



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

MINUTES AND VERBATIM REPORT



No. 2 — July 27, 2000

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Hon. Ron Osika, Chair
Melville

Bob Bjornerud
Saltcoats

Dan D'Autremont
Cannington

Hon. Jack Hillson
North Battleford

Carolyn Jones
Saskatoon Meewasin

Myron Kowalsky
Prince Albert Carlton

Hon. Eldon Lautermilch
Prince Albert Northcote

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Room 10 Legislative Building
5:25 p.m. Thursday, July 27, 2000

Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy

Hon. Ron Osika, Chair
Mr. Bob Bjornerud
Mr. Dan D'Autremont
Hon. Jack Hillson
Ms. Carolyn Jones
Mr. Myron Kowalsky
Hon. Eldon Lautermilch

Staff to the Board

Marilyn Borowski, Director, Financial Services
Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk
Margaret Kleisinger, Secretary

Officials in Attendance

Patrick Shaw, Sergeant-at-Arms

AGENDA Moved by Mr. Lautermilch that the agenda, as amended to include the addition of an item pertaining to the budget approval process by the Board, be adopted. Agreed.

MINUTES Moved by Mr. Bjornerud, ordered, that the Minutes of Meeting #1/00 be adopted. Agreed.

ITEM 1 Table Item: Legislative Assembly Quarterly Financial and Fiscal Forecast Report (First quarter 00-01).

The Chair tabled the report.

ITEM 2 Decision Item – Security Recommendations

The Chair tabled the following documents: "Report on Security Review – Legislative Building, March 8, 2000" and the addendum "Re: Se Security Recommendations, July 24, 2000".

Moved by Mr. Hillson, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont, that the Board meet *in camera* for Security matters.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

The Board met in camera at 5:28 p.m.

The Board resumed public meetings at 6:20 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the Board accept recommendations 1, 3, and 4 of the July 24, 2000 document; and ask the Sergeant to supply further information on Item 2 at a future meeting of the Board.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1508

The Board asked the Speaker to initiate further discussion with the caucuses re demonstration policies.

ITEM 3 Decision Item: MLA Travel and Living Expenses

Moved by Mr. D'Autremont, seconded by Mr. Hillson:

That, effective July 27, 2000,

(1) That Directive #3 MLA Travel Expenses and Directive #1.1 MLA Sessional Expenses be revoked, and

(2) That Directive #3.1 MLA Travel and Living Expenses, as attached, be adopted, and

- (3) That for the 2000-2001 fiscal year only, that the annual amount stated in Sections (11)(a)(ii) and (11)(c)(iii) be reduced to \$3,150, and that the annual amount stated in Sections (11)(b)(ii), (11)(c)(ii) and (11)(d)(ii) be reduced to \$6,300.

DIRECTIVE #3.1

(s. 50(3)(c), (g), c.L-11.1)

MLA TRAVEL AND LIVING EXPENSES**AUTHORITY**

- (1) Every Member is entitled to an annual accountable allowance, to a maximum that is determined in accordance with clause (11), for travel and living expenses that are incurred by a Member who:
- (a) is discharging that Member's duties; and
 - (b) is required to be absent from that Member's home.

TRAVEL AND LIVING EXPENSES ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- (2) Members may seek reimbursement by attaching receipts to a travel expense claim form approved by the Board of Internal Economy or seek direct payment on their behalf by attaching invoices to the form, as follows:
- (a) by certifying on the form that the expense is in respect of his or her duties as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, being the representative of all constituents, and not in respect of his or her role as a member of a political party; and
 - (b) by signing his or her name directly upon the accompanying receipt or invoice, as the case may be.

CLAIMING TRAVEL AND LIVING EXPENSES

- (3) In order to claim for travel and living expenses, a Member must:
- (a) in the case of travel by private vehicle, submit a request for reimbursement for travel expenses, that states the claim period and the number of kilometres travelled each day in that claim period at not more than the highest rate per kilometre payable to Saskatchewan federal civil servants in accordance with the Federal Government's kilometre rate schedule;
 - (b) in the case of travel by any mode other than private or CVA vehicle, submit a request:
 - (i) for reimbursement of the actual travel expenses to be supported by receipt; or
 - (ii) for direct payment on the Member's behalf to be supported by invoice;
 - (c) for meals, submit a request for reimbursement on the basis of either the rate payable to out-of-scope employees under *The Public Service Act, 1998* as set out in the Financial Administration Manual, or the actual and reasonable expenses to be supported by receipts;
 - (d) for accommodation, submit a request for reimbursement on the basis of either the rate payable to out-of-scope employees under *The Public Service Act, 1998* as set out in the Financial Administration Manual, or the actual and reasonable expenses to be supported by receipts.

EXPENSE OPTIONS

- (4) Instead of clause (3)(d), with the required documentation, every Member who represents a constituency wholly outside the city of Regina has the option of claiming reimbursement for accommodation expenses in the city of Regina as follows:
- (a) in the case of leased or rented accommodation, actual expenses to a maximum of \$700 per month to be supported by evidence of payment;
 - (b) in the case of owned accommodation, at the rate payable to out-of-scope employees under the *Public Service Act, 1998* as set out in the Financial Administration Manual, for each day the private accommodation is available for the Member's occupancy and is not rented to any other person. No claim for rent by any other Member in respect

of the same premises may be reimbursed.

- (5) A Member who chooses the option set out in clause (4) is eligible for the amount claimed whether the Assembly is sitting or not and only if:
 - (a) the Member decides to maintain two residences to facilitate that Member's duties;
 - (b) one of the residences is located in the city of Regina; and
 - (c) the accommodation is owned or leased in the Member's name and the transaction is not with another Member or with a person or an entity that is listed in clause (9) in Directive #4.1;
- (6) When the Assembly is sitting, if a Member who represents a constituency wholly outside the city of Regina chooses not to make a claim for meals and accommodation under clauses (3)(c) and (d) and the Member is not making a claim under clause (4), the Member may claim \$73 per day without receipts for meals and accommodation for each day the Assembly is sitting, to be paid bi-weekly in arrears.

AIR PROVISIONS

- (7) In addition to the maximum amount set out in clause (11), Members for the constituencies of Athabasca and Cumberland are entitled to reimbursement or to have direct payment made on the Member's behalf for two return trips per year by air from the Member's place of permanent residence in the constituency to each community in the constituency.
- (8) If a Member travels between his or her constituency and Regina by means of a commercial scheduled airliner, the Member shall be reimbursed or have direct payment made on the Member's behalf for the cost of the air ticket in full; the Member's travel allowance shall be reduced by an amount equivalent to the cost of one return trip between Regina and his or her constituency, or the actual cost of the flight, whichever is less.
- (9) During periods when the Assembly is sitting, any Member living 350 kilometres or more from Regina may travel by executive aircraft between Regina and his or her home in the constituency. The actual cost of the air trip shall be paid by the Legislative Assembly Office; the Member's travel allowance shall be reduced by an amount equivalent to the cost of one return trip between Regina and his or her constituency, or the actual cost of the flight, whichever is less. A Member's spouse may accompany the Member on any of these air trips in accordance with Executive Air standby policy. In the event there is a charge for travel by the spouse, the cost of the airfare for the spouse shall be borne by the Member.
- (10) Notwithstanding clause (9), any Member is entitled to claim the cost charged by Executive Air for each air trip taken on executive aircraft at any time during the allowance year; and that Member's travel allowance shall be reduced by the amount of that air trip based on fair market value. An air trip:
 - (a) must be on a flight authorized by a Member of the Executive Council who is travelling on executive government business;
 - (b) may only be undertaken by a Member if the air trip was scheduled prior to the Member requesting the trip; and
 - (d) may be used by a Member, who is a Member of Executive Council, if that air trip was a previously scheduled air trip, if the Member of Executive Council mentioned in this clause did not authorize the air trip and is travelling on MLA business and not executive business.

MAXIMUM ACCOUNTABLE ALLOWANCE

- (11) Subject to clauses (7) to (9), the maximum amount for reimbursement to a Member for that Member's annual travel and living expenses is to be determined as follows:
 - (a) For Members who represent constituencies wholly located in the city of Regina the maximum allowable travel and living expenses is the sum of:
 - (i) 20,000 kilometres multiplied by the highest amount per kilometre during the year paid to Saskatchewan federal civil servants in accordance with the Federal Government kilometre rate schedule, and
 - (ii) 4,200;
 - (b) For Members who represent constituencies of 100 square kilometres or less, excluding those constituencies wholly located in the city of Regina, the maximum allowable travel and living expenses is the sum of:

- (i) The distance in kilometres for 52 round trips between Regina and the largest centre in the constituency or the home of the Member in the constituency, whichever is the greater, plus 20,000 kilometres multiplied by the highest amount per kilometre during the year paid to Saskatchewan federal civil servants in accordance with the Federal Government's kilometre rate schedule, and
- (ii) \$8,400;
- (c) For Members who represent constituencies of more than 100 square kilometres but less than 2,000 square kilometres, the maximum allowable travel and living expenses is the sum of:
 - (i) The distance in kilometres for 52 round trips between Regina and the largest centre in the constituency or the home of the Member in the constituency, whichever is the greater, plus 32,500 kilometres multiplied by the highest amount per kilometre during the year paid to Saskatchewan federal civil servants in accordance with the Federal Government's kilometre rate schedule, and
 - (ii) for constituencies located wholly outside of the city of Regina, \$8,400;
 - (iii) for constituencies located partially within the city of Regina, \$4,200;
- (d) For Members who represent constituencies over 2,000 square kilometres, the maximum allowable travel and living expenses is the sum of:
 - (i) The distance in kilometres for 52 round trips between Regina and the largest centre in the constituency or the home of the Member in the constituency, whichever is the greater, plus 45,000 kilometres multiplied by the highest amount per kilometre during the year paid to Saskatchewan federal civil servants in accordance with the Federal Government's kilometre rate schedule, and
 - (ii) \$8,400.

In calculating the maximum annual allowable expenses for Members of Executive Council, the Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition only one-half of the amounts stated in clauses (11)(a)(i), (b)(i), (c)(i), (c)(ii) or (d)(i), as the case may be, is to be used in determining that Member's maximum annual allotment.

ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT

- (13) Except for the Financial Administration Manual rates and the kilometre rates, on April 1 of each year the dollar amounts stated in this Directive shall be increased or decreased by the annual change in the Consumer Price Index for Saskatchewan and this Directive may thereupon be reproduced to include the indexed amounts without further amendment.

A debate arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1509

The Board recessed for a short time.

ITEM 4

Decision Item: Committee Indemnity and Expenses

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. Bjornerud:

That, effective July 27, 2000, Directive #17.1 Committee Indemnity and Expenses be revoked, and that, effective July 27, 2000, Directive #17.2 Committee Indemnity and Expenses, as attached, be adopted.

DIRECTIVE #17.2

(s. 50(3)(k), c.L-11.1)

COMMITTEE INDEMNITY AND EXPENSES

- (1) Subject to clause (4) every Member who serves on a committee of the Assembly is eligible to claim travel and living expenses and an indemnity of \$79 for each day the Member attends a meeting of the Committee or attends to the business of the Committee, that is authorized by the Committee:
 - (a) during an interval between sessions; or

- (b) where the Assembly adjourns for a period of 30 or more continuous days, during the period of that adjournment.
- (2) Claims for Committee travel and living expenses shall be made in the same manner as set out in Directive #3.1, but shall not be charged against the Member's annual travel and living expenses allowance.
- (3) All claims for a Member's Committee indemnities and expenses shall be charged to the appropriate Committee budget.
- (4) A Member who chooses the monthly accommodation option set out in clause (4) of Directive #3.1 is not entitled to claim for accommodation expenses when the Committee is meeting in the city of Regina or the Member is attending to Committee business in the city of Regina.
- (5) On April 1 of each year the dollar amount of the daily indemnity set out in clause (1) of this Directive shall be increased or decreased by the annual change in the Consumer Price Index for Saskatchewan and this Directive may be reproduced to include the indexed amounts without further amendment.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1510

ITEM 5 Decision Item – MLA Benefits: Dental Plan and Extended Health Benefits

Moved by Mr. Hillson, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That, with respect to the Dental Plan, the exclusion of Members' children aged 5 to 13 inclusive be removed; and

That Members of the Legislative Assembly be included in the Legislative Assembly Extended Health Care Plan; and

That the Speaker be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to implement these changes as soon as possible and no later than October 1, 2000.

A discussion arising and the question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1511

The Chair committed to bring back information to the Board regarding the legal implications of pension beneficiaries

ITEM 6 Decision Item: Process to Recommend Salary Levels of Certain Independent Officers of the Legislative Assembly

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Ms. Jones:

That the Board of Internal Economy:

- (a) Endorse the establishment of a task team of officials, which includes representation from executive government and the Legislative Assembly, to:
- (i) identify and scope out the issues related to determining the salaries of independent officers of the Legislative Assembly;
 - (ii) make recommendations to Cabinet and to the Board of Internal Economy on a method for establishing appropriate salary levels for the independent officers;
 - (iii) make recommendations to Cabinet and to the Board of Internal Economy on appropriate salary levels for the independent officers.
- (b) endorse the following membership of the Officials' Task Team:
- Perry Erhardt, Clerk of the Executive Council (co-chair)
 - Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly (co-chair)
 - Lynn Minja, Director, Machinery of Government, Executive Council
 - Ken Ring, Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk, Legislative Assembly
 - Doug Moen, Executive Director, Public Law, Justice

The question being put and a debate arising, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1512

The Board recessed for a short time.

ITEM 7**Decision Item: Process for consideration of the Legislative Assembly and Officers of the Assembly Budgets**

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the Board of Internal Economy adopt the following process for the next fiscal year for consideration of the Legislative Assembly and Officers of the Assembly budgets:

1. Budgets to be distributed to Board Members one to two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.
2. Senior management appear before the Board to present the budget of the respective office.
3. Board Members discuss the budget and ask questions of the Officers.
4. The board meets *in camera* to deliberate on the necessary decisions.
5. The board meets in public with the Officials present to announce its decision regarding the budget request.
6. The Chair of the Board transmits the approved Estimates to the Minister of Finance for inclusion in the *Estimates* book for tabling in the House.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute # 1513

The Board adjourned at 7:38 p.m. to the call of the Chair.

The board met at 5:25 p.m.

The Chair: — Ladies and gentlemen, I think while between munchies, maybe we'll . . . I'd like to call our meeting to order, the Board of Internal Economy meeting — our second one of the year 2000.

I welcome you all back and I hope everybody's enjoying their summer. Some are enjoying more than others; you can tell by the colours. Anyway we'll get right at it so we don't have to keep people here any longer than they absolutely want to stay here.

So the first thing I'd like to do is ask for the members' approval of the proposed agenda that was presented to you.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Chairman. One small addition with respect to a motion that I would like to propose, dealing with the consideration of the budgets and the timing that the budgets would be distributed to board members. And just ensuring that there would be a lead time, an appropriate time between when we deliberate on the budgets and when we first see them.

The Chair: — Anything else? Any members?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Other than that, I'd move the adoption of the agenda.

The Chair: — Mr. Lautermilch has moved adoption of the agenda. Is it the committee's pleasure to agree?

A Member: — Agree.

The Chair: — Agreed. Thank you.

The minutes from our last meeting, our first meeting, have been distributed to all board members and I would appreciate any comments with respect to omissions or corrections or errors in the minutes. If not, then a motion to adopt the minutes as circulated. Moved by Mr. Bjornerud. All those in favour? Carried.

Okay, now, item no. 1 on our agenda is the tabling of the Legislative Assembly quarterly financial fiscal forecast report. That's for the first quarter. And that's been distributed again to each of the board members. Any comments or discussion with respect to that item?

If not, then we'll just carry right on and move into our next item. It's a decision item and it deals with security recommendations. And before we go into that, the discussions on security matters is generally held in camera. And is it the board's wish to have this particular item discussed in camera?

A Member: — Yes.

The Chair: — Okay. We can do that. Now does the board feel that it's necessary to have our *Hansard* people absent during this discussion as well?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I think that that's sort of the normal

course of action, is it not as we've gone in camera, Gwenn? I can't recall how we've done it. I know it's not recorded in *Hansard* but . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — It's whatever, just whatever . . .

The Chair: — Whatever your wish is.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I don't think it matters. As long as it's not recorded in *Hansard*.

The board continued in camera.

The Chair: — There have been some recommendations with respect to security of the building. I will prepare to entertain a motion. Mr. Lautermilch. Secunder? Mr. D'Autremont.

A Member: — What is it?

The Chair: — To apply or accept recommendations no. 1, 3, and 4 as presented by the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And that more information would be brought back with respect to recommendation 2.

The Chair: — Yes, okay, thank you. Seconded by Mr. D'Autremont. All those in favour? Opposed? None. Carried.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, if I could, I just would like to say to Patrick and to you . . . you know, through you to your staff, our thanks for their work and their diligence on these issues.

I know that all of us are very much aware of the potential for difficulties that have happened in other jurisdictions in other legislative buildings. And the recommendations that you brought to us, I think make some . . . make common sense and still allow people of the province access to their building. And so I thank you for this work and for your ongoing work.

Mr. Shaw: — Thank you very much. Thank you all for your time and consideration of these important matters. I believe they are. And I want to assure everyone here that the last thing in my mind is to have a fortress locked, barred, and shuttered that precludes people from entering here and I do believe that this is the building of the people.

By the same token, however, I believe that taking precautions is much better than reacting to something . . . that a life is lost or somebody is maimed seriously. So it's my view to be proactive and cautious as opposed to clean up the mess after it's finished.

So I thank you very much for your time and consideration.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Pat.

Then we'll move right on to decision item no. 3, the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) travel and living expenses. And what I would like to do, committee members, at this time is give you some background and I'd like to read it into the record.

The Board of Internal Economy directive #3, the MLA travel expenses, authorizes reimbursement for travel expenses that members incur in discharging their duties as members. Members are allocated a maximum annual amount to be used for transportation, accommodation, and meal expenses.

This directive, however, excludes members of the Executive Council, the Speaker, and the Leader of the Opposition.

Board of Internal Economy directive #1.1, MLA sessional expenses, provides all members, including the members of Executive Council, the Speaker, and Leader of the Opposition, with funds to reimburse them for additional expenses they incur to attend sittings of the Assembly.

Members who represent constituencies wholly or partially in the city of Regina may claim meal expenses while members in all other constituencies may be reimbursed for both meal and accommodation expenses.

As the role of members changes, these two provisions no longer meet their needs. Many members have determined that it is necessary for them to maintain a second residence in the city of Regina on a full-time basis in order to meet their commitments as legislators, as members of legislative committees, and as members of a caucus. The current provisions do not provide for the maintenance of a full-time residence in Regina at times when the Assembly is not sitting.

Members who have been provided with an executive vehicle may . . . pardon me, with an executive vehicle have not had funds available to them to assist with travel and living expenses when they were required to travel in their capacities as MLAs. The present amount allotted to members who represent constituencies within the city of Regina does not recognize that, as part of their caucus duties, these members frequently are required to travel throughout the province.

Therefore, the proposal before the board is that in order to address the problems discussed above, it is proposed that directive #1.1, MLA sessional expenses, and directive #3, MLA travel expenses, be revoked and that the provisions of these two directives be combined into a new directive, #3.1, MLA travel and living expenses.

First of all it will provide members with flexibility in using these expense funds to meet their individual needs while maintaining accountability and transparency in the claiming process. It will also reduce administrative rules and procedures by replacing two different sets of procedures and forms with one. It will also allow members with large constituencies that are a great distance from Regina to spend more on travel and less on living expenses in Regina, if they so wish.

Therefore the recommendation is that effective July 27, 2000, that directive #3, MLA travel expenses, and directive #1.1, MLA sessional expenses, be revoked.

And secondly, that directive #3.1, MLA travel and living expenses, as attached be adopted. And that for the 2000-2001 fiscal year only, that the annual amount stated in sections (11)(a)(ii) and (11)(c)(iii) be reduced to \$3,150, and that the annual amount stated in sections (11)(b)(ii), (11)(c)(ii), and

(11)(d)(ii) be reduced to \$6,300.

That is the recommendation proposed to the board. Any questions or discussions?

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Have we had any opinion on the income tax status of the proposal here?

The Chair: — In answer to your question, I'll allow our director of financial services who is very familiar with this process to answer that, if I may, Mr. Hillson.

Ms. Borowski: — Yes, we have done some work on that. Under the provisions of the Income Tax Act, the provision of lodging and meals normally would be considered a taxable benefit and that would be, you know, for most individuals. It also would be for members too.

Now we were concerned about that and so we did some surveying with other legislatures across Canada. And the House of Commons, as it turns out, has gone through a whole . . . this type of thing, a proposal for providing secondary accommodation to their members.

And in the process of doing that . . . In fact, very much what they wanted to do was what was the plan, the original plan, with the directive for MLAs, and that is that members would be reimbursed mortgage payments, interest, taxes, that they would have utilities paid for — those sorts of things.

What Revenue Canada told them was those would be taxable benefits. And in the end, what Revenue Canada was agreeable to — and which they received a letter from Revenue Canada stating — in the case of rental property, rental property may be reimbursed based on a receipt, and they were willing to accept that without a taxable benefit.

However, if you were going to include in that the payment of utilities, taxes, cleaning services, you know all various things like that, that those would be considered taxable benefits.

So they did say, they did agree that if, as part of your rental agreement, you are able to have utilities and those sorts of things included under the lease agreement that you have, then that's fine. The lease agreement, the amount you pay, would be receipted and would be acceptable as a reimbursement.

In the case of owned accommodation, they stated that to pay for principal, interest, taxes, utilities, condominium fees, any sorts of those things would be a taxable benefit. The value of that would be added to your income and it would be taxed.

So in the end what they were able to work out with Revenue Canada, and Revenue Canada agreed to, was that in the case of owned property they would consider it acceptable for members to be reimbursed accommodation based on the — in their case — the Treasury Board rate, which would be similar to our \$25 rate. Actually in Ottawa, the House of Commons, that rate is \$13.50.

But they said you could be reimbursed based on that, and you could be reimbursed for 365 days a year, providing that space was available for occupancy for the member during that time.

So for example, if you had a . . . you had owned property and you were going to rent it out to someone else for the summer months, you would not be able to submit a claim. But if for the 365 days or for whatever number of days that you wish to submit a claim, the accommodation is available for your occupancy — whether or not you stay there — then you may make a claim for accommodation.

So because of the Revenue Canada, you know, and the taxable benefits, we felt that that would be the procedures we would want to use for members here too with staying away from reimbursement of mortgage and interest and principal and those sorts of things.

In this case, the rate that would be comparable to the rate that Ottawa is using would be our \$25 a night that's allowed for private accommodation. And again they do consider it, and we would be considering it too, to be a reimbursement of accommodation expenses. It's not a reimbursement of utilities. It's not a reimbursement of taxes or anything like that. It is a reimbursement of private accommodation.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — So basically then it comes down to actual rental, or if it's owned accommodation it would be a claim for the \$25 a night that's already in place or what the situation is.

Ms. Borowski: — But it could be a claim for the whole month. Like you could, for example . . .

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Whether we are physically here or not, you're saying.

Ms. Borowski: — Yes, yes.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Okay, provided I haven't sublet . . .

Ms. Borowski: — As long as that . . . Up to a maximum of 700, but provided the place is available for your occupancy.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Has not been sublet.

Ms. Borowski: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Okay.

The Chair: — Thank you, Marilyn.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Yes, I'm just wondering, Ron, Mr. Chairman, I certainly want to thank her for that. I mean it's obvious you did do considerable research.

But is there a . . . It seems to me there is a need though to have something in writing and perhaps circulated, you know, if in the event that this is . . . If in the event this is approved — you've obviously done your homework — but in the event this is approved, I think that something should go out to the members so that everyone's very clear on that.

The Chair: — Yes, thank you, Jack. That's a good point.

Ms. Borowski: — We did provide, with your minutes, a copy of the documents that we intend to send out to members when . . . if these changes are approved.

Now, I haven't put a lot of mention in there about Revenue Canada, but I certainly could, you know, mention that a lot of . . . the documentation that we are asking for is in agreement, or is to meet the conditions of Revenue Canada.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Okay. That's all.

The Chair: — Any other questions or comments? If not, then I would be prepared to have someone move a motion and the motion . . . Mr. D'Autremont. Seconder? Seconder for . . . Mr. Hillson.

The motion reads:

That effective July 27, 2000,

- (1) Directive #3, MLA travel expenses, and directive #1.1, MLA sessional expenses, be revoked, and
- (2) That directive #3.1, MLA travel and living expenses, as attached be adopted, and
- (3) That for the 2000-2001 fiscal year only, that the annual amount stated in sections (11)(a)(ii) and (11)(c)(iii) be reduced to \$3,150, and that the annual amount stated in sections (11)(b)(ii), (11)(c)(ii), and (11)(d)(ii) be reduced to \$6,300.

Any questions or comments? All those in favour of the motion? Any opposed? None. Carried. Okay, I thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

We'll move right on then to item no. 4 on our agenda — the committee indemnity and expenses. I have that here. And once again, just some background here. The Board of Internal Economy directive #17.1, committee indemnity and expense, provides a per diem indemnity and travel expenses for members who attend meetings of a legislative committee during periods when the Assembly is not sitting. Both the indemnity and the travel expenses are claimed on a separate committee claims form.

Under the present system, committee travel expenses include expenses for transportation and living expenses which includes meals and accommodation. These are the same expenses that may be charged under directive #3, the MLA travel expenses. However, the amounts that may be claimed are subject to different rules than those that are used for MLA travel.

The different rates are confusing to members and staff and the use of different forms for different rates are confusing to members and staff — I just said that — for regular travel and committee travel requires additional administrative procedures for members and staff to ensure that the appropriate directive is being accessed and that members are not claiming twice for the same expense.

Therefore, the proposal is that committee travel be removed from the committee directive and that it be claimed as part of MLA travel under directive #3.1, the MLA travel and living expenses. Committee expenses would not be charged against the MLA travel provision but would continue to be charged against the applicable committee budget.

This proposal would apply the same rules, rates, and procedures to all MLA travel and only one form would need to be used. This will simplify the claiming procedure for members and will reduce the administrative requirements of financial services staff which should result in more efficient processing of members' claims.

Under this proposal, the set rate option of claiming living expenses and the provision for committee travel days is eliminated. Members may continue to claim expenses for travelling to and from committee meetings; however, these expenses will now be based on the actual circumstances that apply to each individual member.

Therefore it is recommended that effective July 27, 2000, directive #17.1, committee indemnity and expenses, be revoked and that effective July 27, 2000, directive #17.2, committee indemnity and expenses, as attached, be adopted.

I would entertain a mover for that motion.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Chairman, I don't know that we have . . . and I don't know what the implications of this directive are and I don't think that this has been something that we've had an opportunity to discuss with caucus members. Certainly I haven't with our caucus members.

Ms. Ronyk: — It was in the package from the beginning.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Can I just ask you one question?

The Chair: — Did you wish to take a brief recess?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Just a brief recess.

The Chair: — Can we just take a brief recess? Will members agree? A brief recess.

The board recessed for a period of time.

The Chair: — Based on our recent discussions, very recent discussions, I am prepared to accept a motion.

Mr. D'Autremont: — How do we gain an understanding of what the motion is about?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Because of all the confusion, I'm wondering if maybe you'd advise me or allow me to move this motion, now that I know where we're going.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Lautermilch. Seconder, Mr. Bjornerud.

Will the board take the motion as read? All those in favour? Any opposed? None. Carried. I thank you.

We'll move on then to item no. 5, and this item deals with MLA benefits — dental plan and extended health care plan. I'll just give you a little bit of a background.

The current MLA dental plan excludes children aged 5 to 13 inclusive from coverage in the plan, the dental plan. This is a disadvantage to members with young families. It also creates

administrative problems as no other participants in this plan — that is out-of-scope government and all legislative employees — are subject to this restriction.

This inconsistent provision has prevented the Legislative Assembly from converting to electronic claim submission for dental claims because substantial computer program changes would be required to accommodate the excluded dependents of members.

The removal of the inconsistent provision would allow us to offer all participants the benefits of electronic submission of claims directly from the dental office rather than having to seek reimbursement. Electronic claim submission will eliminate the need for paper claims to be submitted through the Legislative Assembly Office. This would ease administrative resources in the Legislative Assembly Office.

The Legislative Assembly extended health care plan does not currently include elected members. The Assembly plan is a separate contract that offers the same benefits as are provided to public servants in the public employees' extended health care plans. All legislative employees, caucus and constituency staff are included in the Assembly plan. Only members are not covered.

In recent years, it's become the practice in government to negotiate improvements in benefits as part of the overall employee compensation plan in lieu of straight monetary increases. It is appropriate that similar benefits be part of the MLA compensation package. The board is authorized to provide such a benefit plan to members pursuant to subsection 58.1(2)(c) of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

The recommendations therefore . . . Oh, just one other thing I should mention. The extended health care benefits are commonly available to elected members in other Canadian jurisdictions. In a recent survey conducted by the Clerk's office, of the 11 jurisdictions that have replied to date, all provide an extended health care plan to members.

So the recommendations are that, with respect to the dental plan, the exclusion of members' children aged 5 to 13 inclusive be removed. And secondly, that members of the Legislative Assembly be included in the Legislative Assembly extended health care plan. And thirdly, that the Speaker be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to implement these changes as soon as possible and no later than October 1, 2000.

Any discussion, questions, comments?

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — So moved.

The Chair: — Moved by Mr. Hillson. Seconder? Mr. D'Autremont?

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'll second it, but I also have a question that doesn't relate necessarily directly to this but is towards the benefit thing.

I'm interested in if there's a possibility to make a change in the pension situation. It was something that we need to be looking

into. So we can talk about that maybe after we're done this motion.

The Chair: — Okay, it's been moved by Mr. Hillson, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont. Will the board take the motion as read?

A Member: — Agreed.

The Chair: — All those in favour of the motion? Opposed? None. Carried. Thank you very much.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The item I wanted to make under the MLA benefit, on our pension plan right now you . . . your spouse is your designate as far as a beneficiary of your pension.

And I wonder if you could look into the fact, would it possible to change that so that you could designate whomever you wanted and what the legal implications of that would be? And what's the survivor benefit thing or dependents' maintenance — the law involved in that and how that would be impacted if this kind of a change was made?

The Chair: — Please give us the opportunity to have the staff look into that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Absolutely.

The Chair: — And that's a good point you raised, Dan. I thank you for that.

Can we go on then to item no. 6. Item no. 6 deals with the process to recommend salary levels of certain independent officers of the Legislative Assembly.

Now there is currently no common standard or process for determining the salary levels of the independent officers of the Legislative Assembly. This has resulted in an ad hoc approach to setting the salary levels of these officers. Some positions are linked directly to salary levels of senior public servants and others are based on more unique approaches.

A consistent and transparent approach to the salary levels of the independent officer positions would eliminate the ad hoc approach which currently exists. An initial process is required to establish fairness and certainty in the salary levels.

Therefore, and we have some . . . attached some additional information with respect to the backgrounds and rationale which you will have in your packages. So at this time I would like to go to the recommendations:

That the Board of Internal Economy, first of all:

Endorse the establishment of a task team of officials which includes representation from executive government and the Legislative Assembly to:

- (i) identify and scope out the issues related to determining the salaries of independent officers of the Legislative Assembly;
- (ii) make recommendations to cabinet and to the Board of Internal Economy on a method for

establishing appropriate . . . pardon me, salary levels for the independent officers;

(iii) make recommendations to cabinet and to the Board of Internal Economy on appropriate salary levels for the independent officers.

(b) endorse the following membership of the Officials' Task Team:

- Perry Erhardt, Clerk of the Executive Council, who would act as Co-Chair;
- Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, to serve as Co-Chair;
- Lynn Minja, Director, Machinery of Government, in Executive Council;
- Ken Ring, Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk, for the Legislative Assembly; and
- Doug Moen, who is the Executive Director of Public Law in Justice.

And I would invite any questions or comments or discussion on these proposals.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Chairman, I would move the recommendation. I think it gives a very balanced approach to selecting appropriate levels for officers, independent officers, of the Legislative Assembly.

And I think that the team of officials that have been recommended to the board can very adequately serve the needs of selecting appropriate pay levels for these very important officers of the Assembly. So I would be willing to move that motion.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Lautermilch.

A Member: — Bob Bjornerud seconds.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Might I ask a question, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: — Yes.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Who sets the salary level of the librarian? Of our librarian.

The Chair: — The Board of Internal Economy.

Mr. Kowalsky: — But is the librarian not considered an officer of the legislature?

The Chair: — No.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Not exactly.

The Chair: — No.

Ms. Ronyk: — Not in the same way as these are.

The Chair: — As the Ombudsman and . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — As is the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Law Clerk, and the Clerk. They are House officers, House staff.

Mr. Kowalsky: — House staff.

The Chair: — The motion's been moved by Mr. Lautermilch . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Question on the membership of the officials' task force team. I'm wondering why the Clerk of the Executive Council and why the Executive Council to the machinery of government would be on the task force? If there was an explanation of why those two particular individuals . . .

The Chair: — Gwenn, could you respond to that, please.

Ms. Ronyk: — If I might just respond, I'm not just sure why those two individuals other than . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, I meant the officers, not necessarily the individual names, but . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes. Several of the House officers according to their legislation are appointed by cabinet, by order in council. And so it was felt that there ought to be representation from both executive and the legislative side. The board sets some of the salaries; order in council sets some of the other salaries. So for cabinet to receive a recommendation from this committee, it was felt there needed to be some Executive Council representation on it as well.

They're all House officers but the current method of appointments in their Acts has a role for Executive Council.

The Chair: — Anything else? There's a motion moved by Mr. Lautermilch. Do you want me to read the entire motion again or will you take it as read? We need a seconder; I'm looking for a seconder. Ms. Jones. Will the board take the motion as read? All those in favour? Opposed? None. Carried. Thank you very much.

Now we have an item that Mr. Lautermilch had brought forward earlier and that's with respect to budgets, I believe.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Right, I think, Mr. Chairman, just with respect to the process. The Board of Internal Economy is becoming, I guess over a period of time, more and more involved in setting budgets of independent officers of the legislature; certainly the Clerk brings forward the Legislative Assembly Office budget.

And I think members, certainly I, have felt that at times I would have benefited as a member of this board if I had had the budget requests in a . . . I wouldn't say a more timely fashion but if there was a bit more lead time between when I received the budget and the request for the budgets and the actual Board of Internal Economy date.

And I would be much more comfortable if in fact we could receive the budgets so that we could look through them and be comfortable with what is being proposed in, say, a week to two-week period prior to the meeting.

And so my motion today would be, if I have a seconder, I will move:

That the Board of Internal Economy adopt the following process for the next fiscal year for consideration of the Legislative Assembly and officers of the Assembly budgets that:

1. The budgets be distributed to the board members one to two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.
2. That the senior management appear before the board, as they do, to present the budget of the respective offices or office.
3. The board members discuss the budget, of course, and ask questions of the officer.
4. That the board meets in camera to deliberate on the necessary decisions.
5. The board meets in public with the officials present to announce its decision regarding budget requests.
6. And that the Chair of the board transmits the approved estimates to the Minister of Finance for inclusion in the *Estimates* book for tabling in the House.

I so move.

The Chair: — You've heard the motion put forward by Mr. Lautermilch with respect to the board's budgets, budgets for the legislative officers.

A Member: — I wonder if we can have a copy of that?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — We can get some made, maybe, Margaret?

The Chair: — While we're waiting, do you want to recess for a couple of minutes?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Sure.

The Chair: — Or did you want to have some discussion or recess? We'll take a few minutes recess then.

The board recessed for a period of time.

The Chair: — We have a motion put forward by Mr. Lautermilch, and I'll read the motion:

That the Board of Internal Economy adopt the following process for the next fiscal year for consideration of Legislative Assembly and officers of the Assembly budgets:

1. Budgets to be distributed to board members one to two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.
2. Senior management appear before the board to present the budget of the respective office.
3. Board members discuss the budget and ask questions of the officers.

4. The board meets in camera to deliberate on the necessary decisions.
5. The board meets in public with the officials present to announce its decision regarding the budget request.
6. The Chair of the board transmits the approved estimates to the Minister of Finance for inclusion in the *Estimates* book for tabling in the House.

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch. Do I have a seconder? Any discussion? Seconded by Mr. D'Autremont. Any discussion? If there are no questions or any further discussion, all those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? None. Carried. Carried unanimously.

Well that, ladies and gentlemen, that brings us to the conclusion of the agenda. I want to, before I call for a motion to adjourn, I want to thank the staff that are here — I should have mentioned to you — Margaret, my assistant in the office, and Gwenn of course, and Marilyn, for a lot of the background work that they've done to prepare us for this meeting. And I want to thank our lady from *Hansard* as well for being patient with us.

And I know the meal wasn't the type that would entice these people to want to rush back here for another supper board meeting, but maybe we can make up for that later. And the staff that's here, Chris and Reg. Thank you very, very much.

Enjoy the rest of the summer. I expect that perhaps we'll be calling for a get together maybe after September when things have settled down a bit, if that's okay.

I'll now entertain a motion for adjournment. Mr. Kowalsky. This meeting is now adjourned. Thank you again.

The board adjourned at 7:38 p.m.