



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Minutes and Verbatim Report



No. 2 — June 28, 2001

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
Prince Albert Carlton

Bob Bjornerud
Saltcoats

Dan D'Autremont
Cannington

Carolyn Jones
Saskatoon Meewasin

Judy Junor
Saskatoon Eastview

Hon. Ron Osika
Melville

Hon. Harry Van Mulligen
Regina Victoria

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Room 10 Legislative Building

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy

Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky, Chair
 Mr. Bob Bjornerud
 Mr. Dan D'Autremont
 Hon. Ron Osika
 Ms. Judy Junor
 Ms. Carolyn Jones
 Hon. Harry Van Mulligen

Staff to the Board

Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk
 Margaret Kleisinger, Secretary to the Board

Officials in Attendance

Viktor Kaczkowski, Clerk Assistant (Committees)
 Ken Ring, Legislative Council and Law Clerk
 Lynn Minja, Director, Machinery of Government

AGENDA Moved by Ms. Jones that the proposed agenda be adopted. Agreed.

MINUTES Moved by Ms. Jones, ordered, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont, that the Minutes of Meeting #1/01 be adopted. Agreed.

ITEM 1 Decision Item: Standing Committee on Health Care Budget

Viktor Kaczkowski presented the budget for the Standing Committee on Health Care.

Moved by Mr. Van Mulligen, seconded by Mr. Bjornerud:

That the proposed budget of the Standing Committee on Health Care for the 2001-2002 fiscal year be approved in the amount of \$87,166.00

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

Minute #1536

ITEM 2 Decision Item: Report of the Task Team on Independent Officers' Remuneration

The report of the Task Team on Independent Officers' Remuneration was presented by Gwenn Ronyk, Lynn Minja and Ken Ring, members of the task team in attendance.

Moved by Mr. Van Mulligen, seconded by Mr. Bjornerud:

That Directive #27 *Ombudsman's Salary and Expenses* and directive #28 *Children's Advocate Salary and Expenses* be adopted, and

That Directive #20 *Conflict of Interest Commissioner's Salary and Expenses* and Directive #26 *Chief Electoral Officer's Salary and Expenses* be adopted as amended. (Amendments in bold).

DIRECTIVE #27 -- OMBUDSMAN'S SALARY AND EXPENSES

(1) Section 6 of *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act* provides that:

- 6 The Ombudsman is entitled to be paid:
 - (a) a salary to be fixed by the Board of Internal Economy; and
 - (b) an allowance for traveling and other expenses incurred in the performance of the duties of the Ombudsman at a rate approved by the Board of Internal Economy.

(2) Section 15 of *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Amendment Act*, 2000 provided that:

15(1) Subject to subsection (2), this Act comes into force on assent.

(2) Sections 5, 9 and 14 are retroactive and are deemed to have been in force on and from March 31, 2000.

(3) The Ombudsman shall be paid an annual salary of:

(a) effective April 1, 2000, \$115,560;

(b) effective April 1, 2001, \$117,492;

(c) effective April 1, 2002, the average of all deputy minister and acting deputy minister salaries as determined annually at April 1. Once established, the salary is not to be reduced from the salary received the previous year. The Ombudsman would also receive any privileges of office and economic adjustments that are provided to deputy ministers.

(4) The Ombudsman is eligible to be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of his or her duties in accordance with the tariff of travel and sustenance expenses provided under *The Public Service Act* for out of scope employees in the Public Service.

DIRECTIVE #28 -- CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE SALARY AND EXPENSES

(1) Section 12.3 of *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act* provides that:

12.3 The Children's Advocate is entitled to be paid:

(a) a salary to be fixed by the Board of Internal Economy; and

(b) an allowance for traveling and other expenses incurred in the performance of the duties of the Children's Advocate at a rate approved by the Board of Internal Economy.

(2) Section 15 of *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Amendment Act*, 2000 provided that:

15(1) Subject to subsection (2), this Act comes into force on assent.

(2) Sections 5, 9 and 14 are retroactive and are deemed to have been in force on and from March 31, 2000.

(3) The Children's Advocate shall be paid an annual salary of:

(a) effective April 1, 2000, \$115,560;

(b) effective April 1, 2001, \$117,492;

(c) effective April 1, 2002, the average of all deputy minister and acting deputy minister salaries as determined annually at April 1. Once established, the salary is not to be reduced from the salary received the previous year. The Children's Advocate would also receive any privileges of office and economic adjustments that are provided to deputy ministers.

(4) The Children's Advocate is eligible to be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of his or her duties in accordance with the tariff of travel and sustenance expenses provided under *The Public Service Act* for out of scope employees in the Public Service.

DIRECTIVE #20 -- CONFLICT OF INTEREST COMMISSIONER'S SALARY AND EXPENSES

(Amendments in bold)

(1) Section 22 of *The Members' Conflict of Interest Act* provides that:

22 The commissioner is entitled to be paid:

(a) a salary to be fixed by the Board of Internal Economy; and

(b) an allowance for travelling and other expenses incurred in the performance of the duties of the commissioner at a rate approved by the Board of Internal Economy.

(2) **Effective April 1, 2001**, pursuant to section 22 of *The Members' Conflict of Interest Act*, there shall be paid to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner an annual salary of **\$60,456**.

- (3) **The Conflict of Interest Commissioner is eligible to be reimbursed for** expenses incurred in the performance of his or her duties in accordance with the tariff of travel and sustenance expenses provided under *The Public Service Act* for **out of scope** employees in the Public Service.

DIRECTIVE #26 -- CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER'S SALARY AND EXPENSES

(Amendments in bold)

- (1) Section 4.4 of *The Election Amendment Act, 1998* provides as follows:

4.4 The Chief Electoral Officer is entitled to be paid:

- (a) a salary to be fixed by the Board of Internal Economy following consultations with the Chairperson of the Public Service Commission; and
- (b) an allowance for traveling and other expenses incurred in the performance of the duties of the Chief Electoral Officer at a rate approved by the Board of Internal Economy.

- (2) **The Chief Electoral Officer shall be paid an annual salary of:**

- (a) **effective April 1, 2000, a salary of \$103,392;**
- (b) **effective April 1, 2001, a salary of \$105,456;**
- (c) **effective April 1, 2002 and thereafter, a salary equal to the Senior Executive 2 range or equivalent.**

- (3) **Employee benefits applicable to the public servants of Saskatchewan and Legislative Assembly employees shall apply to the position of Chief Electoral Officer.**

- (4) **The Chief Electoral Officer is eligible to be re-imbursed for** travel and other expenses incurred in the performance of his or her duties in accordance with the provisions for travel and other expenses approved under *The Public Service Act* for **out of scope** employees in the Public Service.

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

Minute #1537

Moved by Mr. Van Mulligen, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont:

That the Board of Internal Economy concurs that the next step in the process is for the Minister of Justice to prepare for the next legislative agenda an omnibus bill that amends, and brings into effect at the same time, the changes required in *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate, The Election Act, 1996, The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and The Members' Conflict of Interest Act*.

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

Minute #1538

ITEM 3

Other Business Raised by Members of the Board:

Mr. D'Autremont raised the issue of utility bill payments for Regina accommodation under the Travel Allowance. The Speaker committed to get a ruling from a tax expert re the income tax implications of such reimbursement.

Mr. D'Autremont asked for a clarification on travel allowance rates. The Clerk committed to inquire as to recent changes to these rates.

The Board adjourned at 4:15 p.m. to the call of the Chair.

The board met at 15:05.

The Chair: — ... for enabling the committee to deal with these two issues which would be good to get out of the way as soon as we possibly can.

I also want to thank ... for their presence here today, two members of the committee who are here ... people that were ... did the report on the independent officer's remuneration, Lynn Minja and Ken Ring. And we also have with us as well, Victor Kaczkowski, who will be ... who's going to be here to give us some background information on the health care budget.

My proposal is that we ... looking at the agenda, that we approve the minutes of the last meeting first, then we go to the Standing Committee on Health Care budget. We do a brief introduction with respect to the report of the task team on the independent officer's remuneration, but we go into camera on that item because it deals with matters of personnel.

So first of all, can I have approval for the proposed agenda? Ms. Jones. Those in favour. Motion is carried.

With respect to the minutes of the meeting of the ... first meeting of this year. They were ... members will have received copies of that some time ago; it's the meeting of January 23, 2001.

Motion to approve by Ms. Jones, seconded by Mr. D'Autremont. All in favour.

Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Motion is carried.

The decision item then, Standing Committee on Health Care budget, and we want this presented to the committee.

Now we have with us the Chair of the committee and also the Clerk of the committee, and I'm not sure which way you want to present it to this committee, Ms. Junor. So perhaps both of you could work on it. Or what is your pleasure?

Ms. Junor: — I think I'll let Victor speak to it.

The Chair: — I should just mention that it is the mandate of the Board of Internal Economy to approve the budgets for all special committees of the House, that are constituted by the House.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Good afternoon, members of the committee. As you are aware, the legislature struck the Standing Committee on Health Care on May 16, 2001. Its first order of reference was to hear and report on representations regarding the final report of the Commission on Medicare, usually referred to as the Fyke report. That reference was made on May 25.

Since that time the committee has met, as has the steering committee, to establish how it wishes to proceed. To that end a budget has been prepared based on a number of ... both direction of the steering committee in terms of its schedule and

a number of assumptions based on previous committee activities as far as the cost of committee support, that kind of thing.

So I think what I'll do, at the committee's indulgence, is just review the budget so that everyone's clear on what we are working on.

An assumption was made that the committee would hold approximately 19 meetings. That was the basis for the preparation of the budget. The steering committee decided that once the House rises, the committee would meet twice a week — Tuesdays and Wednesdays — for approximately four weeks throughout the month of July.

Now it's somewhat difficult to make an exact determination because of course we don't know how many witnesses we are expecting to request to appear. The deadline for witnesses wanting to appear before the committee is July 10. For that reason the committee decided that additional days may be ... the committee may meet on additional days, if needed.

So on that basis I made an assumption that we would actually ... it would work out to be an average of three meetings per week for the four weeks in July. I've allowed ... the committee allowed for another three days for the preparation of the report, which would occur sometime in August. And then of course there was an assumption made that the committee would meet for a few days while the House was still in session. So that was an additional four days — hence a total of 19 days.

Section 1 on the proposed budget deals with members' expenses. Most of these ... actually all of them are statutory. They're given amounts, once again based on meeting for a number of days each week for a total of five weeks. So the assumption is that the member would travel to Regina for the meetings on the one day. We'd have a series of meetings that week, and then the member would return. So it was assumed one round trip per member per week in the travel expenses.

Of course the per diems are standard — \$81 per day. So we worked out a calculation of approximately \$18,241 for members' expenses.

In terms of committee support, of course we've got all the support staff — *Hansard*, broadcast and recording, the transcribers. All of that is presented to you here and that was based on the average costs that other committees have experienced in times past.

The other actual day-to-day costs of operating the committee include the report production — \$2,500 was allocated for that. Certain business expenses, including beverage service, postage, equipment I have noted down here in case we need to rent certain audio visual equipment, if the need arises.

The committee did decide that they needed a researcher to work with the committee. And we hired Leslie Anderson at a rate of \$9,000.

And lastly, there was of course the advertising. The committee decided that they wished to advertise at least twice in the four

main Saskatchewan dailies plus twice in all the Saskatchewan weeklies. And that worked out to a cost of almost \$20,000.

So there you have the total budget for the Standing Committee on Health Care estimated at \$87,166.

I don't know if that was too brief or not brief enough. Does anyone have any further questions for either myself or the Chair?

Mr. Bjornerud: — Just one question on the expenses: accommodations. Now if all these meetings are in Regina — and I believe there's a fairly large number of the members that already have accommodation paid for — is that taken into account in this budget?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Yes it is. There are two members of the eight members on the committee who certainly live in Regina. I had estimated six members there, partially because we may have members . . . This particular committee, there's the option for members to substitute on and off the committee so it is hard to have an exact number. So I didn't cut it down.

I think there's a total of three members that wouldn't qualify. But I made it . . . I had it at two members who don't qualify just to give us that extra flexibility.

Mr. Bjornerud: — I guess maybe I should . . . I could add to that though, too. I wasn't just meaning the people that have permanent residences in Regina. But there's a number of us that also have apartments rented but paid for now that do not live in Regina but have apartments in here and would not probably qualify for being paid for accommodation while they were sitting.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — When we were originally discussing the budget we did have the director of finance, Marilyn Borowski, come in and clarify some of those issues so the committee was quite aware of that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess my question is on the number of meetings that you're planning. Are you holding meetings in the afternoons and the evenings or are you holding just afternoon meetings?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — The schedule that was agreed to was: on Tuesdays the committee would meet in the morning from approximately 10 until noon; in the afternoon from 1:30 to 4:30; and then in the evening from 7 to 10. That would be for the Tuesdays. The Wednesdays would be just the morning and afternoon sessions.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Maximizing the time. That's good.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — That's correct.

The Chair: — Are there any further comments or questions? The suggested motion is as follows:

That the proposed budget of the Standing Committee on Health Care for the 2001-2002 fiscal year be approved as attached.

Moved by Mr. Van Mulligen. Seconded by Mr. Bjornerud. Is the committee in favour of the motion?

Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Motion's carried. Thank you. Thank you, Viktor.

The committee will now proceed to the item on the report of the task team on independent officer's remuneration. And I would invite Lynn and Ken Ring to approach the table please.

Just by way of background, I would like to advise the board that the job of the board is to approve the salary level for the Ombudsman, the Children's Advocate, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and the Chief Electoral Officer. However the report deals with two other officers, the Provincial Auditor and the Information Privacy Commissioner.

Because this report was commissioned by both the Board of Internal Economy and the cabinet, the idea was to . . . here were the positions of our independent officers and they should all be reviewed at the same time rather than independently.

I will turn the meeting over to Gwenn Ronyk now. And I guess I can . . . are there any comments we might want to make prior to us going into committee . . . into in camera? Not really. Then I would consider this portion of the meeting to be in camera.

The board continued in camera.

The Chair: — . . . suggested would read as follows:

That directive 27, Ombudsman's salary and expenses; and directive 28, Children's Advocate salary and expenses be adopted.

And:

That directive 20, Conflict of Interest Commissioner's salary and expenses; and directive 26, Chief Electoral Officer's salary and expenses be adopted as amended.

Is there a mover to the motion? Mr. Van Mulligen moves. Is there a seconder? Mr. Bjornerud, seconded.

Members in favour of the question?

Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Question is carried . . . The motion is carried.

The second proposed motion I will read is:

That the Board of Internal Economy concurs that the next step in the process is for the Minister of Justice to prepare for the legislative agenda an omnibus Bill that amends and brings into effect at the same time the changes required in The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act; The Election Act, 1996; The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; and The Members' Conflict of Interest Act.

Is there a mover to that motion? Mr. Van Mulligen. Is there a seconder? Mr. D'Autremont.

Are the members in favour of the question?

Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — The motion is carried.

Is there anything else that anybody would like to bring . . . Yes, Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — A couple of items that are not decision items at all but perhaps questions that could be investigated for future discussion.

When we last passed the allowances dealing with accommodations, one of the items that was not discussed or included, wasn't thought of, was utility bills at the time. It's been brought to my attention that in some agreements, rental agreements with people their utility bills are covered, in others they are not. I wonder if we could take a look at what impact that would have, still remaining within the current allowance dollars but including utilities as part of that allowance?

The Chair: — I think we have a partial answer to that and something that we can at least advise the committee of at this time. And that is, that it is my understanding that if the utility bills are included separately there are income tax implications. And so unless there is some way of — which I'm not aware of — of going about that then it simply doesn't become very practical.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Would it be possible to get a, you know, some sort of a ruling on that from an expert on taxes and those kind of things to take that into caucus and say here's the problem.

The Chair: — All right. We'll see if we can do that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The other issue was one that perhaps the committee has the answer to for already. I believe that January 1 and July 1 we normally get travel adjustments depending on what's happening with the cost of living, up and down. Any ideas what's happening there particularly in light of the gasoline prices these days?

The Chair: — Has anybody . . . Can we be advised on that?

Ms. Ronyk: — What I can advise you is that right now the directive links mileage to the federal rate and we don't know whether there's any changes being contemplated, but we could check and see.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And they may come out normally, what, July 1? Any changes, January 1 and July 1?

Ms. Ronyk: — The date is twice a year.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Those were the questions.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. By Mr. Bjornerud that we adjourn. Is it the pleasure of

the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Members: — Agreed.

The board adjourned at 16:15.