

Title: Wednesday, March 15, 1995 Designated Subcommittee

Date: 1995/03/15

[Chairman: Mr. Magnus]

Time: 3:02 p.m.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, I'll call this meeting to order. This is, of course, the designated supply subcommittee on Executive Council. The first order of business is a procedural motion, which is the agreement between the House leaders. Everybody should have a copy of it. Corinne's handed it out. It basically says:

Be it resolved that the Designated Supply Subcommittee on Executive Council allocate the 4 hours allotted to it pursuant to Standing Order 56(7)(b) as follows:

(a) the Minister responsible . . . addresses the Subcommittee for a maximum of 20 minutes,

(b) Opposition Subcommittee members and Independent Subcommittee members then have 1 hour for questions and answers,

That is a maximum of 1 hour. We then revert to the

(c) Government Subcommittee members . . . have 1 hour for questions and answers,

Then the Opposition again has 1 hour more for questions and answers, and

(e) Government Subcommittee members have the remainder of the 4 hour [period of time].

We do need a motion on this, so I'll get somebody to move this, please. Thank you. Seconded by Hung. All those in favour? Any opposed? None opposed.

The only other thing I'll say – and I'm trying to make this brief, because we are a little bit stretched for time, and we're a couple of minutes late – is that this is not a policy meeting. We've discussed this before. Most members sitting in this room today have done at least one of these committees before. We are here to discuss estimates. Policy is in the realm of the minister and cabinet, and the minister is available in question period and in Supply to answer policy questions. This is a meeting on the estimates. What will happen is that if somebody gets into a pure policy question, I will probably stop the question. If the minister chooses to answer it at that point in time, he may. If not, then we'll go on to the next question.

Obviously, we've had a few changes since the last one of these that we did, so we're going to be fudging it just a little bit at this stage of the game.

MR. SEKULIC: I agree with what you're saying; however, I want to reference *Beauchesne* 953 on page 261. It says that the whole management of a department may be discussed in a general way when the committee is considering the first item of the Estimates of that department, which reads as follows: "Vote 1 – Administration."

The second point I want to raise is *Ersine May*, page 706:

On a main estimate it is in order to discuss the general policy which lies behind the demand for that particular sum of money.

So there's a bit of latitude there, and I just want to make sure that we can exercise that.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is a little bit of latitude, but again it's up to the chair to make that decision. I can quote you three or four different places here, if you'd like, on different rules that state that this is not a policy meeting, as is Committee of Supply within the Chamber itself. It's not a policy meeting, so we hope to stay reasonably close to estimates. If you want to ask something with a little bit of policy in it, I'd ask that you hook it up to something related to estimates.

In any event, Mr. Premier, you're up, and if you'd like to introduce your group there, it would be appreciated. Thank you.

MR. KLEIN: Okay. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and hon. members. I'm pleased to participate in this round of hearings held by the subcommittee. This afternoon we'll be discussing areas for which I am responsible, namely Executive Council, which includes my office and general administration for Executive Council and the Lieutenant Governor's office.

With me today is my deputy minister, Vance MacNichol. You all know Vance. Northern development is represented by one of the members of this subcommittee, and I don't know how we're going to work that. Nonetheless, the Northern Alberta Development Council is represented by the council chairman, Mr. Wayne Jacques, who is available to answer questions. I don't think he'll be required to come to this end of the table; he can probably do it right from there. The personnel administration office, represented by Mr. Jim Dixon, who is the Public Service Commissioner, and the Public Affairs Bureau, represented by the bureau's new managing director, Gerry Bourdeau and, of course, my own communications director, Jim Dau. Is Jim here? He is. Okay. Of course, I have with me today my colleague Mrs. Mirosh, who is here to answer your questions about science and research.

As you know, Executive Council is ultimately responsible for co-ordinating our agenda for change. Our goal is to provide open, accountable government that lives within its means and delivers quality services at a low cost. We will continue to base government initiatives on three clear goals; that is, to implement the government's multiyear business plans, to streamline and deregulate government, and to create the climate for businesses to generate wealth and jobs for Albertans. Our ultimate goal, of course, remains to give Albertans the best services possible and the most value for their tax dollars. Executive Council, Mr. Chairman, is on track to meet its budget target of \$23.7 million this year.

First, speaking to northern development. Northern development has two components: the Northern Alberta Development Council, made up of eight public members and chaired by Mr. Jacques, and the administration of a federal/provincial cost-shared program designed to strengthen the economic base of Alberta's north. The program is through the application phase and will distribute funds to approved projects until 1997-1998, as planned. The council's primary mission is "to promote economic and social development in northern Alberta through practical advice to government and through the delivery of development services to northerners." Over the past year it has sponsored research and discussion on access to telecommunications, local wood supplies, and electrical energy. The council will continue sponsoring public meetings to address development issues raised by northern Albertans, and it is on track to meet its budget target of \$3 million this year.

The personnel administration office, or PAO, is responsible for the central human resource management of government's biggest asset, and that asset of course is our employees. It provides programs and services to help our people manage change. Its workforce adjustment program helped reduce the size of our public sector by nearly 20 percent in just over two years. Almost half of those reductions were achieved by the early voluntary options program. So it demonstrates that indeed the program within the public service was carried out with understanding and compassion. Our workforce adjustment program offers support courses on job searching, interviewing, and résumé writing. As well, employees are eligible for a negotiated severance package providing for up to 43 weeks' salary for 13 full years of service. PAO made a major contribution to the government's fiscal agenda by negotiating a 5 percent compensation reduction with our union. PAO co-ordinates both the Premier's Forum, bringing together representatives from the broader public sector to help manage change, and the first ever

Premier's award of excellence to recognize the exceptional work being done by our employees.

I should note PAO's investment in a major redevelopment of the government's human resource information system, and you will note that in the budget books. This is the first year major systems developments have been reported as a capital investment in accordance with the Auditor General's recommendation. That recommendation was that those things that normally went into operating that exceed \$100,000 now have to go into the capital side of the books. So this is a very important human resource support tool and is Executive Council's only capital investment, but over the long term, Mr. Chairman, it should prove to reduce considerably the ongoing operating costs.

The public administration office is indeed on track to meet its budget target of \$7.5 million in fiscal 1995-1996.

Communicating with Albertans has been a priority with our administration from day one, and it's extremely critical now as we undertake the kinds of changes that we have embarked upon. So the Public Affairs Bureau helps us make government information more accessible to Albertans. The bureau is a co-ordinated, governmentwide full-service agency. It assigns staff to departments and agencies to help develop and implement communications programs. It co-ordinates the purchase of advertising, printing, graphic design, and audiovisual services on behalf of government departments, and it operates the RITE telephone system, the Queen's Printer bookstores, and the Alberta Communications Network. The bureau is also on track to meet its budget target of \$9.5 million this year and is forecasting \$1.4 million in revenue through its Queen's Printer bookstore operation.

So, ladies and gentlemen, members of the committee, those are my initial comments, and I now welcome a few comments from the Hon. Dianne Mirosh.

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Premier, Mr. Chairman, and colleagues. I'm pleased to be here to participate in the budget with regards to the Science and Research Authority. As most of you are aware, the authority was set up in September of '94, six months ago, and it was created as a direct acknowledgement of the importance of the role of science and research in all departments and the role that it plays in the economy and in the lives of Albertans. It will function to ensure that our province's investments in science and research are effective and accountable and co-ordinated. As you can see in the estimates, as it relates to my portfolio, they're comprised of the minister's office, item 5.0.1, and the science and research secretariat, which is item 5.0.2.

Essentially the secretariat's function is to support the goals of the authority, and it provides assistance to the minister's office and the authority board of management. It works to identify the strategic goals and priorities in science and research. It will also serve to co-ordinate all the provincial funding in all the departments for R and D programs. Why the minister's office and the secretariat fall in Executive Council is for two reasons: so that the administrative expenses are held to a minimum by the use of Executive Council staff, and because the authority will work with all the research performing departments across government, it's essential for us to draw support from a neutral body such as Executive Council. As we're working into the development of our authority, Executive Council is assisting us to keep our staff at a minimum.

In terms of spending, the minister's office and secretariat have a combined budget of \$584,000. The minister's office represents \$250,000, and the secretariat makes up the balance.

I look forward to any comments that any of you have, and I am pleased to answer any questions. Thank you.

3:12

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

If there are no other comments, it is the Liberal side's one hour, starting now, to ask questions. In the past we've always just had a hand up so I knew who was doing it, and I took them as I saw them.

Debby Carlson.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to start out with some general questions on program 1, office of the Premier and general administration. Can the Premier provide a breakdown of the estimated and forecast expenditures of the office of the Premier and general administration for 1995-96?

MR. KLEIN: Well, to what degree would you like the breakdown?

MS CARLSON: I think we'd like a format similar to last year. You provided some written supplements.

MR. KLEIN: Yes, I guess I can. Do you want me to go through the whole thing?

MS CARLSON: Yes.

MR. KLEIN: Well, the Premier's office 1995-1996 operating budget calls for \$588,810 in salaries; correspondence, \$263,000; communications, \$182,000; the Calgary office, \$265,000; planning and co-ordination, \$541,000; finance and administration, \$205,000; wages provision, \$36,000. What is wages provision?

MR. MacNICHOL: That's for temporary people.

MR. KLEIN: Oh, the temps that we bring in. Okay. For a total manpower – do you want me to go through the kind of breakdown I've just given you?

MS CARLSON: Yes, that's perfect.

MR. KLEIN: First of all, total manpower, then, and things related to the workforce for a total of \$2,084,225, including those components that I've just given you; travel and hosting and communications, purchased services, equipment, materials, and other accounts for \$718,790. The breakdown is: travel, hosting, and communications, \$270,000; purchased services, \$217,450 – this is consultants and so on as required – equipment, material, and other, \$230,940.

The office of the Lieutenant Governor. Human resources – that is, person power – \$128,000; supply and services, \$51,200; for a total of \$172,000. Then there is a further breakdown in travel, hosting, and communications, purchased services, materials, and others. I can go through that breakdown if you want, but it all depends how much time you want to take.

MS CARLSON: Yes, I'd like that information.

MR. KLEIN: Okay. In the category of travel, hosting, and communications, as I mentioned, we have \$270,400; in purchased services, as I mentioned before, \$217,450; and as I mentioned previously, in materials and others, \$230,940; for a total of \$718,790. The breakdown there, going to the first category, is travel, \$171,800. By the way, that's travel within Alberta. This

is not external travel, because my external travel would normally relate to, well, the First Ministers' Conference, which would come out of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Anything I do in terms of getting out there and selling the Alberta advantage would be covered through the department that basically requires my services. In other words, we're going to Houston, next week I believe it is, and the budget for that will clearly come out of Economic Development and Tourism because it is purely an economic development initiative. So travel is \$171,800; hosting, \$54,100; postage and freight, \$17,000; telephones, \$27,500.

Under purchased services, insurance is \$5,000; rental, \$68,025 – and Jim, we need a further breakdown there; I just don't have that breakdown in front of me – repairs to equipment and so on, \$15,000; contracted services, \$90,985; and EDP processing, \$38,440. Purchased services: equipment, \$102,440; materials, \$128,500.

There are 46 people in the Premier's office. This includes the people in my office, the research branch, correspondence division, cabinet supports, support to agenda and priorities and to Treasury.

MS CARLSON: Two supplementals?

THE CHAIRMAN: You can ask questions for the whole hour if your colleagues will allow it.

MS CARLSON: Okay. I'd like a follow-up on your last statement, then, Mr. Premier. Can you indicate how many of those 46 FTEs under this vote are employed by the office of the Premier and in general administration, respectively?

MR. KLEIN: Yes, I can. In the Premier's office – and I'll give you their names and titles if you wish – we'll start with Rod Love, who is the executive director, followed by his secretary, Lana Schmitz; followed by my executive assistant, Sheryl Burns, and my administrative assistant, Nargis Zaver, and my secretary, Colleen Marouelli, and the administrative assistant in the Premier's office, George Samoil, who is here today; a secretary, again, to Mr. Love's office, Sylvia Evans; administrative assistant Ivan Bernardo; one vacant research position; and Delilah Morgan, receptionist, and Lynn Hall, who are the frontline people taking all of the phone calls, some of them nasty and some of them good.

MRS. MIROSH: Most of them good.

MR. KLEIN: Right.

In correspondence, there are seven staff. These include five writers.

[The bell rang calling for a division in the Chamber]

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, folks, there's bad news and there's bad news. My understanding is that when the bells ring, we are supposed to adjourn and go back to the House.

3:22

MR. KLEIN: Well, I don't mind if you don't mind. We can stop the clock right there.

MS CARLSON: Good. That's great.

MR. KLEIN: Okay; if you want. Sure.

THE CHAIRMAN: We'll do that and continue where we left off when we come back.

Motion to adjourn. All those in favour? Any opposed? None opposed. I'll call it adjourned. As soon as the vote's taken, please come back very quickly.

MR. KLEIN: Okay. I was just going to the next category, which was communications.

[The committee adjourned from 3:23 p.m. to 3:40 p.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Premier, you were on communications, I think.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In communications we have Jim Dau, the director, and Fay Orr and Marisa Etmanski as assistants.

In the Calgary office we have the director of the Calgary office, Hugh Dunne; secretary Joyce Austin; receptionist Lea Roberts; secretary Helena Gryckiewicz; and one vacant position.

Then in planning and co-ordination there are nine staff, including Vance MacNichol; secretary, C. Thomlinson; the deputy cabinet secretary, Mr. Steeves; co-ordination officer Ms Critchlow; policy co-ordinator Doris Porter; policy co-ordinator Wendy Rodgers; co-ordination officer A. Hill; co-ordination officer Katherine Kinnee; and project officer K. Dawson.

In finance and administration there are five staff members: K. Henke, director; administrative assistant J. Zowtuk; administrative officer K. Miller; accounts clerk N. Fazal; accounts clerk D. Stewart. There are three vacant positions in the provision for wage staff to deal with peak workloads, part-time staff, and we simply haven't taken any on.

So that's a total of 38 staff, two vacancies, and three wage vacant; those are the part-time people that haven't been hired. Total office of the Lieutenant Governor: add three more. It brings it to 46.

MS CARLSON: I'd like to request that that information actually be tabled for our benefit and then proceed with one more question.

MR. KLEIN: Okay.

MS CARLSON: You talked earlier about the travel not all being included within this ministry. Could you provide to us your total travel budget for the year from all departments?

MR. KLEIN: As it affects my travel?

MS CARLSON: Yes.

MR. KLEIN: Or as it affects all the travel of all the ministers?

MS CARLSON: No.

MR. KLEIN: My travel that would be charged to other departments?

MS CARLSON: Yes.

MR. KLEIN: I'm sure we can get that. I don't have that information right here.

MS CARLSON: To provide it later in writing would be fine.

MR. KLEIN: Yes. Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms Carlson.

MR. SEKULIC: Mr. Premier, today we had a young guest from my constituency in the Legislature, and he spent the morning with our caucus. A very bright 11 year old, he wants in fact your job, so we're starting to get him ready early. He asked questions about – I know you know this question is coming. He asked questions about my salary and also asked what he can expect to make at some point in the future. Here the question isn't whether you earn it; it's a question as to what does a Premier make, and if you could break that down.

MR. KLEIN: Well, basically I make what an MLA makes as an MLA, plus I get a salary – and this is how much I pay attention to it – of \$56,865, and that is the Premier's salary. It's slightly more than a minister's salary or the salary of the Leader of the Official Opposition. There was a time – and I didn't know about this – that I had an additional \$5,000. That, of course, has been eliminated. That was a clothing allowance.

MR. SEKULIC: Okay. I take it, then, that now there aren't any special allowances included; or are there? Are special allowances included?

MR. KLEIN: No. There's the Premier's salary, which I think is separate, and it's defined in Standing Orders. If you look at Standing Orders, you will see the salary of the Premier. You will see the salary of a minister. You will see, I believe, the salary of the Leader of the Official Opposition, which I believe is the same as a minister's salary.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah.

MR. KLEIN: Then you will see the salaries for those assigned to legislative committees.

MR. SEKULIC: Okay. My second question. In the 1993-94 budgets there was reference to the establishment of a management board of executives. But it was missing. It was conspicuous by its absence in the '95 budget, and I'm just wondering whether the Premier can indicate whether there are any resources from his office that have been allocated to the establishment of a management board of executives.

MR. KLEIN: No, I don't think so.

MR. SEKULIC: So that project has ceased to exist?

MR. KLEIN: I'm sorry; Jim, can you . . .

MR. DAU: I don't know that.

MR. MacNICHOL: No. I think that the reorganization secretariat is made up of existing deputies and senior people. That's the only group that we have.

MR. SEKULIC: Okay. I'm curious. Given that we are in times of rapid and radical change, I was wondering if the Premier can indicate whether any resources have been allocated from his office towards measuring the impact of things like the new user fees, licences and premiums, as we continue on our way with implementing or introducing these?

MR. KLEIN: No, not from my office, but I can tell you that this issue is now under consideration by the new Alberta Economic

Development Authority, which, of course, is budgeted under Economic Development and Tourism. As you know, the authority is made up of two components. One is a board of management, the executive board. The other is the economic development council, which basically involves about 50 to 55 people from all across the province who have been assigned to something like 17 subcommittees to examine various components of interest that could affect economic development and trade. One of those components deals with taxation, fees, levies, and so on. Basically, they have in their hands right now the report of the Tax Reform Commission. They're looking at fees. They're looking at, you know, what it costs to do business and so on.

MR. SEKULIC: How soon would you expect them to be reporting back and specifically on the things introduced by your government?

MR. KLEIN: On certain issues they're starting to report already, and we will have the first set of recommendations from some of the councils at the next board of management meeting. From the board of management, of course, those recommendations then will work their way through cabinet and government, and we'll decide if then it should become a matter of policy or a matter of legislation.

MR. SEKULIC: Mr. Premier, will you be forwarding the recommendations as they're brought down by the authorities? Will you be tabling them in the Assembly?

MR. KLEIN: That's an interesting thought. There is no requirement to do so. As I say, some of these things might have to be adjusted through legislation and some through regulation, and some might simply be a matter of policy.

MR. SEKULIC: Good. Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Mr. Mitchell.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. You know, Mr. Klein, sometimes in the Legislature the questions escalate and the answers escalate and we don't always get to the heart of an issue.

MR. KLEIN: Yes, they do. Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: Under the ministry summary, program 1, office of the Premier, general administration, I guess we would slot the many issues that you have to deal with on a daily basis. I'd like to pursue a little further the question that I raised the other day about the 11-year-old girl who needs an operation that is lifesaving and that more immediately is very important to reduce the pain that she's in from this bent spine she has, who on February 24 was all but ready to go, and then 30 minutes prior to the surgery it was canceled. Then last Friday it was canceled again. I guess what I want to know is: when somebody like that can't get an operation that he or she needs, whose responsibility is it in this system to ensure that that happens?

3:50

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Premier, if you would like to answer that question, you may of course. But this is estimates, Mr. Mitchell, and we talked about this as you came in. This has, as I see it, no connection whatsoever to these estimates. It is a question that was

asked in question period today, but you can ask the same question tomorrow, I suppose.

MR. KLEIN: Certainly the minister shared with me some information that she had on that particular case, and because all medical procedures are confidential, as they relate to a relationship between a patient and a doctor, I can't discuss this matter publicly.

On the general question, I don't know how many pieces of correspondence – I'd normally have that, but literally it's in the thousands – and phone calls come into my office. For instance today: there was a piece in yesterday's *Red Deer Advocate* telling all the members of Elnora, all the residents . . .

[The bell rang calling for a division in the Chamber]

THE CHAIRMAN: Folks, if it meets with everyone's approval, we'll just go about three or four minutes, and then we'll go.

MR. KLEIN: Okay. I'd just like to finish this answer, because I think it's important. The article in the *Red Deer Advocate* indicated that the chairman of this committee concerned about what was going to happen to the hospital in Elnora – phone the Premier's office. Now, that's a lot of phone calls, and obviously they did, because I couldn't get through to my office today. I mean, I tried. I started shortly before 8, because I wanted to get some messages, and I could not get through to my office, which means that we probably should have a stand-alone phone with a number that I can phone directly. Normally what happens is that the correspondence is screened. There are a lot of letters of a general nature; there are a lot of letters that are very specific.

In the case of the 11-year-old child, if there was correspondence or communications on that particular case, normally they would go immediately to the Minister of Health saying: the Premier's office has received this correspondence; can you deal with it? There are mechanisms within that department to deal with it. There is the Health Facilities Review Committee. There is the ability of the minister or a deputy minister or an ADM to intervene directly. Normally, that's the way something like that happens. If it's something that directly affects my office, I'll deal with it, and indeed I get a reading file that contains maybe 30, 40 pieces of correspondence each day that deal specifically with my office, with a comment that I made or an action by myself. I will deal with it on the basis of how it affects my office or a staff member. But if it affects a department, and if it clearly is the responsibility of that department, then it will be referred immediately to that department.

MR. MITCHELL: But this 11-year-old girl couldn't get the operation on February 24. She couldn't get it last Friday; it was canceled. She still hasn't got it. The minister apparently has intervened, and it's not working. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that that little girl gets that operation?

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, government can't be on top of every procedure and every case at all times. I think that the ultimate or, we'll say, the initial responsibility is really a medical responsibility, and that is to leave it to the capable, hopefully, doctors and medical staff to make that decision. Ultimately, I guess the Minister of Health has the authority to intervene or, as I say, the deputy or the assistant deputy minister or the appropriate health official to make sure that these matters are investigated or that the treatment, if it is indeed medically necessary and appropriate, is delivered.

MR. MITCHELL: Of course, you know, the doctors . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mitchell, before you continue, we're at four minutes now.

There's a motion to adjourn. All in favour? Any opposed? Thanks.

[The committee adjourned from 3:55 p.m. to 4:08 p.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to call the committee back to order, and if I may just express a caution which the Leader of the Opposition and I have just chatted about. He has to link the question to estimates or it will not be allowed.

MR. MITCHELL: The Premier was talking about Elnora. Oh, no. We got past Elnora.

MR. KLEIN: We got past Elnora.

I'm just indicating that these are some of the things that my office has to deal with in sort of a generic way. I think there is a perception that by the stroke of a pen I can resolve all issues at all times. Basically we try to work through these difficult situations, and we use the resources of the department. But I have to go back to my initial statement that basically I would assume that the medical questions would have to be answered at the hospital, at the scene.

MR. MITCHELL: Back to program 1, the office of the Premier. There must be resources there to ensure that issues like this are handled. When the doctors don't have enough resources, when the hospital doesn't have the money to open up intensive care, postoperative care for an 11-year-old girl, when the family approaches the minister and the minister says to go back to the hospital, go back to the regional health authority, who in that Premier's office organization is ultimately responsible to make sure that an 11-year-old girl gets an operation that she needs?

MR. KLEIN: Well, this is argumentative, and again you would have to know the details of the case. As I understand it, the minister now has some information in her hands relative to this particular case. She's following through, and I think under the circumstances that's the appropriate action to take. Unfortunately, no matter what we do in society there are going to be these problems. It was also prevalent when I was on the hospital board as the mayor of the city of Calgary. I mean, there were tremendous amounts of dollars being spent on hospitals and there were still problems, patients who unfortunately fell through the cracks. But I would reiterate that there were 415,000 admissions last year, and surely amongst those people who were admitted to hospital, I would suggest that the majority were treated very well indeed and there were no problems.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. It is a problem though, and I suppose the Premier would agree with that. But in somewhere over 415,000 people, there's a little girl who is 11 years old and can't an operation she needs.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mitchell, this has nothing to do with the estimates. Could you get a little bit closer to them, please?

MR. KLEIN: Honestly, to the hon. member, I don't know the doctor who was involved and who the ancillary people were to the medical decision that was made at that particular time, but as I understand it, again, the minister has some information on that case, is following through with the doctor involved, and hopefully it can be resolved.

MR. MITCHELL: Just one final question on this line. If the Premier can't get through to his own office on the telephone, I wonder how somebody with a problem like this can get through to whoever it is that would be responsible for helping them.

MR. KLEIN: Yes, I can, I guess, if I wanted to wait. There is an order. You know, we have one staff, one person, answering the telephones, and literally on certain occasions hundreds of calls are coming in. Basically, there is a recording on the line, as you know, and it says: "You have reached the Premier's office. Your call is important to us. Please stay on the line." I guess some people are impatient like myself. I don't stay on the line. But eventually the phone call will be answered. It will be.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: That's all, Mr. Mitchell?

MR. MITCHELL: That's it, yes.

MS CARLSON: I'd just like some further clarification on some of the numbers that you gave us in my earlier set of questions. You talked about \$90,985 available in contract services?

MR. KLEIN: Yes, \$90,985. Right.

MS CARLSON: Can you give us a description of what those activities entail?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Vance just indicated that our telephone services, the maintenance services are contracted. Computer services, the maintenance and the upkeep of that equipment are contracted. The servicing, I guess, of our faxes, word processors.

MR. MacNICHOL: Some vehicles.

MS CARLSON: Could you provide written documentation on who the contractees are?

MR. KLEIN: Oh, my gosh. Well, I guess we could. I really don't get involved in that kind of detail, as to how these things are contracted out, but that information obviously is available.

MR. MacNICHOL: It's in public accounts. We can break it out.

MS CARLSON: Yeah. That'd be great, if you don't mind.

MR. KLEIN: Okay. Relative to that item specifically?

MS CARLSON: Yes.

MR. KLEIN: Okay.

MR. MacNICHOL: That's contracted services?

MS CARLSON: Contracted services.

MR. KLEIN: Right; \$90,985.

MS CARLSON: Then I'll add another one onto that also. The \$102,000 for purchased services, if you could add that as well.

MR. KLEIN: Okay. That's equipment. Do you want the total \$230,000, or do you just want equipment?

MS CARLSON: I'll take the total.

MR. KLEIN: That's equipment and materials.

MS CARLSON: Yeah.

MR. KLEIN: Okay.

MS CARLSON: In your communications budget can you tell me what types of activities are involved in the expending of those dollars?

MR. KLEIN: Yes. First of all, generally communications is a huge part of the Premier's function. We handle literally hundreds of inquiries I would say weekly – Jim Dau can answer this more – from news media, not only the news media here at the Legislature Building but from all across the province, all the weekly newspapers, all the radio stations, all the television stations that want information on just a myriad of government services and programs and so on.

If there's one thing for certain, the first line, the front line, in the Legislature is the Premier's office. As I said, there's a perception out there that we can solve all the problems, so the first line is always to the Premier's office. "We need this information. We need a backdated press release. We didn't get the feed relative to some message that was being communicated. Can you get that for us? Is there a possibility of getting an interview with the Premier? Is there a possibility of getting an interview with one of the ministers?" Then if we can't handle it directly, and it doesn't refer directly to our office, the three staff there would co-ordinate it through Gerry's Public Affairs Bureau. But just a phenomenal amount, you know, we just get a lot going through that department.

MS CARLSON: Do any of those dollars accrue to your fireside chats?

MR. KLEIN: You mean the one that I do every year?

MS CARLSON: Yes.

MR. KLEIN: James, does that come out of . . .

MR. DAU: Public affairs.

MR. KLEIN: It comes out of the Public Affairs Bureau, not out of the Premier's office.

MR. MacNICHOL: These funds are all for people, those names that were mentioned.

MS CARLSON: Okay. It's all salary dollars?

MR. KLEIN: It relates solely to the functions of Mr. Dau, Marisa, and Fay.

MS CARLSON: No disbursement costs at all?

MR. KLEIN: No. This is all strictly one hundred percent person power.

MS CARLSON: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms Carlson.
Mr. Sekulic.

MR. SEKULIC: Yes. Mr. Premier, in response to one of my earlier questions regarding measurement of the impact of user fees and licence fees and premiums you indicated that the Alberta Economic Development Authority was charged with some of that, was in fact undertaking some of it. I'm curious if you could indicate how much money or how much of the expenditures from your office and the Public Affairs Bureau is allocated to polling and consultation fees? I guess I'll wrap in a supplemental, and that is: could you differentiate if there is political polling and if there is issues polling?

MR. KLEIN: Well, issues polling, yes. Some of that is handled through our department. Some of it is co-ordinated through various departments. Yes, we do issues polling. I can say that, no, we don't do political polling, but I guess one, you know, relates to the other. The party certainly does political polling. We get enough external polling by the newspapers and so on. Just recently there was some very interesting polling done, and we didn't pay a darn cent for that.

4:18

MR. SEKULIC: Well, you know what Nick Taylor says: poles are for the dogs; right?

MR. KLEIN: Yes, that's right.

MR. SEKULIC: Mr. Premier, so your office and the Public Affairs Bureau don't do any political polling?

MR. KLEIN: We don't do political polling, but we're constantly trying to get a consensus or comments from Albertans. Certainly we set up the 1-800 line. We've done that for seniors, we've done it on health, and we've done it on education. Yes, when there are major issues, we want to know how Albertans feel about these issues.

MR. SEKULIC: Okay. I'm just curious because I see there's a list of expenditures in polling: Chase Communications, close to \$120,000; Dynamic Personnel Services, \$150,000; Environics Research Group, \$20,000, and so on. The list goes on for about another 15. Some of it is listed as Public Affairs Bureau expenditure, and some is Executive Council administration. I'm just curious. What type of polling is that?

MR. KLEIN: Well, no. I think, hon. member, that you're confusing polling with information gathering. A lot of this is basically: what are the people saying out there? What's the media saying? What is the media saying in Red Deer? What are they saying in Grande Prairie? What do the radio stations say? What do the television stations say? I don't know how many newspapers there are in this province, but I would estimate maybe 200 daily and weekly newspapers. What are they saying? What are the editorialists saying? What are the Liberals saying? You know, basically, what are people saying about the programs and so on? A lot of this is information gathering.

MR. SEKULIC: I appreciate that, and I think it's critical. I guess as an opposition member and as a Member of the Legislative Assembly I would like to know: is that information public, and if not, why not? It is critical for Albertans to know what the key issues are for them, especially if they are taxpayers' dollars. We're looking at probably half a million dollars in issues analysis.

MR. KLEIN: Well, I guess you have a communications budget as well.

MR. SEKULIC: That's duplication, Mr. Premier, and you know that as Liberals we're pretty much against . . .

MR. KLEIN: Well, maybe we should sit down and look at how we can share the resources.

MR. SEKULIC: I was just trying to eliminate some duplication, but I see there's some opposition to that.

MR. DOERKSEN: You could resign.

MR. SEKULIC: That's not an option.

Mr. Premier, I'm curious. I see that there are business plans in virtually every other area of government – actually, I won't call them business plans, because business plans certainly have much more detail. But there's something that the government calls a business plan in every area, yet in the office of the Premier it's conspicuous that there's an absence of something called a business plan. I wonder if you could give me an explanation as to why that office has been excluded.

MR. KLEIN: Well, there is a business plan as it relates to expenditures. But you have to look at the Premier's office quite differently than any other, outside of Dianne's department, the Science and Research Authority, which is an authority. It is an anomaly at this particular time within government because it is not a department per se. It is a tremendous responsibility on the part of the minister to pull together all the research activities within government and through the authority set up a system to leverage those funds against what we can get from the private sector. It's much the same as the Premier's office.

The Premier's office is not a department per se. I have responsibility for PAO. I have responsibility for PAB. I have responsibility over all as the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, and there are business plans for all those departments. But for the Premier, no, because I have to be honest with you: I don't know where I'm going from one day to the next. I mean, the issues change. The dynamics change, you know, and I'm dealing with – well, I'm dealing with the opposition. We'll start with the opposition. Those dynamics change every day. I'm dealing with all the standing policy committees. I'm dealing with all the departments of government.

MR. DIXON: Treasury Board.

MR. KLEIN: I'm dealing with Treasury Board. I'm dealing with just a multitude of issues. So the Premier's office is more of a thing or a being rather than a department.

MR. SEKULIC: I guess I'll try to provide some definition to that.

MR. KLEIN: If you can provide me with a business plan or suggest how I might go about one, right. Yes.

MR. SEKULIC: Sure. One of the examples you raised earlier was that you get a large number of calls, literally hundreds at a time sometimes.

MR. KLEIN: Yes.

MR. SEKULIC: You know, to respond to calls, in effect you deliver services from your office. You have 64 staff. You have a goal. One of your goals is open communication. Now, that could be wrapped up in a business plan. For example, you have to have some performance to measure to know how you're going to improve it. I guess what I'm looking for is that if your office deals with, let's say, 1,000 or 1,500 calls a day, we know that they're being dealt with in a timely manner and appropriately and how the 64 staff are dealing with them, because you can't improve the efficiency of something if you can't define it.

MR. KLEIN: Yes. Well, that is all tracked. There are monthly reports. Again, to say that we're going to focus on one particular subject – but there is a breakdown there, and that information could easily be provided. I've provided it in public speeches and so on.

A business plan relative to the Premier's office per se and my day-to-day activities would be extremely hard to track; that is, as it relates to Premier. As Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, it's not; that's very easy to do a business plan. To discharge my responsibility with respect to the Public Affairs Bureau, that's easy. To discharge my responsibilities relative to personnel administration, that's simple to do and that's all defined. But to discharge my responsibilities generally as the Premier is probably one of the hardest things in the world ever to define. It was a lot easier being the mayor, because at least there were under the Municipal Government Act certain duties assigned to the mayor. Right? It was. You know, it specified it, and you could prepare a business plan to correspond with the duties as defined through legislation, but there's nothing defined for the Premier.

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you.

MR. DOERKSEN: You'll have to stay the Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Yeah, right. The Premier is the Premier.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Sekulic.

4:28

MR. MITCHELL: I'd like to pursue that a little bit because I think maybe that's one of the problems. We're going to have to define what it is to be Premier and what the Premier's supposed to do. I want to pursue another issue, and this would be under the same vote.

MR. KLEIN: The Premier does everything; right? I chair the cabinet. Do you want its business plan? I chair the cabinet; right? President of Executive Council. Yes.

MR. MITCHELL: Under the office of the Premier then, program 1: how would this work? Who'd be responsible for this? You've got a closure of a 70-bed, long-term care facility, West Park nursing home in Red Deer. It's to be closed at the end of August. Some patients have been transferred or, unfortunately, have passed away, but there are 48 patients left.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mitchell, before you continue, I was talking to Parliamentary Counsel about this, and their response to this type of question is that any question you have should relate to a program or a program offered by the department. So far, health is the Health Department; it's simply not Executive Council.

MR. MITCHELL: You know, Mr. Chairman, I just heard the Premier say that he deals with virtually every single issue, that he doesn't really know, maybe, what the job is because it's not defined. So it seems to me it falls under the rubric of at least the office of the Premier, if we would begin to define that. I'm saying that there is a set of responsibilities here. When 48 patients left in this facility are going to be removed from it and the regional health authority doesn't have a plan for what to do with them . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mitchell, I'm going to stop the question. I'm sorry, but this is related to health.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, who's the chairman here?

THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry?

MR. MITCHELL: Is it you, or is it . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: If you'd like to designate the Health department and the hon. Mrs. McClellan to answer these types of questions, you have that opportunity to do so, but this is Executive Council.

MR. MITCHELL: Can I go back to that, because the last question – clearly, Mrs. McClellan hadn't answered the question about the 11-year-old girl.

THE CHAIRMAN: That was in question period.

MR. MITCHELL: Somebody has to be responsible for this, and I'm just wondering who it is. I just want the Premier to tell me who's responsible for these kinds of issues, when they're not getting settled, under the structure of the Premier's government.

MR. KLEIN: Ultimately, I guess there can be political involvement, but we have said to the RHAs, as we have said to school boards and boards of universities: lookit; you're put in place to do a job. If something goes fundamentally wrong with the system – that is, the system or the program – there are mechanisms within the RHAs, there are mechanisms within government to monitor these things and make sure that what is being done is being done in the best interests of Albertans.

You know, there is a notion here for some reason that because the RHA made this particular decision – and Mr. Doerksen is from Red Deer, so maybe he can respond in detail. He probably knows more about the situation; that is, the details and the intricacies of the situation. There is a notion here that these good, hard-working volunteers – I'm talking about the people on the RHA; they are volunteers – are somehow these awful darn people who are doing these terrible things. Doesn't anyone understand that these people also have kids and families and a sense of value and a sense of community? They're trying to do what is right, what is right for the community in terms of ending overlapping and duplication, and to bring about consolidation and at the same time exercise empathy and compassion and feeling for the people who are being affected by the changes in the system. These are not bad-thinking people; these are good-thinking people who have been charged with a very difficult task with absolutely no pay whatsoever.

That's why I would challenge the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition to get involved with these people to help bring about meaningful change and to get involved in a meaningful way.

MR. MITCHELL: I wonder: did these people, then, come up with a budget and come to the government and say, "This is how much money we need"? I guess they were given an amount of money and told . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mitchell, I'm going to stop the question.

MR. KLEIN: On the issue of budget, Mr. Chairman, it is no secret that health care generally was going to be reduced by 17 percent. It was no secret that we were going to move into a mode of service delivery at the community level as much as possible. It was no secret that we were going to try to eliminate overlapping and duplication. It was no secret that we were going to try to break down the administration – that is, to reduce the amount of administration in the system – and that's why we now have 17 regional health authorities instead of 200 separately administered boards with their own executive directors and office staff and so on.

MR. MITCHELL: Who in your office, under that \$3,077,000 budget, would monitor a situation like this or would be apprised of a situation like this, so that whomever it is that has responsibility – and I'd still like to know who it. Who do you think has responsibility to make sure that ultimately these things were . . .

MR. KLEIN: On a global sense and relative to the overall program, I would, along with the staff people, and we do. We monitor these situations every day, because I'm asked about these situations by yourself; I'm asked about these situations by the media. But I have also said that I'm not going to micro-manage the province; right? By the way, there still is a very, very large contingent of public service employees, a huge contingent of public service employees, very capable, in many cases professional people who have been put in place and are paid to deal with these issues. Yes, on the global policy, I monitor these situations. I monitor the situation as it relates to virtually every single department of government, and I'm in constant communication with my ministers, with members of caucus on myriad issues.

MR. MITCHELL: So I guess when this isn't working and when an 11-year-old girl can't get her operation, somehow the responsibility lies with you. Is that what happens?

MR. KLEIN: Is that where you're taking this?

MR. MITCHELL: What I keep seeing is that it's always somebody else. It's the regional health authorities. They don't determine their budget; you do. And there's got to be some relationship between their budget and what they can provide in the way of services.

MR. KLEIN: If we're going to get back to the 11-year-old child – and, yes, it was unfortunate. [interjection] Yes, it is unfortunate.

MR. MITCHELL: It's very unfortunate.

MR. KLEIN: But there is a reason. I have the reason, but I'm not about to get into a discussion with you here today relative to something that is strictly a matter of privilege, the most sacred of privilege, between a patient and her doctor. Now, if you want to bring it up publicly, you do it, you violate all the conventions, but I'm not going to do it.

MR. HAVELOCK: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to interject for a moment. I think that the Leader of the Opposition is taking advantage of the Premier's sense of fair play in answering any question put to him, and quite frankly these don't relate to the estimates at all. He's putting the Premier in a position where he feels he has to respond, and quite rightly I think he does not have to. You know, knock off the repeat of question period. Why don't you get on with the estimates?

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The Liberals still have the floor.

MR. HAVELOCK: Well, why don't they use it appropriately?

MS CARLSON: Mr. Premier, can you provide further details for us on your upcoming trips to Houston and Dubai and Israel and a list of prospective business groups that you'll be meeting with?

MR. KLEIN: Yes. That will all be tabled. There will be a full agenda. As a matter of fact, there's an open invitation to the press or to anyone else who, you know, wants to come along if they can get there. That will be distributed. It will be a full public document indicating all our meetings, with whom, anticipated outcomes, and I think that you're going to find it's going to be a very worthwhile endeavour indeed. When do you want it?

MS CARLSON: As soon as possible.

MR. KLEIN: Well, okay. I think . . .

MR. DAU: Houston will be ready tomorrow.

MR. KLEIN: Tomorrow. Okay.

MS CARLSON: Will that have dollars attached to the figures? How much of this will be recoverable?

MR. KLEIN: Yes. We've always indicated the budget amount, how much we anticipate something like this will cost.

MS CARLSON: Will any of it be recoverable?

MR. KLEIN: Recoverable in what way? Recoverable, hopefully, down the road, because I can tell you, Debby, that we're meeting with perhaps six or seven individual companies, and many of them are . . .

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Premier, can I just interject? This one group that you are meeting is really significant for us in science and research, because it is a research centre and we are looking to have this specific company invest in Alberta with our universities and our Alberta Research Council. If this particular trip and meeting goes the way we hope it will, it will probably bring about \$100 million into this province.

MR. KLEIN: There are two other companies related to the energy industry that we know have expressed tremendous interest in Alberta. Basically, they want to sit down with officials from Economic Development and Tourism, they want to sit down with the Premier, and they want some assurances that through our economic policies we're going to maintain very competitive tax rates, that once they're here we're not going to hit them with a sales tax or we aren't going to jack the corporate income tax or increase personal income tax. They want those assurances. So the payback I think is going to be tremendous in terms of these

companies moving up here with new dollars and creating new jobs and contributing significantly to our economic growth and prosperity. That will be the payoff.

MS CARLSON: Okay. Earlier you gave strong arguments for why you can't have business plans or performance measures in your department. Then I'm wondering how you can state in the documents that you've provided responsive support focusing on cost of service effectiveness and open communication, when there really is no mechanism to evaluate this.

MR. KLEIN: Well, yes, there is. There's a damn good mechanism to evaluate. That's when the election is called.

MR. DOERKSEN: It seems to have worked last time. [interjection]

MR. KLEIN: It is; right. It's black or white.

4:38

MS CARLSON: Can you provide further information to us on the steps that are being taken by your office to comply with the recommendations of the Auditor General in his '93-94 report which were directed to Executive Council relative to establishing an accountability framework?

MR. KLEIN: As far as I know, we have accepted virtually all of the recommendations of the Auditor General's report. I think there were something like 73 or perhaps 83 recommendations. We accepted all of those recommendations, save for one.

MS CARLSON: But you haven't acted on them.

MR. KLEIN: They are all being acted upon in one form or another right now. Some of these things involve changing procedures and changing systems and so on. Many of them we have acted upon. I indicated one of those recommendations here today – it's a fairly insignificant one – and that is to include all items over \$100,000 of a capital nature in the capital account. The only recommendation I can recall that we didn't accept was related to Committee of Supply and the subcommittee of supply, and that is to have public servants . . .

MR. MacNICHOL: The ministers are responsible.

MR. KLEIN: That's right. To have them appear before the committee; that is, to give presentations and so on and to be cross-examined.

MR. MacNICHOL: I think, Mr. Chairman, to add about the Auditor General's things, you know, when we say we're going to do something, he certainly follows up on it.

MS CARLSON: But in fact that's not always the case. There were 13 guidelines that were included last time established by the Auditor General, one of which would . . .

MR. KLEIN: I wish I had the report in front of me, and I'm sorry that I don't.

MS CARLSON: Well, you can address one of them: the auditing of performance information by the Auditor General. Are you going to act on that guideline and the other 13? You can provide that information later.

MR. KLEIN: We have given a commitment to do that, and the Provincial Treasurer has indicated more than once and very publicly that, yes, we are now moving into the phase of performance measurement. As a matter of fact, that was clearly mentioned in the Speech from the Throne.

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the member to read the full recommendation of the Auditor General that she's referring to?

MS CARLSON: I don't have the full details on it, but particularly it referred to auditing of the performance information supplied by the Auditor General.

MR. DOERKSEN: Did he say audit the actual performance measures, or did he suggest that performance measures need to be established?

MS CARLSON: The performance information needs to be audited.

MR. KLEIN: Specifically, the Auditor General comments that he is "convinced that measuring performance is critical to improving performance" but does not want to encourage "an army of accountants and evaluators measuring everything" in great detail. I'm sure you would agree with that. He says that there should be "simplicity, clarity and candour" and that these are "the essence of good accountability."

Significant reductions in expenditure have accompanied significant changes in governance . . . The delegation of authority carries with it a responsibility to be accountable.

Okay. That's what the Auditor General recommended.

The response is that

the government shares the Auditor General's views on improving financial administration of government. The government is committed to a fundamental restructuring that will result in all government organizations:

- setting clear objectives,

That's being done through the business plans.

- developing effective strategies,

- measuring performance,

- improving customer service, and

- fulfilling a commitment to cut costs.

The government has set out comprehensive and detailed plans for the future – a three year business plan for the government as a whole and plans for departments and agencies.

Clearly our commitment is to measure performance in accordance with the Auditor General's report. If you have designated the Provincial Treasurer, I'm sure that he would be more than happy to answer in detail how the program is being developed to put in place performance measurements.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Premier. We are very, very close to one hour. We have about 30 seconds left by my watch. How much have you got?

MRS. DACYSHYN: Two minutes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, we have two minutes. Would you like to express your question by a short question and a short answer? My clerk just came back. I'm looking at mine and hers both.

MR. MITCHELL: I'd like to ask Mrs. Mirosch some questions about science and research. She mentioned in her opening comments, Mr. Chairman, that she would co-ordinate all provin-

cial funding for research and development programs. I wonder if she could tell us how much in total is spent on research and development by the range of government departments and agencies and so on.

MRS. MIROSH: There is a book that TRAC has put out, and this book is the technical research authority within government. All the assistant deputy ministers sit on this particular board, and it's chaired by Dr. Brian Barge, who is the president of the ARC. They have identified \$200 million.

MR. KLEIN: In various government departments.

MRS. MIROSH: Throughout all departments. That's including R and D, research and development, and it also includes a number of programs as a result of the research. So a lot of the dollars, particularly in agriculture and environment, are providing programs with the research. There's \$200 million identified. I can get you that book that outlines that in detail.

MR. MITCHELL: That'd be great. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. That concludes the one hour of time that the Liberal side has. The government side now has one hour. Are there any questions from the government side to the Premier about this budget?

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Premier, I just want to make one quick comment and then just a couple of questions. Relating to Debby's point, my recollections of the Auditor General's recommendations – I don't have them in front of me, and I'm not going to ask any questions about them, so you don't have to pull them out – were very clear that there should be measurements and benchmarks. That is definitely a direction the government has gone. I'm not sure that he ever suggested that you audit policy to see whether those benchmarks have been achieved. There's quite a different message in that particular statement.

The question I have relates to PAO. I know that in your opening comments you remarked that they were involved with the workforce adjustment strategy. I just wonder if you would comment about how they were involved in setting up the workforce adjustment strategy and how it helped the workers of the province to adjust to some of the changes.

MR. KLEIN: Well, I'll answer in a global sense, and then I'll have Jim Dixon answer specifically. Basically, as we went through this program, we had to achieve two things fundamentally right off the top. That was an overall reduction in the public service and to do it as compassionately and as fairly as we possibly could. The second was to achieve throughout the public service a 5 percent reduction in the compensation package. We achieved both of those, the 5 percent reduction through some very tough negotiation with the unions, and all unions directly accountable to government or under the umbrella of so-called government bought in. There are some unions that are under the jurisdiction of municipalities and counties and so on who have not bought in. Most unions related to health care, education, certainly all those directly under the umbrella of government bought in. I think that

the PAO did a tremendous job in achieving that renegotiation of those contracts and of achieving a 5 percent reduction.

The second component, of course, was to put in place a program that would allow the employees to leave with dignity and to take advantage of various programs to make sure that they got back into the workforce as quickly as possible. Now, we put in place a voluntary severance program, and many employees took advantage of that almost immediately and found it to be eminently fair. There was also a program of early retirement. There was and is now, I believe, a program of job sharing if those opportunities arise. PAO also put in a program relative to workforce adjustment. That is the program that really involved counseling employees in preparing résumés and how to go about seeking another job, where job retraining opportunities might exist.

I'll have Mr. Dixon supplement.

4:48

MR. DIXON: As the Premier indicated, the fundamental basis of our workforce adjustment program is to try and treat employees as fairly as possible in what are fairly difficult circumstances for them. The voluntary options program resulted in I think something like 1,800 employees leaving on a voluntary basis.

I'll just augment the comments with respect to the workforce adjustment program itself. Redeployment is a large factor in the program as well. When you have a hiring freeze on, attrition occurs. The policy is for departments to redeploy staff from programs that are disappearing or being reduced into the key programs that are carrying on. First of all, that's done within the departments, and then if it's not possible within the departments, PAO will co-ordinate between departments. So that goes on before the position abolishment notice might be provided.

Once a position abolishment notice is provided, then the other elements of the program go into effect: outplacement counseling, job-training assistance. The employees have the option of trying to stay on for an additional three months to see if there are other redeployment opportunities available, or they can choose to take a severance payment and try and find employment with another employer. The program now has been operating for over two years, and it seems to be working well and providing as much support as we can under these circumstances.

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Any other questions from the government side? Seeing none, the Premier does have to be out of here at 5 o'clock sharp. It's now 10 to 5. Mr. Premier, do you want to quit now?

MR. KLEIN: It doesn't matter. I would prefer that, if that's possible. Certainly we can make up the time at the other end.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. If that meets with the committee's approval, we will adjourn this meeting at this time. The government side has concluded their questions. When we come back, it will be the Liberal side for one more time, and we'll go on from there.

[The committee adjourned at 4:51 p.m.]

