That is, if at some point in the future we decide we aren't going to bring somebody up from Lethbridge but are going to send Derek Fox to Victoria, can we make those kinds of . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: In my view, we can, yes. That's the argument I'll make to them tomorrow.

3:06

MRS. HEWES: That was my understanding, but earlier someone said we had to present a line-by-line budget, that it isn't a global budget and . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. I think I had said that in many ways I'd feel more comfortable if they gave us a global budget and asked us to do the job, but that's not what they're doing.

MRS. HEWES: But in your estimation, we are not locked into the detail of the budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. I'll clarify that tomorrow when I make the presentation.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You'll have that typed out and ready?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, I'm to meet with the committee at 9:30?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could I see you at 9?

MRS. KAMUCHIK: Yes, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

Coming back to the agenda, the Standing Orders question. I don't know whether you all have your documents. I was going to refer you to under tab K, the submission from the Clerk.

Do we have an extra copy for Mrs. Hewes?

MRS. HEWES: Thanks, Corinne.

[The committee adjourned at 3:07 p.m.]