



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

MINUTES AND VERBATIM REPORT

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Glenn Hagel
Speaker



No. 1 — TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 1996

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Hon. Glenn Hagel, Chair
Moose Jaw North

Bill Boyd
Kindersley

Hon. Joanne Crofford
Regina Centre

Myron Kowalsky
Prince Albert Carlton

Hon. Eldon Lautermilch
Prince Albert Northcote

Harvey McLane
Arm River

Grant Whitmore
Saskatoon Northwest

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Room 10 Legislative Building
5:24 p.m. Tuesday, March 5, 1996

Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy

Hon. Glenn Hagel, Chair
Bill Boyd
Hon. Joanne Crofford
Myron Kowalsky
Hon. Eldon Lautermilch
Harvey McLane
Grant Whitmore

Staff to the Board

Greg Putz, Deputy Clerk
Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk
Janis Patrick, Financial Services
Deborah Saum, Secretary

Officials in Attendance

Office of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan
Judy Brennan, Assistant Legislative Librarian
Robert Cosman, Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk
Chris Hecht, Systems Analyst
Linda Kaminski, Director of Personnel and Administrative Services
Marian Powell, Legislative Librarian

Office of the Provincial Auditor
Wayne Strelieff, Provincial Auditor
Fred Wendel, Assistant Provincial Auditor

AGENDA Moved by Mr. Whitmore, seconded by Mr. Boyd, that the proposed agenda be adopted, with the addition of Handout Item #6 placed at the end of the agenda. Agreed.

MINUTES Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. Kowalsky, ordered, that the Minutes of Meeting #3/95 be adopted. Agreed.

ITEM 1 Decision Item - Review of the Implementation Report, dated September 6, 1995, of the Independent Committee on MLA Compensation (Salaries and Allowances) - McDowell Report

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

That, in view of the request of the Clerk for sufficient time to implement the required salary and allowance changes, the Board directs that the implementation date for the McDowell report be July 1, 1996;

And further, that the Board meet at a later date to finalize the directives to implement the changes.

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

Minute #1357

ITEM 2 Table Item - The Chair Tabled the Audit Opinions of the Three Caucuses for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1995.

ITEM 3 Decision Item - Review of the 1996-97 Budget for the Legislative Assembly

ITEM 3(a) Review Budget Document

The Board reviewed the Budget submission in the amount of \$14,467,910 (with B-Budget item).

ITEM 3(b) Decision Item - Benefits for Constituency Assistants

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

That effective January 1, 1996, all eligible Constituency Assistants be enrolled in the Public Employees Disability Plan and the Public Employees Dental Plan.

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

Minute #1358

ITEM 3(c) Decision Item - Special Salary Adjustments for Certain Classifications Not Included in the April 1 PSC/SGEU Agreement

Moved by Ms. Crofford, seconded by Mr. Whitmore:

That, effective April 1, 1996, five clerical classifications (seven positions) in the Legislative Assembly Office receive the special salary adjustment as provided by the PSC/SGEU Collective Agreement.

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

Minute #1359

ITEM 3(d) Decision Item - Reclassification of Legislative Guide Position

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

That effective April 1, 1996, one of the permanent Legislative Guide positions be reclassified from a Clerk 1 to a Clerk 2 and that the title be changed to Senior Legislative Guide.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1360

ITEM 3(e) Decision Item - Temporary Staff for Administration and Financial Services

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

That the Legislative Assembly Office request for temporary staff for Administration and Financial Services in the amount of \$101,637 be approved for the 1996-97 fiscal year.

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

Minute #1361

ITEM 3(f) Decision Item - Directive Respecting the Provision of Equipment and Furniture for Constituency Offices

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

That the Board adopt Directive #24 effective March 5, 1996.

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

Minute #1362

ITEM 3(g) Directive Amendments Re: Indexing (April 1 - June 30, 1996)

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

That the Directives listed below **not** be increased April 1, 1996 by the annual cost-of-living adjustment:

Directive #1	Per Diem Sessional Expense Allowance
Directive #5	Constituency Office and Services
Directive #7	Caucus Grant- Sessional Research
Directive #8	Caucus Grant - Secretarial Expenses
Directive #10	Grants to Independent Members

Directive #11	Grant to the Office of the Leader of the Opposition
Directive #14	Per Diem Caucus Expense Allowance
Directive #15	Grant to the Office of the Leader of the Third Party
Directive #17	Committee Per Diem and Expense Allowance
Directive #18	Speaker's Per Diem and Expense Allowance

And that the section of each directive that contains the indexing provision be amended to read as follows:

"This adjustment will not be applied for the fiscal years beginning April 1, 1992, April 1, 1993, April 1, 1994, April 1, 1995 and April 1, 1996."

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1363

ITEM 3(h)

Decision Item - Motion to Approve Revenue Estimates

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

That the Legislative Assembly Revenue Estimates of \$50,000 be approved for 1996-97 fiscal year;

And that such Estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1364

ITEM 3(i)

Decision Item - Motion to Approve Budgetary and Statutory Estimates

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

That a budget of \$14,438, 210 be approved for the Legislative Assembly, for the 1996-97 fiscal year, as follows:

Budget to be Voted	-	\$4,853,090
Statutory Budget	-	\$9,585,120

And that such Estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Minute #1365

ITEM 4

Decision Item - Review of the 1996-97 Budget for the Office of the Provincial Auditor

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

That the 1996-97 budget of the Provincial Auditor be approved as submitted, in the amount of \$4,288,000;

And further, that prior to consideration by this Board, the Provincial Auditor's 1997-98 budget be submitted to the provincial audit committee for detailed analysis and commentary. The Board of Internal Economy will issue a detailed directive on this process at a future meeting;

And further, that the Board of Internal Economy consider the results of this detailed review when examining the 1997-98 budget of the Provincial Auditor.

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

Minute #1366

The Chair, at 10 p.m. asked that the Board Members agree to "Stop the Clock". Agreed.

ITEM 5 Decision Item - Allowance Clarifications Requested by Members:**ITEM 5 (a) Decision Item - Travel Expenses for Constituency Assistants**

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

That effective April 1, 1996 constituency assistants be reimbursed for travel expenses (mileage, meals and accommodation) incurred while carrying out duties relevant to their jobs as authorized by the Member, subject to the following conditions:

- That these expenses be charged against the Constituency Office Allowance;
- That the constituency assistant travel claim be submitted on an invoice, signed by the Member, which reports the details of the authorized travel such as the dated travelled and the purpose of the travel;
- That the Member determine the reasonability of the travel expenses claimed, with the PSC travel rates being regarded as the maximum amount that can be reimbursed for travel:

Mileage --\$.2838 per kilometre

Accommodation - lodging -- actual and reasonable charges up to \$48 per night plus tax (with receipts).

\$15 per night for accommodation in private residences (no receipts).

Meals -- reimbursement, without receipts, at the following rates, which include the GST:

Per diem:	\$24.61
Breakfast:	\$ 6.05
Dinner:	\$ 7.86
Supper:	\$10.70

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

Minute #1367

ITEM 5(b) Telephone Services

Confirmation of Telephone Services Such as Message Manager and 1-800 Numbers, in Constituency Offices, out of Telephone Allowance

The Board agreed to defer this item.

Purchase of Constituency Office Telephone Systems

The Board agreed to defer this item.

Approval for Internet Access and Usage Charges out of Telephone Allowance

Moved by Mr. Kowalsky, seconded by Mr. Whitmore:

That effective April 1, 1996 the costs associated with subscribing to and using the Internet service be eligible expenses under the Telephone and Telephone-Related Allowance.

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

Minute #1368

**HANDOUT
ITEM 6**

Decision Item - Early Retirement Package

Moved by Mr. Whitmore, seconded by Mr. Kowalsky:

That the Board of Internal Economy approve the application of the 1996/97 Early retirement Program (currently being offered to Provincial Government employees) to eligible Legislative Assembly employees.

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

Minute #1369

It was agreed to meet in the near future, at the call of the Chair, to further deal with the Report of the Independent Committee, dated September 6, 1996, on MLA Compensation (Salaries and Allowances) - McDowell Report.

The meeting adjourned 10:25 p.m.

The Chair: — If I can call the meeting to order and first of all begin by saying welcome to you. We have on the Board of Internal Economy, five members who have not attended a meeting before so I am assuming that probably two things: one, past practices may not necessarily be repeated; and secondly, that it's certainly in order to be asking questions as we go along regarding procedures, if you wish, and I would encourage you to do that.

As much as possible what I like to do is to chair the meeting as informally as we can while we're getting business done. And you will know from the agenda that we do have that we've got a lengthy task before us and a very limited amount of time. We are scheduled to sit this evening with a 10 o'clock adjournment and then tomorrow morning from 8 a.m. to a 10 o'clock adjournment again. So that's not a long period of time.

And I will first of all want to then acknowledge Mr. McLane to your first meeting, Mr. Boyd, and Mr. Whitmore, and Mr. Kowalsky to your first meeting at the Board of Internal Economy, to say welcome to you. Welcome back to Mr. Lautermilch and we'll say welcome to Ms. Crofford when she arrives. I understand that she's on her way from somewhere else.

So let us proceed if we may. Before I put to you the question for the agenda I would like to ask to add an item no. 6, which is entitled early retirement eligibility, early retirement eligibility. It's a very brief and I think straightforward matter that is a personnel matter and if you accept it also when we get to that point on the agenda I would ask that we would meet in camera.

A Member: — Is that for MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly), Mr. Speaker?

The Chair: — No, it's got nothing to do with MLAs. This has to do with employees of the Legislative Assembly Office. So if you accept that we'll distribute it. As I say it's a one-page item.

So with that . . . And I also just want to . . . For the information of the new members, as you know our meetings are public and on the record. The agenda and minutes are distributed publicly and publicly available. However we do have, since making that decision . . . and I think if I'm not mistaken becoming the first and perhaps still the remaining only jurisdiction in Canada that does that, we have reserved for ourselves the right to meet in camera. And it has been our standard practice when dealing with matters that affect personnel of the Legislative Assembly that we do that.

So if I can ask for an adoption of the agenda with additional item no. 6, if somebody would be prepared to move that. Mr. Whitmore. Is there a seconder? Mr. Boyd. Is there discussion? In favour? Opposed? That's carried.

If I can introduce to you then the staff of the Legislative Assembly Office who will be assisting us over the course of our meeting. Everyone will be familiar with the Clerk of the Assembly, Gwenn Ronyk; and the Deputy Clerk, Greg Putz. Also here assisting us is the secretary of the committee, Debbie

Saum. Linda, where's Linda? Here we are, okay. Our director of personnel and administration is Linda Kaminski. And Janis Patrick is over by the wall, responsible for financial services. Our Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk, Bob Cosman. Marion Powell is . . . where's Marion? There's Marion, legislative librarian. And beside Marion is Judy Brennan, the assistant legislative librarian. Also with us today is the computer consultant for the Legislative Assembly Office, Chris Hecht. Chris is here. And assisting us as our Hansard recorder today is Mary Ann Cline. So those are our staff who are here to assist us over the course of the meeting.

And the first item then is the minutes, the review of the meeting # 3, 1995. Now it will be difficult for five of the members, or four of the members here now, to determine whether it is an accurate record of the meeting. I do advise you that I have reviewed the minutes and in my opinion do consider them to be accurate.

You will find them in your material under minutes, meeting #3/95. They're fairly lengthy, about seven or eight pages in total. And when you're ready, it would be in order to have a motion to adopt or amend the minutes.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, having attended that meeting, I think they're an accurate reflection of the proceedings and so I would be prepared to move adoption of the minutes.

The Chair: — Okay, thanks, Mr. Lautermilch. Is there a seconder? Mr. Kowalsky, do you want some time to review them or are you ready to put the question?

A Member: — Question.

The Chair: — Question. Okay, the motion is to adopt the minutes of #3/95. Those who are in favour of the motion please indicate. Down. Hands opposed. And that's carried.

We can then move to item no. 1, which is a decision item. The review of the implementation of *Report of the Independent Committee on MLA Compensation*, salaries and allowances, the McDowell report, and that has been previously distributed to you. It is fairly lengthy. You will have it in your information tabbed as item no. 1, for meeting 1/96.

And the floor is now open for discussion related to that. What I'll do is keep a speakers' list. And I will ask members, as much as you can, to be pithy in your remarks so as to permit us to maximize discussion and debate and expedient decision making. So on item no. 1 then, the floor is open for discussion.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess I have, first of all, a question or two with respect to the implementation of the recommendations made by the McDowell Committee. As you will be aware, members of the board are in receipt of a letter from the Clerk with respect to implementation and some of the concerns that the Legislative Assembly Office has regarding that.

And I'm wondering if it may not be appropriate, in light of McDowell's recommendation, that the implementation date be, I think . . . I believe it was a January 1 implementation date and the fact that the board hasn't been able to meet — you've just been newly appointed as the Chair, elected Chair, which is appropriate — and I'm wondering if it wouldn't be in order to have Gwenn, perhaps, give us some kind of a response to her letter in terms of some of the issues that she has raised in her March 1 letter.

The Chair: — Well as members will be aware from the review of the minutes of the #3 meeting of '95, that the McDowell Committee was referred the minutes of that meeting and asked to consider that and then to recommend directives. Having done that, that has come back, was distributed some time ago to members of the Board of Internal Economy and has been reviewed by the Clerk of the Assembly and her staff in the Legislative Assembly Office with an eye to the implications for implementing it.

As members will all appreciate, the implications can be fairly extensive. There's a large number of directives and a fair amount of detail to them. And I'll ask, Gwenn, if you would comment on the letter that you forwarded to me regarding your assessment of the implementation of the recommendations.

Ms. Ronyk: — Thank you. Yes, Mr. Chair. The financial services and admin branches of the Assembly will be responsible for implementing the procedures for adopting the new salary and allowance structures under McDowell, and these are substantial.

There will be substantial changes both to the salary structure and to the expense allowances. Although we've all been aware of these changes for some time, we have not been able to actually do the administrative work necessary to implement the changes until we knew exactly when they were to be implemented and exactly what terms and conditions were to be adopted. And now that we are into the session and that we're at year end, fiscal year end for financial services, which is an extremely busy time, and because the implementation date of April 1 is only a few weeks away, I would ask the board to consider not implementing the changes until July 1.

It's important that we have time to adequately prepare the forms and the new procedures, but also to inform members, to do some orientation, to brief and inform members' constituency staff as to the new allowance procedures, particularly. It's very important that everyone have the right information so that members' expenditures are properly handled and accounted for under the new rules, and we need to get out to members ahead of the actual implementation to do that. And that's the reason we feel that we just could not practically implement it within the next two to three weeks.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Being a new member, just a couple of questions of clarification, if I could, on this report.

With the report, is there an opportunity or will there be an opportunity to review the report? Is there an avenue that this

report can be rethought by this committee in terms of the broader spectrum of the whole MLA restructuring? I'm just wondering what are the time lines for that?

The Chair: — Just to respond as briefly as I can to your question, it is . . . one option available to us is to begin to do a detailed review right now. I think there may be some concern that in light of the need to deal with the budget of the board, that that may not be the preferred option at the moment. But there certainly will be detailed review by the board, if not now then at a later time.

In terms of the McDowell Committee, the committee's mandate expired at the end of September. It did some work after that time at the direction of the board, which was intended to provide further clarification in light of questions and comments that were raised at the meeting #3 of 1995. So to address your question directly, can the McDowell Committee change its report in some way, the answer to that would be no. Can they be required, can we ask them, to provide further consideration of the items they recommended or things related to that for clarification or for recommendation? The answer to that is yes. So I think, in terms of broad scope, no; in terms of refinement, there is that possibility.

Mr. McLane: — Then in terms of the broad scope, could I ask this group, I guess, if that's appropriate, as to what we would see happening, if there is a delay for three months of implementation, during that period of time, or if the intention is that at that time the report would be adopted as is. Or would we as this group be looking at some of those broader issues that have not been addressed by this committee?

The Chair: — The way that the changes would be affected, would actually be made and come into force, would be through changing directives of the board. That's one of the vital tasks that this board does, is to pass very specific directives that outline, among other things, the rules related to the use of members' allowances. And until such time that this board passes any specific amendment or replacement of a current directive, the current directive remains in place. That's the only way that the change can be made, is by motion of specific directives at this table.

Any other questions or discussion?

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Chairman, as we know, the McDowell report came down in March of last year, 1995, some almost 12 months ago. It certainly is, in our view, in my view, a very shameless example of procrastination on the part of the government in not moving to implement this at a far earlier time than now. We certainly understand and appreciate the position that it puts the people who have to implement this in, and understand that July 1 is probably the earliest possible date that it can be implemented because of that procrastination that we have seen from the government. I think, had the government had any real commitment to the implementation of this, we would have seen it some time ago. And I don't think we should be now using as an excuse the fact that the financial services can't implement it until July 1 as the reasons why it isn't being done till July 1, because we all know that that isn't the case. We have seen a

year pass by where there has been ample opportunity to implement this, either in the last . . . prior to the election or immediately after, or January 1 of '96 as has been recommended. So while I certainly, while we, have always contended that the independent committee should be independent and that we would accept the recommendations — we continue to accept the recommendations — and we reluctantly, I guess, would be prepared to go along with the July 1 implementation date, but very clearly we want to be on the record as being in favour of the substantial . . . the implementation of it could have and should have been done substantially earlier than it was. And certainly we appreciate now that there isn't an opportunity to deal with it before April 1 and we understand that, but I think we should have moved on it a long time ago, could have moved on it and it's high time that it's being done.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:—Yes, I guess . . . and it's certainly not my intention to be argumentative, but I think having sat on the board both prior to the election and now again it would be important that perhaps members of the board understand the chronology of events and how things took place prior and post-election.

The Board of Internal Economy met on the McDowell commission a number of times. We accepted the report. Members had the opportunity, those of the existing members at that time had the opportunity, to go through the recommendations in some detail. And I think it's fair to say that all three parties represented on this board had some concerns. One with respect to substance of the directives; how they will impact on the members as McDowell would see them.

But I think as importantly the intent of some of the directives was not clear, so the board then agreed that we would ask the McDowell commission to bring back to the board some clarification and do some further work on the recommendations. And I guess all of that process took some considerable period of time, from March of 1995.

Let me say that from a government member's perspective, and I speak, I think, for my colleagues on the government side, it was our intention to — and we have been in the past term of government — we worked with other members on the board quite diligently in terms of ensuring that there was accountability, better accountability. And I think we made some progress over that period of time.

You will note, Mr. Speaker, the board attending to these meetings, which was an initiative members of that board supported, so that there could be more openness, more understanding how MLAs are remunerated and how they spend public taxpayers' dollars.

I think it's also fair to say that this is a difficult issue for MLAs, members of the legislature, to deal with. Setting salaries for MLAs, setting guidelines for allowances, communications, travel, have always been a challenge and always been difficult for members so I think it was fair to say that we all agreed that we wanted an independent — truly independent — commission to have a look at and make recommendations in terms of how

we do those things.

I think in all the McDowell commission did a good job for members and I know they tried their best to reflect the needs of members as they do their job and to enhance their ability to do their jobs, but as well to allow for transparency in terms of how they spend taxpayers' money.

But I guess I would want to remind Mr. Boyd that since March of last year we completed a session which became very political. It ended up being a pre-election session as was evidenced by the proceedings that took place last summer. The election, the general election that was held, became a very political forum. Very difficult to get any work done because partisan politics, I think it's fair to say, in many cases took place of the ability, and I guess overruled the ability, of this board to do its job. And I'm trying to be as pithy as I can, Mr. Speaker, here, but I think this does require some explanation.

So the session ends, an election is called and we have a whole new scenario. A Speaker who made the decision not to run again so we had . . . although we did have a Speaker in place, we had a Speaker that didn't have a mandate any longer from his constituents. Mr. Rolfes didn't run in the general election so we didn't have a Speaker in place.

The whole make-up of the Board of Internal Economy changed somewhat in that Mr. Swenson had made a decision, your representative from the Tory caucus, had made a decision not to run again, which meant that person had to be replaced and an appointment had to come from your caucus.

And I just want to outline some of the events that have happened since then. And I want members of the board to understand that we have, as government members, tried to deal with this issue as quickly as we could. But there are some things that happened.

As an example, Mr. Boyd, you were appointed — and these are order-in-council appointments and it takes some time to go through the process of cabinet — you were appointed on September 6, 1995. So you would have basically have had no representation until September 6, 1995.

As well, the Liberal appointee was Glen McPherson and he was, as well, appointed on September 6, 1995, and on the same date my colleague Mr. Kowalsky was appointed to replace Mr. Upshall, who joined cabinet. And subsequent to that, the Liberal caucus decided to make a change and we had some meetings . . . I can say to you I'd attempted some meetings that you will recall prior to Christmas and I contacted your office to attempt to set up some meeting dates. We were unsuccessful in doing that. In December, I think it was some time in December, Mr. McLane replaced Mr. McPherson.

So what I'm saying here is there is a whole chain of events that did take place. And then I guess I would want to as well remind board members that we elected a Speaker. We have now an elected Speaker who chairs this board and that happened some four or five days ago.

So I think it's invalid, your criticism, with respect to the length of time, Mr. Boyd, and I think that it is not accurate that government was, or that government members were, attempting to stall the process. We tried to put it in place as quickly as we can as soon as it became clear that the Speaker would be in place, you know, knowing full well that January 1 was the date recommended by McDowell. We looked at alternate dates of . . . and knowing we had to go through this process to get the directives in order and to have the administration in place, we made a suggestion that the implementation date be April 1 as opposed to January 1 for a number of reasons. One, the Legislative Assembly Office and government operates on a fiscal calendar year that starts April 1 and we thought that that might be an appropriate date.

Well subsequent to the letter from the Clerk, I think it's quite clear that the Legislative Assembly Office needs some time to do justice to prepare members and to prepare the staff within the Legislative Assembly Office for dealing with McDowell. And so I think that the timing is . . . and a implementation date of July 1, certainly from my perspective, would make some sense, as long as Gwenn feels comfortable, Ms. Ronyk feels comfortable, that all of this can be in place and that she's comfortable with having things operate and flow smoothly at a July 1 date.

The Chair: — Let me just add some comment in support of the July 1 implementation, because I certainly do support the recommendation of the Clerk in implementing. However, in saying that, I think it is important to acknowledge some sentiment that would have liked to have seen it implemented by April 1 or some other earlier date than July 1.

If it is the will of the board to postpone the implementation of the new directives, that is, not to pass the new directives, but the implementation of the new directives until July 1, then that clearly says that there is work for the board to be doing and I would suggest sooner rather than later in terms of coming to some clarification and conclusion. It would be highly unfair to the Legislative Assembly operation to expect that they would not have the time to prepare the directives, to prepare the forms, to give a direction and an interpretation of those directives, not only to members, but to constituency assistants who, as we all know, in many cases will be the people who will be assigned to carry them out and to answer their questions before it comes into place.

The topics deal with some substantially detailed items of accountability, for example, as we all know, that will be easy to confuse. And if we want this thing to achieve its original objective, which I've always understood to be to try to improve the public sense of accountability and responsibility in the use of allowances, then I do want to urge the members of the board to commit yourselves to getting to work on this fairly quickly so that the decisions would be reached far in advance of the July 1 implementation date.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thanks you, Mr. Chair. My understanding is that the McDowell commission report has been approved by principle of this committee.

The Chair: — Yes, it has.

Mr. Kowalsky: — And as a member new to the committee, I feel that I want to be in a position in reporting back to the public and certainly to the members of the legislature that when we looked at the detail of the implementation, that we did so in a careful manner and a thoughtful manner and in a manner that was not rushed. I think it's very important that when we get at the implementation that we do it right, rather than doing it fast.

So I appreciate the forthrightness of the Clerk in saying that we could end up with difficulty — not directly of course, but in order to get it right, the Clerk's office would be in a better position to do so over a period of time where we weren't sandwiching it into a very short period of time. And that would certainly help me as well, as a new member, to be able to address specific items that are mentioned in the directives, because there will be some I think that I'll want to ask questions on at a later time.

The Chair: — Further discussion, Mr. Boyd.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well I certainly understand the arguments that you presented, Mr. Lautermilch, none of which I feel are very valid, however, when it comes right down to it. The government sets the agenda; everyone around here, everyone in this building, understands that clearly. The election of the Speaker could have taken place at any time. We all know that. The committees could have been appointed at any time had you set a . . . had the Speaker been chosen by election. You can rest assured that we were prepared to move pretty quickly in terms of appointing a member to the board. The members' appointments to the board come and go on a regular basis and we all understand that. I just think that the implementation of this could have been done far sooner than it has been done, should have been done that way as well. The government moves very, very quickly when it wants to and has had . . . in many examples we've seen the government moving quickly.

Just one that comes to mind recently: where the report on workers' compensation came down and was accepted the next day and already moved to cancel some of the changes that the previous board . . . or the board had recommended earlier on. So it does happen quickly from time to time when it suits the government's agenda.

I don't think this suited the government's agenda in a lot of respects, and that's why we've seen the slowness with respect to this. But now we're at the position where we have to move and I think we move as quickly as possible to implement and to get down to the work of deciding on what the directives are going to be.

Mr. McDowell is fairly explicit, in terms of what I see anyway, of what his directives should . . . what they believe they should be. So we would . . . and I am certainly prepared to do a weekend to expedite the process as quickly as possible. But nevertheless we want to be on the record with respect to those comments.

The Chair: — Well, thank you. Mr. Lautermilch. And if we are getting close to an agreement as to what we want to decide, if I can urge us to be rather pithy in doing that instead of agreeing with one another at great length. So if we can do that briefly and then get on with the business. Mr. Lautermilch.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I think, Mr. Speaker, we've got a long agenda. We've got the auditor's budget, we've got the Legislative Assembly budget . . .

The Chair: — Lots of other opportunities to agree with one another.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And I think there are those who would want to put the blue book to bed so that we can bring down a provincial budget, and without those numbers I guess it would be fairly difficult.

I'm not going to dwell on Mr. Boyd's comments. I'll leave those for another moment.

The Chair: — Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And I know you'll appreciate that. I'm pleased to hear that he recognizes in fact and that we have, I guess, some agreement in terms of an implementation date.

So if I have a seconder, I would be prepared to move a motion. And I guess . . . Let's see here. Okay, that I would . . . in view of the request of the Clerk for sufficient time to implement the required salary and allowance changes, that the Board would direct that the implementation for the McDowell report be July 1, 1996.

And I think I would add to that in terms of comments maybe, made by Mr. McLane and by Mr. Kowalsky, that they would like to have some time to look at some of the directives and maybe better understand McDowell, that the board meet at a later date to finalize the directives and implement the changes.

The Chair: — Okay. Is there a seconder for the motion? Mr. Kowalsky.

That in view of the request of the Clerk for sufficient time to implement the required salary and allowance changes, the board directs the implementation date of the McDowell report to be July 1, 1996, and further that the Board meet at a later date to finalize the directives to implement the changes.

Have I stated that correctly?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, I think so.

The Chair: — Any discussion on that? Mr. McLane.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to clarify that, if we're going to . . . And I don't have a problem with the delaying of the date — let that be on record as well — in fact I would urge it. I'm just wondering, if we're going to have it so that the Clerk can implement some of these things that are in

the report, if they're going ahead and being implemented, then how will we have a chance, as Mr. Kowalsky has stated, to discuss them. And if there's some changes that we want to see or think are appropriate, how then can that happen?

The Chair: — Well I think there's a variety of ways, one of which must occur, and that's back at this table for decision obviously. An option is to come back to this table for discussion purposes without decision. Because members will be spending a fair amount of time in the same room together for several hours a day for the next period of time, there is opportunity obviously for members to be speaking with one another.

I would urge all members to feel very free to ask for the advice and the interpretation of the Legislative Assembly Office, and certainly through my office in any way that we can assist by way of facilitating a movement towards decision. Perhaps it's by way of background of information.

Quite understandably almost all of the members of your caucus will not have had a working knowledge of the previous report. And so if you would like something by way of an orientation to that, we'd be happy to facilitate that in some way. And that's something I think we can do for all members if requested.

So I think the avenues are as large as we choose to make it, and at the end of the day you may want to talk to one another in some way. And again it doesn't have to be at this table, although a decision has to be at this table. I urge that we get at the process very quickly.

Mr. Lautermilch, did you want to make further comment?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I guess just a comment that I would make is that I don't think it would be . . . I think it would be a benefit to have the staff take members of the Board, including myself, because it's been a while since we've looked at these, and if we were to just have an informal meeting to go through McDowell, to again go through some of the directives so that we can reacquaint ourselves with some of these issues. And if you could schedule something like that, I think it would be really helpful to members of the Board.

The Chair: — Just to get a talking understanding of them? Is that something you wish to have happen?

A Member: — Yes.

The Chair: — Okay. We don't need a motion to that effect, and I'll assume responsibility for doing that. Is that helpful to you too?

Mr. McLane: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Anything else then for the debate on the question? Question then is on the motion that in view of the Clerk's request . . . the Clerk . . . for sufficient time to implement the required salary and allowance changes, the board directs the implementation date for the McDowell report to be July 1, 1996, and further that the board meet at a later date to

finalize the directives to implement the changes.

Those who support the motion please indicate. Down hands. Opposed? And that's carried.

And that's item no. 1. And we will facilitate an orientation at an early date. And so my office will be in touch to try and find some common times to do that.

Item no. 2. Okay. I would like to table, according to minute #1291 of the Board of Internal Economy, the audited opinions for the three caucuses. This is by previous motion of the board and there is no decision required.

Item no. 3, a decision item then. We now move . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Back to these reports, are these public documents or how are these . . .

The Chair: — No. What is tabled here, and is a public document, is what is required of the board, and that's the audited opinion. I think caucuses may all in fact have taken other actions and that's their freedom to do that. But what is provided here is the tabled opinion because that's the motion. Now as you will be aware, the McDowell Committee made recommendation further than that, but that's not yet adopted. Okay? So that's why that's all that's tabled here at this meeting. Anything else in item 2?

Okay, can we move then to item 3 and begin our deliberations on the budget. Now as you can see from your agenda, there will be several items, information — sorry, decision items — that will be implicit before we arrive at the approval of the budget item and the number that will go into the budget book for Legislative Assembly.

Now if I can just make some very brief comment and then largely what I'm going to do is turn the bulk of this over to the Clerk to help us walk through this. You will note, first of all, if I can bring your attention to the agenda, that what we'll do is we'll walk through it in exactly, I recommend to you, in exactly the order as it's listed.

First of all, in item (a) then, we'll walk through the budget document with you. Now for purposes of budgeting and for your information the decision items that are listed here have all been assumed to be approved and have been included in the budget numbers when we go through them line by line, number by number.

So after we've gone through the review, then we'll have to have some decision items regarding then, first of all, in this order: benefits for constituency assistants.

Then secondly, item (c) on your agenda, the special salary adjustment for certain classifications not included in the April 1 Public Service Commission-SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees Union) agreement. There will be, you will hear, a recommendation for some small number of reclassifications in the Legislative Assembly Office. There will also then be item (d), another reclassification. Or sorry, the (c) was a salary

adjustment, sorry; (d) is one reclassification; (e) there will be required, assuming a July 1 implementation — well, whenever — but assuming the July 1 implementation has now been approved by the board, there will be some substantial amount of administrative work that will be required and there will be recommendation then, within this, that there be approval for some temporary additional staff in the early stages.

Then under (f) regarding there be a recommended change for the equipment and furnishings provisions for MLA offices; (g) then, regarding — we will have to make a decision then — regarding indexing.

And if you want to distribute that. Gwenn has an item on the indexing that . . . I point out to you this budget assumes that there will be no indexing but that will be your decision to make. Then (h) to approve revenue estimates. Unfortunately that's a relatively small part of the total operation. And then finally, (i) the motion to approve the budgetary and statutory estimates.

So we'll walk through it in that order. And let me begin then.

If you will open your budget books — I think everybody has got your budget book in front of you — and you see on the front page, summary 1 of the grand total summary of the budget that I recommend to you for your adoption. Let me just make some comment on "the big picture" because summary, page 1, is the big picture. And then after having done that, then I'll . . . we'll proceed. Or did you want to ask something before we proceed to that, Bill?

Mr. Boyd: — If I could, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: — Okay, go ahead.

Mr. Boyd: — I understand that as a result of the discussions we've had here earlier, regarding the McDowell commission and the interest that the public has in the implementation in the McDowell commission, I understand that some of the members of the media are looking for some comment with respect to it. I wonder whether the committee would agree to, say a 15-minute recess, at which time we can provide them with that comment and then resume after that.

The Chair: — Can we do it in 10? Can you be pithy with the media as well? Okay.

Mr. Boyd: — Those three?

The Chair: — May be looking for a half-hour here . . . (inaudible) . . . Can I declare a 10-minute recess and we'll extend it by 5 if need be?

Mr. Boyd: — So in other words when we show up again, we'll start.

The Chair: — That's right, but if you'd please not dawdle. Is that acceptable to members? Well, seconded by the media. I'll declare a 10-minute recess, to be extended by 5 minutes if necessary.

The meeting recessed for a period of time.

The Chair: — I think we'll just turn off the camera in about one second. Okay, thank you.

Okay if we can turn to the budget books, page, sum 1, right after the title page, I'd just like to make a brief comment on that and then I'll turn this over to the Clerk to walk us through as per item 3(a) in your agenda.

On sum 1, what you have is the entire budget proposal at a glance, and in the upper left-hand side you have the summary of all summaries. And what it points out to you is the figure for the 1995-96 estimates, the budget that was approved by the board last year for the fiscal year that we're just finishing. Followed by 1996-97 estimates. That's the grand total that you're going to find in the pages to follow with a \$10,500 ... or sorry, \$10,200 B budget item for your recommendation. If you adopt the budget as it's proposed, then it will be ... if you adopt it with a B budget proposal, it will be a budget that represents a reduction of 2.14 per cent the next year over the current year. Okay?

So what's recommended to you, in essence, in summary then, is a budget with a 2.14 per cent reduction from last year.

When you look at the right ... if I just then, follow through, there are some assumptions that have been made in arriving at the numbers that are in here. And that outlines to you what those are; the number of days that the House will sit because that determines some of the factors of cost. It also acknowledges that are some reductions related to the fact that the House has been reduced from 66 to 58 members. It assumes that there will be no cost of living increase approved on any of those allowances that are entitled to do that.

Now it also assumes that the new provisions of the SGEU-Public Service agreement are applied to Legislative Assembly staff. We are not bound by that agreement because our employees are not government employees, but it has been a long-standing tradition that our employees at the Legislative Assembly Office are remunerated according to the same plans and procedures.

In effect, as Board of Internal Economy members, what you are is, you are to the Legislative Assembly what the Treasury Board is to government. So that's your role here and our staff members are not members of government but we've assumed that what has been approved for government employees will be assigned as well to our own employees.

It's also assuming then, under 5 there, that for budgeting purposes, although we won't make a decision until a later time and we will implement and have it up and running on July 1, we've assumed that what McDowell has recommended is what you're going to approve for budgetary purposes. We have to assume something, that's what we've assumed, and we've also assumed that the proposal for changes to the equipment and furnishings for your offices have been approved.

On the right-hand side then you'll see that there are two

categories, budgetary at the top and statutory at the bottom, and I'll just simply comment on that to you. If I can start at the budgetary. Budgetary are all items about which we do have freedom to choose. They will be based on our operations and on those areas we will have some opportunity to reflect priorities. If your directions are something different from what's recommended then changes can be made.

On the lower part, the statutory, and on the ... It works out to roughly a third of the total budget is budgetary and about two-thirds of our total budget is statutory. On the statutory part of it then we are bound by law and these will largely be where the members of the legislature and all allowances and so on are found then. We are bound to provide those as they are required according to law. So we will have less flexibility, I guess, in a sense, to make changes there. Certainly as you go through those, McDowell Committee recommendations will have implications, but having decided to not make those decisions today that really in effect means that there's very, very little opportunity in the statutory part of the budget then to make change from what you find before you here now. There may be consequences of decisions we make over the next few weeks prior to the July 1 implementation but I anticipate that that won't be large.

Now is there any questions on the big picture before I ask Gwenn then to start walking us through this? All right, then the next two pages are a summary of the budgetary and the statutory and I'll turn this over to the Clerk then to give you some direction.

I think as we go through let's ask questions as we're going along. I'll urge us to be pithy and I'll ask Gwenn to give an overall statement as to what the purpose is in each category. If you want more detailed orientation it's something that we can do at another time as well and I do ask you, or urge you, to ask questions that you feel you want to have the answers to in order to make responsible decisions. But we won't deal with absolutely every line as we walk through the budget.

You will see as you go through, and I know you've reviewed it already, that this is as fine-tuned as dealing with every Legislative Assembly employee not only by position, but by name, with a fair amount of fine detail. So I do want to caution you to be sensitive to the fact that this is a meeting on the record and there may be questions you would like to ask related to personnel and if you want to do that what I would simply ask you to do is just to advise me that you'd like to deal with this question in camera so that we can do that. We have an obligation to our employees to not be dealing with specific personnel matters on the public record, in my view. Okay?

So, Gwenn, do you want to take us away?

Ms. Ronyk: — I don't think we probably need to look at the summary pages 2 and 3 because the totals of that appeared on the first page that the Speaker reviewed, unless you have a question. The key line, of course, is the very ... the bottom line on summary page 3 that shows the total for vote 21 as coming in at 2.2 per cent under last year's estimates.

The Chair: — Okay. Can we... I think we'll just keep walking. And get my attention if you want Gwenn to comment on something specific.

Ms. Ronyk: — Page 1 of the next, the following page. It's called page 1 and it's the legislation personnel summary. I draw your attention just very quickly to this page because on the left-hand side is the numbers of permanent employees and on the right-hand side are the numbers of non-perm by person-year. And if you go right down to the bottom of the page, on the left-hand side under the permanent employees, you'll see a reduction this year in one permanent position, and that is because of the decrease in the number of members and the decrease in the size of the government caucus resulting in one fewer permanent secretary in the government caucus — the only change in the permanent staff.

On the non-perm staff side, you will see a slight reduction in the members' secretaries in the caucuses, again because of the reduced size of overall caucuses because of fewer members. And the increase at the very bottom line there, from 23.24 person-years to 25.9 person-years reflects the change, the increase... the request that we're making of you to provide some temporary assistance in financial services and administration to assist with implementation of McDowell and the constituency assistant benefits and so on that are new programs this year. And there's more detail on that later on. But that gives you the overall employee picture.

The Chair: — Okay. We'll now move to general administration.

Ms. Ronyk: — General admin, that first page 2, is a summary that I think we'll just skip right over and then when you go to the next page, it's called Assembly admin and that Assembly admin is the section of the budget that provides for the expenditures for the Speaker's office, the Clerk's salary — my salary, not any of the other Clerks — and for the central services for the Legislative Assembly, the personnel branch and admin, and the financial services people, and it also includes the pages there. No it doesn't. The pages are in the Clerk's office, later on. So this is really the central admin section, providing central services to the Legislative Assembly.

The Chair: — We can move ahead, then we'll get into more detail.

Ms. Ronyk: — The detail starts on page 4, and one of the big items in our general admin is the computer provisions which are on page 5. We've consolidated all of the computer expenditures across the Assembly into Assembly admin just so that we have a better handle on the totals there. And while we're on the computer, I would like to hand out... I know all you need is more paper, but we've got some really neat stuff here.

Mr. Boyd: — Which item is the computer one, code number?

The Chair: — 270, 71, and 72.

Ms. Ronyk: — Page 5, and it's codes 270 right down to 280.

You'll see attached another document there, right in your document that describes our computer request, but I can just tell you briefly that we're coming in at \$165,000 less than last year because the board last year gave us extra funding to provide for new computer equipment. That is in place, and our request this year can then go down substantially and with the money that we are requesting we are going to be able to put in the things we need to establish a presence on the Internet for the Legislative Assembly.

And what I want to hand out — one to each caucus — is just some samples of what other legislatures and members have done in terms of having a web site, or an address on the Internet, where they put up information that becomes available to the public. We will also be able to put, eventually put *Hansard* — and we hope maybe by the next session — to put some of our legislative documents on the Internet, *Hansard*, and votes and orders, and that will save us distributing them and save us a fair bit of printing costs.

And along with this package, I'm going to give to each member a fairly detailed document that'll show the benefits that the Assembly can expect from its Internet expenditure — it deals about what the service... how improved the services will be and what printing costs we'll be able to save.

The Chair: — Just on this, just to repeat, I think the benefit here is two things. One is there is potential to actually reduce financial costs to us, but in many ways perhaps the biggest pay-off is potentially the... just the exposure of *Hansard* can be substantially increased by going on the Internet.

And I've asked that this other item — letting you know what other jurisdictions are doing on the Internet — be distributed to you. If you take that back and want to pass it on to the administrative staff in your own caucuses and they're interested in getting together with the Legislative Assembly folks here for some discussion about moving forward on the Internet... because I think all the caucuses are either already... have made some decisions or are making some very serious considerations at this point, and if there are some ways that can help to reduce your costs and perhaps increase your effectiveness, if you know what the Legislative Assembly is doing and you can link to that, then that may help with your administrative efficiency as well.

So I'd recommend that you pass that on to your admin staff. And please be in touch through my office if you would like to arrange for your admin staff to sit down with the Legislative Assembly admin staff and go through and talk this through in some detail — that may be helpful to your caucuses.

Mr. Whitmore: — Yes. Reading a document that was in the budget in terms of '96-97, the Internet services, it made reference to the members to participate in this. How do you envisage the members participating, in what role or responsibility? Is it using it for access within a certain web service area in terms of facility, or putting information on the web or on the Internet? I was wondering what ideas are there in terms of members participating?

Ms. Ronyk: — Well there's two major ways that members can participate, and one is that what we will be doing with the funding that's provided here is putting up information on a Legislative Assembly home page that will give members and the public access to that information. And it could be a tour of the Legislative Building, it could be . . . or all of our public information brochures could be on there.

We certainly have lists of members and biogs of members, if that's what's wished. Information on the Speaker and the officers of the House. There will be the potential for us to put *Hansard* up there so that from your constituency offices you could access *Hansard* and search it in a much more efficient way than with the hard copy, which you don't have an index for until after session.

And we can put the order paper on there because it's basically a throw-away document after the agenda, the day, is over anyway. We can put the *Votes*; we can put the progress of Bills so that any time you can dial in or, you know, link in and find out where Bills are at; progressive estimates, that kind of thing. And we hope that we'd even put the Bills up once we can get that arranged through Justice and they're already doing a lot electronically anyway so it shouldn't be that hard to do.

The Chair: — So you can see from those kinds of ideas just the potential to reduce paper that comes out of this place, and therefore cost, and also the potential, more importantly or just as importantly if not more importantly, the public access to what goes on in this building. Not to members but beyond.

Mr. Whitmore: — How broad based is this going to be?

Ms. Ronyk: — The other aspect of member involvement is does each member want to have a home page where your constituents can go to Grant Whitmore's address on the Internet and find information about what you're doing, what your position is, what you've said in *Hansard* last week, what you . . .

Mr. Whitmore: — That's coming very soon.

Ms. Ronyk: — What you are doing in your constituency next week. Now that is not . . . We have no funding yet for that kind of thing here and we need to sort out whether we would have members up on the Legislative Assembly server to provide that kind of service, whether you would be doing that on your own through your allowances, or whether you'd be doing it through your caucuses. So those things need to be sorted out yet.

Mr. Whitmore: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. If we can continue. Anything else on page 5? All right. Moving along to page 6. Any questions there? That's okay. Okay, page 7. All right. Page 8. Now as we're dealing with . . . I again want to caution you to . . . if you have questions related to this you may want to ask them in camera. But this lets you know precisely how the personnel figures are arrived in the budget.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Page 7.

The Chair: — Page 7.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — With respect to item 620, the furnishings, fixtures. It just . . . it's such a small item, almost hate to raise it. But we've got . . . we're again looking at \$1,000 for linen and silverware, spoons and that, and I recall the previous Speaker's explanation was you'd be surprised how many silver spoons disappeared.

The Chair: — I think the previous Speaker used to lose cutlery at tea. But I don't. Did I lose any?

Ms. Ronyk: — I'll bet you did.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Maybe we'll give this guy a try and we'll see if he can get in under budget. Maybe his guests will be more aware of the costs of the silverware than others.

The Chair: — Do we want the Speaker patrolling up and down behind the table there — you're allowed to have tea as long as you don't touch anything. Was there a serious point you were wanting to make there, Mr. Lautermilch?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Have we budgeted historically for that, a thousand bucks a year?

Ms. Ronyk: — It used to be \$2,500 a year and it's been reduced.

Mr. Boyd: — People walk off with the silverware, is that what you're saying?

Ms. Ronyk: — Not only that. They do . . .

The Chair: — They drop cups.

Ms. Ronyk: — The tea services break and the china breaks and the linen wears out. I don't know who washes it but they're really rough on it.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I just got a little chuckle out of that. I've never heard . . . speak that way before.

The Chair: — We're not saying that the folks are rolling around on the tables or anything like that but as the Clerk says this is down substantially from what it has been in the past.

Okay, page 8 is fine. Okay, caucus administration begins on page 9. You have your summary but I think we move to page 10. At least that gets you into the area where the detail is.

Ms. Ronyk: — And under caucus administration, basically these are the services provided by the Legislative Assembly Office to the caucuses, so it's some office supplies and the ministers' . . . the members' secretaries during the session and some intersessional . . . and photocopiers and telephone systems in your caucus offices, that kind of thing.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — We've had a substantial . . . on item 222, we've had a substantial increase in the costs of the rent of the photocopiers and it would appear to me that it's much more

than inflation. Have we upgraded some of the photocopiers for the caucuses or . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — No, we haven't. These are fairly large machines that have not been . . . I'm sorry, they have been replaced. Yes, I can't read my own note here. They have been replaced but the rental costs have gone up substantially. It's much . . . it's the same machine but it is a new version, new technology. But it's basically the same size of machine. But when we got the earlier deal at 400 a month, they were trying to get into the market and we got a steal. And now we're actually paying more market levels at over 700 a month.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Have we pursued a purchase option as opposed to a lease option and has anyone factored the costs of purchase as opposed to lease?

Ms. Ronyk: — What we do is we use the SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) photocopy service. They lease . . . or they actually rent photocopiers for all of government and they get, I think, the best deal that's available.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay.

Ms. Ronyk: — We're quite confident of that.

The Chair: — Moving along then to page 11. And these are all provided through the Legislative Assembly administration to caucuses. It's not recommended at this point in time, but it may be that at some point in the future the board would want to consider looking at the grant structure to caucuses and assigning more, therefore more freedom and responsibility for management of budgets within, as opposed to the number of items that are provided to caucuses through Legislative Assembly administration. That is just something to put in the back of your minds as we look into the future.

On no. 12 then, is by formula. If you want to know in your caucus why you have precisely the number of member secretaries, then this is all by formula and that explains it on the upper right-hand corner.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — There is really nothing . . . (inaudible) . . . in terms of costing here. This is all by prearranged formula and predetermined formulae.

The Chair: — Yes, that's right. The formulae are set. Okay. If we . . . no. 12(1), begins constituency office administration then and this is for the MLAs' offices. And there is the . . . there is one proposal that's built into this and, Gwenn, maybe you'd like to describe that briefly. I think members will have all seen it.

Ms. Ronyk: — This is a proposal that the board had asked us to look at, oh, over a year ago or almost two years ago I guess, on providing . . . a bit different way of providing members' constituency offices with some of their office equipment and furnishings so that it would be more standard, more just like standard issue in a government office. And after looking at various options this is the one that we feel is the simplest and

the easiest to provide members with kind of what they need on a flexible basis and yet still gain that sort of standard uniformity over time. Basically what will be provided is a standard photocopier provision for each constituency office, an amount over the course of the term for each member's constituency office to purchase a new computer system. Now we know that some constituencies have more than one office but you will then use either the existing equipment that you have or you will have access to other MLAs' surplus and you still will be able to fund some things out of your existing allowances if you find that these aren't adequate.

And then there's a small amount per member — \$1,000 per member — over the course of the whole term to add to your furniture and, you know, other maybe smaller equipment that you might need yet in your constituency office.

The Chair: — Okay. We'll deal with that as we go through the decision items on your item no. f). Okay. Page 13. Page 14. Now we move to Legislative Assembly Office, accommodation and central services.

Ms. Ronyk: — These are the charges paid to SPMC for the overhead for postage and mailing through the Legislative Assembly. That's through the caucuses and through our offices and the rental of some storage space in the Gemini warehouse. The next page is the mailing costs from the Legislative Library that also go through SPMC.

The Chair: — Then to the Legislative Assembly Office in summary on page 16 and moving from there then to specifically the Clerk's office on page 17 in summary.

Ms. Ronyk: — These next parts of the budget go through each of the branches in a separate section, so you can see how much *Hansard* costs, so you can see how much television costs, and that kind of thing.

This first section is the Clerk's office and it deals with all of the people in the Clerk's office except myself, and it includes the pages. So it provides those personnel costs and it also covers all of the printing for the Legislative Assembly, the costs of printing of *Hansard*, of Bills, of *Votes* and orders and *Journals*. That's one of the big items on page 19.

The Chair: — Just before we proceed, Mr. Whitmore on page 16. About the B budget?

Mr. Whitmore: — Yes.

The Chair: — Okay.

Mr. Whitmore: — I'm jumping the gun because it's on 32 also. Just an explanation of the construction of the Qu'Appelle gallery, what's proposed there.

The Chair: — Do you want just to hang on and we'll come to that on 32 as we're walking through.

Mr. Whitmore: — Okay, sure.

The Chair: — Okay. Because that is a B budget item and thank you for flagging that. We'll be there in a moment, I think.

Ms. Ronyk: — And all of the committee support services are also provided out of the Clerk's office except for the *Hansard* and so on, which is in a separate section. The committee staff are here.

The Chair: — Okay. I'm up to page 21. Any from the Clerk's office? Any questions on any of those?

Mr. Whitmore: — Sorry to interrupt again, Mr. Speaker. Going back — and it relates to yourself, Gwenn — I saw the reduction that you're not using an SPMC car now and gone to a car allowance.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes. When they buy some new cars, I might switch back. That's the honest answer.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — You mean you didn't like your 1944 Oldsmobile?

Ms. Ronyk: — No, I didn't. No, it was actually my husband that wanted a new vehicle. We're paying the price, mind you.

A Member: — Yes, okay. I noticed

Mr. Whitmore: — Yes, okay. No. I noticed the change and the change in that and I thought I'd missed something in terms . . . whether something had changed in terms of a directive or something or why . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — No, I would feel that it's still . . . the board many years ago decided that the Clerk should have the perks of the deputy ministers, including a CVA (Central Vehicle Agency) executive vehicle and I would hope that they wouldn't change that. I'm just not opting to take that at the moment and a future Clerk may want to.

Mr. Whitmore: — No, I didn't mean to change it. I was just, I noticed the change in terms of the number and I just wanted to . . .

The Chair: — And it should be understood as well, Grant, that this was a decision made I think last . . . in this fiscal year.

Ms. Ronyk: — Last year.

The Chair: — Yes, as a result of the recommendation of the Clerk, and the board, if I'm not mistaken, on the record said at that time too that it was not to be inferred from that. That that was set. But that just seemed to be the preference of the Clerk at this point in time.

Mr. Whitmore: — Sorry . . . (inaudible) . . . the other car allowance.

The Chair: — You haven't read all your back issues of the Board of Internal Economy minutes?

Mr. Whitmore: — No, I only have what I have in front of me

today.

The Chair: — All right, anything else from the Clerk's office.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I just . . . (inaudible) . . . 19, the printing, publishing. You've pencilled in 125,000. Last year's actual, or I guess last year's estimated 137 and 94-95 actual 110. I'm assuming this is just based on sitting days. I guess what I'm asking, is there any way we can cut the costs of the printing and the publishing.

Ms. Ronyk: — We think that once we can establish Bills and *Votes* and *Hansard* on the Internet we'll be able to make really substantial cuts here. But for now in this budget . . . we have since this budget document was prepared, we have done a kind of a five-year analysis of our printing costs. And we've also gotten in the latest tenders that have just been let prior to the session and we think that we can actually bring this estimate down here, the 125 for this year. And then hopefully it will be more substantial next year.

But I am prepared to propose some reductions in the costs for the printing of the *Votes*. We already reduced the estimate here for Bills by \$10,000 from last year; that's the change that you already see there. But since then we now feel that we can reduce for the *Votes* and the orders and the *Journals* probably by a total there of 15,000 altogether.

Now our budgeting . . . I worry about this because you know it depends entirely on how long the Bills are, you know how many pages are we printing, how long the House sits and how many hours it sits. I mean *Hansard* depends, is totally dependent, on hours although *Hansard* is in another spot. But we have to keep printing if the House is sitting but at least we're trying to get as close as we can to the usual actuals.

The Chair: — This is government Bills as well as private member Bills. They all get equally printed.

Mr. Boyd: — And so they should.

The Chair: — And so they should. Okay. Anything else on the Clerk's office? All right then, if we're past page 21, on page 22 is the staff that you will recognize from around the building. Again, I caution if you want any questions there. All right, moving then along to the services. Right, okay, right. Let me just walk you back to page 21 just very quickly.

The rationale beside the CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) budgeted amount here is this. It is Saskatchewan's turn in 1997 to be hosting the regional CPA conference. As you'll be aware, we send delegates from this province on an annual basis to the regionals, and our last one was 1987, so 1997 is our turn again. And so there is some funding recommended in this fiscal year to deal with preparatory costs as in terms of preparing for that. There will be probably a very similar . . . we'll have a better idea on the grand total cost implications and you can expect in next year's budget a similar figure that would be the remainder of the costs then for the hosting of the 1997 regional CPA conference. Thanks.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I guess this is on what, a 10-year cycle that we inherit this?

Ms. Ronyk: — It goes from each jurisdiction across the country and we have to take our turn.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And so it becomes our turn. You will . . . I guess so we're looking at what, roughly \$100,000 of cost for that conference? Is that . . . and part of it you're budgeting in this fiscal year and part in the next?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes. We haven't actually done our budgeting yet, but Manitoba's hosting it this year and they're budgeting about 120,000. We'll probably be able to do it for less than that but we won't know until we actually get the CPA executive together to set the itinerary and the agenda.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — In terms of the other 75,000 or roughly 75,000, is that all fixed-cost membership dues or how does that work, Gwenn?

Ms. Ronyk: — There is the Saskatchewan branch annual operations, of course, is in that same figure so the Saskatchewan branch's normal activities for the year, hosting the annual dinner, printing the annual report, sending delegations to various CPA events, seminars, and so on, that there are, is there as well as the additional funding for '97 conference.

The Chair: — Including in that our membership in the CPA itself?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, there are membership dues in the Commonwealth level of CPA and in the Canadian level that have to be paid out of here.

The Chair: — Okay. Anything else on the Clerk's budget then? Okay, if we can move to *Hansard*. You have the summary on page 23 and the detailed description beginning on page 24.

Ms. Ronyk: — This section on *Hansard* is the House *Hansard* only, not the committee. That's in a separate section. The main changes here are staffing . . . are salary increase due to the PSC-SGEU agreement for April 1 which affects most of our non-permanent clerical staff, of which there are many in *Hansard*. And there was an increase in the tender for the printing of *Hansard* as well this year. And on that tender we budgeted, you'll see on page 25, for *Hansard* at \$24 a page but the actual tender did come in at just under 23 so we're prepared to make a change there, a reduction of about \$4,000 there.

The Chair: — Okay. Through to 26. You will find in each of these as we go through them some small amount of conference for our employees. These are and should be considered to be important items because we have in virtually every case a very specialized service that obviously in the province of Saskatchewan exists only in one place, and that's here. And so if we're going to benefit from progress made — oftentimes it is in the area of technology — but it really requires that what you're doing is continuing in your contact with other

jurisdictions as well. And so I recommend that to you as well.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I'm not sure what page it's on, Gwenn, but could you, in terms of *Hansard* and *Hansard* available to members, have we changed some time back the number of free *Hansards* that each MLA will get? Where are we at on that now, in terms of mail-outs?

Ms. Ronyk: — It is in your communication allowance that that provision exists. And you are able to send 10 copies to whomever you wish at a very reduced rate.

The Chair: — It's the same as it's been for quite some time.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Can I ask what the uptake is on that? And you may not need to do it now, but I'd like . . .

A Member: — It's in there actually, the actual number is there; 147 or something.

The Chair: — It is substantially less than maximum.

Ms. Ronyk: — The actual usage of that, are you asking?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes.

Ms. Ronyk: — 145 subscriptions on that basis last session, that were members' mail-outs.

The Chair: — That would be out of a potential 660?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And how many are we budgeting for then? Like which portion of that budget does this come out of and what amount would that be?

Ms. Ronyk: — It's actually . . . We publish 800 copies of *Hansard* and the cost of that is covered right here in the *Hansard* printing budget. So we have the printing cost and the mail-out cost which was in the SPMC section a little further ahead there, when I talked about SPMC costs of mailing. So between those two costs, that's where those costs are covered. Some of that . . . members actually paid a subscription fee out of your allowance. So it's not all . . . we don't get it back, but it goes back to . . . it's a reduction in your allowance.

It is not a big uptake by members at the moment and I think it is because getting six volumes of *Hansard* in your home on the farm is a bit unwieldy. And that's why we think the Internet is a more reasonable, a more viable way to get it — whether they go into their local library and access it through Internet.

Also what we'd like to move to is demand printing, so if somebody in your constituency wants the throne speech debate, or if they want Bill 46, all the debate on Bill 46, or if they want yesterday's question period, all they have to do is ask for it, we can print them off just what they want and send it to them, instead of sending them six volumes of *Hansard* for the whole session.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — What would you estimate that we can save going to that process?

Ms. Ronyk: — Our initial review, and it is in this document . . .

The Chair: — Yes, if you look at that one that was entitled: benefits.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — That's the one you just passed out there.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, yes.

The Chair: — There are some figures that are I think on page 2 of that that outline specifically some expected savings if we use the Internet.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, we would have to wean people off the hard copy. And of course not everyone is on the Internet, and not very many are. But when you look at our public distribution, it's very small anyway, and so we would really be available to a lot more people. And members would be able to find it much easier to ask us to send out just, you know, a particular day's *Hansard* to somebody. We would print on demand.

And we think that initially, with the cost once we get *Hansard*, committee verbatims, *Votes and Proceedings*, and the order paper up, we could save about \$100,000 in printing costs. And still we would be producing some hard copy. We're going to need hard copy for the House and so on.

The Chair: — That's why you said before; there is a potential for saving. The really exciting part is more substantially increased access and use of the information is probably . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I think that's . . . and I guess it may not be appropriate even to make the comment now that we're only halfway through this, but I think when I look at your budget, and knowing this budget over the years and what changes we have made — and there's been some very close looks at the Legislative Assembly budget, and I think we've trimmed a lot of what might have been deemed to be frivolous expenditures or expenditures that were deemed to be unneeded — but I think when I look at the fact that we're reducing the number of MLAs by eight, and when I look at what the identified costs of the introduction of McDowell are, and I'm, you know, I'm hoping that your anticipation and your anticipated expenditures are, you know, are somewhat accurate. But I really worry about the administrative costs of the McDowell commission report because I think it's going to have a major impact on this budget. I was frankly expecting that we would see a larger, and hopefully will see, a larger reduction just based on the number of members decreasing.

But I guess we're going to have to take some time to see how this thing works itself out. And I, you know, guess for one, I'm willing to allow some flexibility in terms of this year's budget, simply because we don't know in any kind of detail what the impact of McDowell is going to be. I guess, you know, we can make assumptions but I'm not sure that they won't be a little

more even than what we expect. But so I, from that perspective, I have a difficult time dealing with this year's budget.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Let's just go back to item 319 . . .

The Chair: — Page 25?

Mr. Kowalsky: — Item 319, page 25. You're showing an increase, and this is mostly *Hansard*. Is that a contract that's been signed? Or who is the contract with?

Ms. Ronyk: — It's a tender for the printing. We go through the tendering process through print procurement, the same process that government uses. We use the government tendering process. And it is an increase in the tender this year for *Hansard*, partly because last year the printer was new and bid very, very low and then lost his shirt pretty much. They had to actually come in with a substantial increase this year. I think it was about 18 or \$19 a page last year up to \$23 this year. So it added quite a bit of cost to what we're expecting to be the same amount of printing.

Mr. Kowalsky: — And in view of the reduced number of members, are we reducing a proportionate number of copies, or is that a major factor?

Ms. Ronyk: — It isn't a major factor because members, as we can see, are not fully utilizing their 10 sets per member. So we don't expect that number to change a lot with eight fewer members.

Mr. Kowalsky: — No, but I'm saying if we ordered, or tendered for fewer copies would that be a . . . Is the cost proportionate to the number of copies? I expect not. But is it?

Ms. Ronyk: — It is only if you make substantial changes. When you're at the range where we're at — 700, 800 — it doesn't affect the printing costs a lot because they're using an offset process and . . . If we were printing 2,000 copies then we would probably get a cheaper rate, again.

If we drop way back, as we propose we would if we had it on Internet, back to, say, a hundred copies, then we see substantial savings per page because they can use a different process. They'd use one of the fancy new photocopier-type processes instead of offset reproduction. Then we would see savings. But if we're still at 800 copies, the photocopying still costs more.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So this tender has been left basically with the format that we've got and there's no way that we could for this upcoming year change . . . well, I guess, look at how we would get to, say, a hundred and use the other process and cut the cost of this.

Ms. Ronyk: — We're not ready yet to do that because we think we would do that once we had it up on Internet, so that there's another alternative available to people instead. Primarily it's the government departments that need it regularly, and daily, and they are people who already have the computers. They would really be able to have good access on Internet.

But until we can replace it, we think we need close to those numbers. We do review our numbers each year to see whether we have extra, we have a surplus, and then we cut back a little bit. But it doesn't affect our total costs a lot until we make a substantial cut.

The Chair: — Okay. Anything else on the *Hansard* budget?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Just the item 411, the St. John's, Newfoundland *Hansard* conference. This question is probably asked every year — I think it is, anyway. What's the purpose of that conference and how does that pertain to the changes that we're going to be or we're anticipating to be made here in Saskatchewan in terms of Internet and the impact on *Hansard*?

Ms. Ronyk: — This is the annual *Hansard* directors' or *Hansard* editors' conference. It's really the only opportunity that our *Hansard* managers have to find out firsthand what other people are doing in other jurisdictions, and certainly there are quite a few others that already have their *Hansards* up on Internet, so we can gain quite a bit of knowledge from them so that when we do it we'll be able to do it a lot easier.

It also is the only place we can send our *Hansard* people for professional development. You know, you can't send them to the university. You can't find anybody else in the province that they can consult with. And it's also a conference that moves from each jurisdiction across the country each year and we do have to host it on occasion, which we did two years ago, I think — or was it last year? Last year.

A Member: — Was it last year?

Ms. Ronyk: — Two years ago, I guess it was. And we do need to . . . we need to host it and we think we need to send our people to it . . .

A Member: — You see that's why they didn't travel anywhere.

Ms. Ronyk: — Oh yes, it probably was '95, summer of '95.

The Chair: — That's why travel was zero.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes.

The Chair: — We didn't go anywhere. We brought the mountain to Mohammed.

Ms. Ronyk: — And we do it very inexpensively, I might add. Throughout the professional development conferences that we send our various managers to — and they're specialized; they're for Sergeants-at-Arms and *Hansard* editors and Clerks, and there aren't too many of these people except parallel positions in other jurisdictions — and across our whole budget you don't ever see the full figure, but I can give that to you. We send 12 people to these professional development conferences out of the Assembly staff for a grand total of \$15,000. So we do it just as cheaply as we possibly can.

And that varies, of course, depending where they are. Like Newfoundland is a little more expensive than Alberta.

The Chair: — Anything else on *Hansard*?

And broadcasting begins on page 28 with the overall summary. And then beginning on page 29 in more detail.

Ms. Ronyk: — If I might announce, under the broadcasting section, it is this year that we will finally be up on satellite. We were hoping it was going to be prior to the start of the session. That has not been the case because SaskTel has been unable to get some of the receiving equipment that cable stations need to pick it up off the satellite. But it will, if they're ready, mid-time during the session, we'll be going ahead with that.

And what it means is that we will be able to expand our coverage from the current 8 centres in Saskatchewan to 20 and we will be out of our budget here. SaskTel will be providing those centres, those cable stations, with the equipment they need to pick it up. And it would also be available to anyone out there if they were willing to buy the decoder, and unscrambler, and so on.

Mr. Boyd: — Why would it be scrambled?

Ms. Ronyk: — Pardon?

Mr. Boyd: — Why would it be scrambled?

Ms. Ronyk: — Well it's through the SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network Corporation) We're now able to afford satellite distribution because of the new compressed video technology that's there. Before, when we looked into the satellite, it was going to cost us a million dollars a year and it just wasn't on. I heard that before. But now we can do it for this very same distribution costs that we have always been spending under the optical . . . fibre optics.

Mr. Boyd: — Do you have the list to the 20 communities?

Ms. Ronyk: — I don't have it with me. Could I provide that to you tomorrow morning?

The Chair: — Is there any one that you're wondering about?

Mr. Boyd: — No, no. I'm also curious whether or not that figure you said of a million dollars has been looked at in the current environment? I mean through SCN and others. I mean it seems to me you should be able to do it considerably less than that.

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, we're doing it for the 240,000 that's in here.

The Chair: — Page 30, line 320.

Ms. Ronyk: — Page 30.

The Chair: — And what you see there is that for almost identical to the current costs, we were able to go to it.

Mr. Boyd: — No, what I'm saying is, by broadcasting off perhaps an Anik satellite or something like that and making it

available to any home-owner with a satellite receiver.

Ms. Ronyk: — It will be in a few years when we can get up on the direct-to-home satellite. They're having some trouble getting that going in Canada yet, but I expect within a couple of years it will. Those are those little 18-inch dishes. SCN is going to be going to that when it's ready, and we'll go with them because we're getting our satellite uplink through SCN.

A Member: — I see. Okay.

Ms. Ronyk: — So we will . . . it'll soon be much easier for, you know, every home that has one of those to receive us. But for now we're still working through the cable companies.

The Chair: — So this means that every home potentially will be able to get the unscrambled legislature.

Mr. Boyd: — Well right now currently it's only enjoyed by the people in Saskatoon or Regina and a few select communities. And we in rural areas frequently are asked why.

The Chair: — So what we'll do is we'll get that list to all of the board members as to what the 20 centres will be. Okay, thanks.

Mr. Boyd: — And how that was arrived at.

Ms. Ronyk: — I can tell you what the policy was. It was to try to arrive at . . . look first at the highest potential for viewers. So we looked at the larger centres who weren't already getting it. And right, the eight that have always been getting it are the eight cities in Saskatchewan except for Estevan and Weyburn. So now we're going to Estevan and Weyburn, plus the additional 10 smaller communities but that have the largest kind of cable membership or subscribers.

Mr. Boyd: — Has there been ever any kind of a study done on what the actual uptake is in the cities?

Ms. Ronyk: — We haven't asked for a poll yet.

Mr. Boyd: — Like ratings. I mean television stations are rated, frankly. Is there anybody who pays attention to it or are we wasting money here?

Ms. Ronyk: — We always rely on members to have those few constituents in there that really let them know if something happens to their TV signal. We do know that some people are watching it. And even if they're not watching it all of the time, there are a good many people who do watch it some time. Now we haven't done . . . it costs quite a bit to do a viewer poll. We can tag on to some existing polling efforts, but even to get a couple of questions on costs quite a bit. Now we do know that other jurisdictions have done surveys and it isn't large. But when you compare the numbers to those who get *Hansard*, for example, I mean it's large compared to, say, the ones that we spend a lot of money producing *Hansard* for. Now we produce *Hansard* for many reasons, including the historical record and the actual daily needs and use in the House. But in terms of public distribution . . .

Mr. Boyd: — It's something that I wonder whether or not couldn't be tagged on to government polling. We're spending a quarter of a million dollars and there might be five people watching it, or there might be 5,000, or there might be 50,000 for all I know. For the government members that's a suggestion.

The Chair: — I think your suggestion has registered.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you. I was just going to say that the other day I was thinking . . . it's sort of along the lines of what Bill's asking about the centres, but it would be nice if once it's all pinned down exactly what's going to be happening, by what date and where, that we could send — as part of our newsletters — out to our constituents to let them know how to tune in.

Because I think to be fair, before counting them, you'd want them to at least know where to even hunt for it and that would be really helpful if we could have that.

Ms. Ronyk: — Certainly, I think that's a very good idea. And you're right — we have never been very good at advertising the television coverage of the House and that's something that we will want to do a little more proactively once we have broader access.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Just a little anecdotal information for you, Bill. I ended up one election canvassing a bit and the seniors, in particular, watch it more than other people do because they're at home. They really don't have as much access as other people do and they seem to like it quite a bit more. Maybe younger people are, you know, at work and other places. But the seniors tend to watch it quite a bit.

The Chair: — The channel surfers.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes.

The Chair: — Okay. Anything more on broadcasting on pages 30 or 31? Okay, visitor services you see on page 32 with a summary. And now here we are at the B budget item and could you just give a brief description of that, Gwenn?

Mr. Boyd: — What page are you on?

The Chair: — Page 32. Beginning of visitor services, and your B budget, right-hand side.

Ms. Ronyk: — The B budget item, there is a request, is to provide funding to construct some oak benches that would be established in the Qu'Appelle gallery, which is the lower floor rotunda — that's where we have the large screen TV, where we show the parliamentary education videos to school groups and visiting groups that come to the building.

Right now we have rented black plastic chairs there that don't do a whole lot for the architecture of the building. We're asking for . . . this estimate here has been prepared by SPMC. We would like to do it in a more attractive and actually more practical form. But the chairs do work so that's why it's a B

budget request.

The Chair: — Okay. And do we deal with that as a separate . . . that'll be included, I guess, in the motion. Any more on the B budget item?

On visitor services then — it begins on page 33 — are there any questions there? Page 34? Page 35? You see on page 36 and . . . In page 36, without being specific by name, I just will draw your attention to the second one listed, and that's the one that relates to the motion on reclassification, item no. (d), 3(d), that's the position.

Mr. Whitmore: — What page is that?

The Chair: — Page 36, the second employee listed there. That's the position that relates to the recommendation on item 3(d) in your agenda, for the reclassification, okay.

Move to the office of Sergeant-at-Arms. You have on page 37 your summary. Beginning in detail on page 38. Questions for Page 39? Page 40, you'll see essentially the status quo. Obviously the Sergeant-at-Arms himself has changed. Page 41, the staffing. Anything on Sergeant-at-Arms?

Mr. Boyd: — Was there any change in the salary, in terms of the personnel, from the previous Sergeant-at-Arms to the current Sergeant-at-Arms?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, last year the board re-classed the position downwards by two levels in the management and professional class plan, so there was a fairly significant decrease in the salary from a management level 8 to a management level 6.

The Chair: — And I think you see an increase on page 41 because it was vacant for a period, is that right?

Ms. Ronyk: — We budget at the bottom of the range and we hired, you know, about a third or so of the way up the range. We knew at the time we budgeted last year that the former Sergeant was retiring and that there was no new person in it yet. And we always budget at the bottom of the range then. We actually budgeted for three months of the old Sergeant and the rest at the bottom of the range.

The Chair: — Okay. Anything else on the Sergeant-at-Arms? We move then to Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk. You have your summary on page 42 and your detail beginning on page 43. Any questions there? Page 44? Page 45? Any questions on the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk?

If not then we'll move to the Legislative Library, page 46. You have your summary . . . and begin in some detail. Maybe I'll just make a comment on the Legislative Library . . . if Mr. Lautermilch were in the room at the moment, he wouldn't need to listen to this either or anyhow because he's heard this before.

One of the . . . there is no proposal related to it in this budget, but I just want to give you advance warning that I've asked that Marian Powell give serious consideration to a more detailed proposal in next year's budget related to our space

requirements. We, to be blunt about it, we're bursting at the seams in terms of space. And we're at the point already now where some of the materials that we have are really virtually inaccessible because of our space limitations. The supplies have outgrown the room. So I just alert you to that. Not for this budget. You won't find anything here that specifically attempted to address that in any out of the ordinary way, but you can expect that next year.

Okay, page 47. Are there any questions there? Page 48?

Just for your information as well, our library here is not only by mandate to serve the functions of the members in the Legislative Assembly. We also do have some mandated obligations related to public access as well. And the services of the library are linked with the University of Regina, and the Health department library, and three hospital libraries as well. Support services catalogue.

Page 49. Page 50. Okay, any questions on . . . oh then, sorry, then page 51 is the staff; 52, that continues. Are there any questions on the library? And in saying that, again, I just alert you to the fact that I expect that we'll have some detailed presentation to make next budget, related to library. Mr. Lautermilch.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, out-of-province travel.

The Chair: — Page?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — 49. These are sort of an annual. Gwenn, do you want to describe those for us again just briefly.

Ms. Ronyk: — Can I have Marian do that?

The Chair: — I think we'll ask Marian to do that.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Or Marian.

The Chair: — Marian does that so well on an annual basis. In fact I think Marian would probably be disappointed if you didn't ask.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — This is an annual thing, I'm thinking.

Ms. Powell: — Indeed it is.

The Chair: — For those of you who are new to the board, this is a ritual now that we're here.

Ms. Powell: — Now the information that you'd like . . . the library regularly budgets for a number of conferences. Each year the conference may vary because there are a number of specialized library conferences available to us and we pick the ones we feel will be most appropriate to our needs here.

First of all, in terms of in-province travel, we send annually one person to the Saskatchewan Library Association conference so that we can both contribute and keep up with what's happening in other libraries in the province. Even within the province, we

tend to be isolated here at the legislature.

We also try to budget each year for four out-of-province conferences. The most important one this year is called the APLC conference and that's the Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Canada. It meets in program conference only once every two years and this is the year for this conference so we've displaced a specialist topical conference for this in this year.

The NOTIS (Northwestern Online Total Integrated System) Users Group, which is always held in Chicago, is our library automated system, and we go there so that we know what changes are happening and how to deal with the automated system. We send one person.

And the Canadian Library Association conference, again it's important for us to keep up with general Canadian library activities and that conference this year is in Halifax. The Special Libraries Association we've been attending as regularly as we can for about the last six years. It's an association from across Canada and the United States of all libraries who serve specialized clientele. And we've benefited a great deal from those conferences so we try to send someone as often as we can, and this year it's in Boston. This conference is very large indeed and so it's only held in very large cities. Once every 10 years it's held in Canada and that was last year.

And I should note we're in under last year's budget by a little tiny bit.

The Chair: — I think it is fair to acknowledge actually the . . . I do acknowledge that the library budget has, as I have gone through this in a lot of detail on the weekend in preparation, has had a lot of close scrutiny, quite frankly.

Okay. Anything else on library?

Let's move ahead then, page 53. Committee support services is summarized on page 53 and then begins in detail. And what you'll see here are the estimated costs related to Special Committee on Regulations, Standing Committee on Crown Corporations, on Public Accounts, other committees, Rules and Procedures. And then the Standing Committee on Driving Safety only exists there because it had previously existed and it just takes a while to fall off the end of the system, as well as the Independent Committee on MLA Compensation.

If there should be any special committees or select committees that are created over the course of the year, they would have to come to the board to have their budgets approved. The board doesn't have any special insight that the government doesn't intend to establish any select committees, just that they aren't budgeted for.

And are there any questions on any of those, on committee support services? This includes . . . the cost of printing of *Hansard* of course is separate here from the previous *Hansard* section.

Okay. Then we begin on page 58 the statutory items. These are the items about which we have little opportunity for discretion,

really. And you'll see the grand total there. We're reflecting a decrease of 5.8 per cent.

Indemnity allowances and expenses to members, summarized on page 59. And as you can see then, when you look at the calculations, these are all calculated, if you're familiar with the detail of the McDowell recommendations, these are the McDowell recommendations put into numbers. And that was the assumption that was used for calculations here. You see that on page 40.

Page . . . sorry, on page 60, I mean. I'm sorry. Moving through, then, to page 61. And you will . . . and on 610 is a zero because of the other recommendation.

Number (f). Okay, anything there? Okay. Moving along. For allowances for additional duties, beginning on page 62 . . .

Mr. Boyd: — Excuse me. On page 61, the rate for the travel allowance, is that the standard government rate, 28.38 — .2838 cents?

The Chair: — Yes.

Mr. Boyd: — That's as of January 1?

The Chair: — I guess it's been the same rate since April of '94. It hasn't changed for a long time.

Ms. Ronyk: — It's reviewed every six months under the agreement between the Public Service Commission and the SGEU. And then it may be revised every six months but it hasn't been revised. There's been no change for a while because it's based on the costs and so on of gas and repairs.

Mr. Boyd: — That is going up. Why would it not be reflected in that?

Ms. Ronyk: — Well I guess gas has gone up and it has gone down. So it will eventually be reflected if it stays up long enough, I guess.

Mr. Boyd: — I see.

The Chair: — And our formula that we use is tied specifically to that, if that rate changes.

Mr. Boyd: — That includes virtually everything then, I assume — the operational cost of the vehicle, the depreciation, interest, repurchase price, all of those sort of things.

Ms. Ronyk: — It's supposed to cover those things.

Mr. Boyd: — Does it?

Ms. Ronyk: — I guess it depends what kind of car you drive.

Mr. Boyd: — But what is it based on?

Ms. Ronyk: — Well when SGEU and PSC negotiate it, I think they do take into consideration all of those costs of

depreciation, maintenance, like day-to-day regular maintenance, and the cost of fuel and so on, oil, you know, that kind of thing.

Mr. Whitmore: — Just to carry on, in terms of the subject, in terms of cost per kilometre, I know it's based on the SGEU rate, on the government rate. I guess though, and maybe this is something we need to discuss when we get into the area of McDowell, I'm not sure if that rate recognizes the increased costs in terms of additional travel when you calculate a travel cost that ranges in the area of 45,000 kilometres average per year, in terms of wear and tear and maintenance. We may have to look at that on a broader base to recognize some of the things related to SGEU travel or public service travel which would not be to that extent. I open that up as a possible discussion point at a later meeting.

The Chair: — I think that's a fair observation and one that when the whole report is being reviewed that the committee will want to have some discussion about. I quite agree.

Anything else then on indemnity, allowances, and expenses? Okay, page 62 is your summary for allowance for additional duties, and on page 63 then you see the figures there, and these are the figures as recommended by the McDowell report. That's how they were arrived at. Any questions there?

All right. Page 64 is the members' committee expenses, summary on page 64. And then on page 65 and 66 you . . . yes, those two. You just see them from the previous committees that we looked at, then the implications of members' expenses on those committees. This is all straightforward calculation. And you see the assumptions about numbers of meetings listed below there. That's thought to be realistic based on past experience.

Page 67 is our own budget for the Board of Internal Economy. You see the summary on page 67, followed then on page 68 by detail. And you will recognize at the bottom of page 68 that when this was prepared it was prepared for private members in mind, two of whom have changed, but when you look at the distances of the two new private members since then and you add them together, we're in the same ballpark there. And page 69, I think I've come close to using up our coffee budget for the year here tonight. So anything on the Board of Internal Economy?

Okay, third party caucus and office of the third party and again this is statutory so the figures are arrived at based on the number of caucus members and that's just a straight calculation. You see that on page 71.

Okay, and then moving to government caucus, on page 72 is the summary. Straight calculation again. And here because numbers are different, numbers of private members are different, so too is the estimated budget.

And then page 74, the opposition caucus, Leader of the Opposition, formula applied and with the opposition caucus being identical in number to previous budget year the numbers stay the same. This is all based on the assumption of zero per cent increase though.

Office of the independent member, and again that's by board directive, page 76.

Mr. Boyd: — There's nothing estimated for '95-96.

The Chair: — Right. There was some spent but there was none estimated when the budget was set. There were no independent members at that time.

Ms. Ronyk: — Next year it'll show up.

Mr. Boyd: — There was an independent member right up until the end of the session.

Ms. Ronyk: — But not when we did the budget, which would be in the fall of '94 that we prepared the budget.

Mr. Boyd: — Okay.

The Chair: — So that's why I say there was expenditure but it doesn't show as having been budgeted for.

So there you have it. That's item (3)(a), the review of the budget. So if I can refer you back then. Oh, well no, let's do the revenue part here too and then . . . the revenue part doesn't take long, I'm afraid.

Page 1 then of the revenue. Then you'll see that the large bulk of the revenue, as you flip over on page 2, we'll see that it is in the sale of legislative publications. That represents 88 per cent of our total revenue, so when you're asking previously about the revenues realized from *Hansard* and the like, it tells you there. So that's the revenue. Any questions on revenue? Okay. Can I then take us to . . . back to your agenda item no. 3. Having done 3(a) then reviewed the budget document, you have then in your appendix . . . now if you can get your appendixes handy. These are the ones with the A, B, C, D, E through to J tabs and each decision item then will refer you to an appendix. So decision item 3(b), benefits for constituency assistants, is under A.

And at the bottom of page 3 of item A you see the recommendation that, effective January 1, 1996, all eligible constituency assistants be enrolled in the public employees disability plan and public employees dental plan. So there are the recommendations. Is there a mover?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I'll move it.

The Chair: — Seconded by Ms. Crofford. Discussion?

Mr. Kowalsky: — All of these recommendations we're going through, if passed, would coincide then with the budget we've just gone through?

The Chair: — Yes. The budget you've seen has assumed that these are all passed so this is not in addition to the budget. This is included in what you have just reviewed.

Mr. Kowalsky: — All right. Thank you.

The Chair: — And that's why the approval of the budget is our final item because it depends on whether you approve these or not. Okay. Further discussion? That was Lautermilch and Crofford. Those in favour of recommendation on benefits for constituency assistants, please indicate. Opposed? That is carried.

Moving then to decision item (c), special salary adjustment for certain classifications not included in the April 1 PSC-SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union) agreement. See your appendix C.

And the recommendation is on the second page. Effective April 1, 1996 that five clerical classifications, seven positions in the Legislative Assembly Office, receive the special salary adjustment as provided by the PSC-SGEU collective agreement. By that agreement in the public service, there was some reclassification . . . sorry, some . . . not reclassification, I'm using the wrong word — range adjustments that were in the . . . as I understand it, were attempted to achieve a pay equity objective, and the recommendation here then is that we apply that agreement in the public service to our Legislative Assembly staff. Oh, I think I misquote myself here.

Ms. Ronyk: — That is the understanding, that the board would normally apply the same provisions that have been applied in the public service and those are the figures that are in the budget. We have applied them.

The results of applying them are actually in appendix B, the one just prior to this one in C. And it just shows you the actual costs of applying it to all of the Legislative Assembly staff that are in the targeted levels within the PSC adjustment. And I could just tell you that that April 1 salary, special salary adjustment, and what it did was add a step to the top of the range, knock three off the bottom of the range, and create a new four-step range.

And as the Speaker mentioned, it was targeted to clerical, primarily female-dominated positions, and we have a lot of those in the Assembly because there are actually 90 people that have their salaries affected by this, including the members' secretaries, especially our non-perms in *Hansard* and security and pages — the lower paid people. It's appendix B that tells you how that affects the people that were aligned with the same positions that were targeted in government for it.

Now appendix C, this request is an additional request, because what we're saying is that we have applied that adjustment to the Legislative Assembly staff in the same positions as those targeted in government. But because we've done that, it has caused a compression problem in a few other positions within the Assembly that were not targeted, that did not get that adjustment.

What we're asking for in order to maintain the equity between positions is that the board apply that very same salary adjustment to these five classifications that are listed here — there's a total of seven people involved and they're listed there. And the total cost is on the next page in the recommendation. No, it's in the budget implications on page 2, a total of 9,500 additional dollars. Those dollars are already in the budget, but it

still requires the board to make a decision as to whether to apply it because it is not an automatic thing.

The Chair: — Okay. So the recommendation is the one listed on page 2?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes.

The Chair: — Yes. Okay. So the recommendation as I . . .

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Can I get a clarification . . .

The Chair: — Yes. Just let me clarify then if there is any confusion. The recommendation is then on page 2 of item C, of appendix C as you see it there, okay. That's what's before us.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, I'm just wanting a little more explanation on the compression problem you mentioned.

Ms. Ronyk: — The positions that had the adjustment applied to got increases that varied from a one-step jump . . . They were at the very bottom of the range. When you knocked off the bottom three steps sometimes they got a two — or in very rare occasions they were right at the bottom — a three step jump.

Now what happened was that when we applied that, then we had a range of people whose positions were just above that and suddenly we had people that used to be paid more than, being paid the same as or less than an employee that you, you know, that you used to be ahead of. You're now either at the same level or behind. And there's just the equity perception problem from staff that they've lost ground and yet they're still doing more responsible things than the person in the other position.

We feel that by . . . it doesn't keep going on for ever which is of course the concern. We feel that we've adequately addressed it by dealing with these five positions which are essentially clerical.

Particularly I draw your attention to the library technician positions. There are four of them, library technicians 1 and 2, and they were within the targeted salary ranges of the government proposal but the government just did not list them because government actually has almost no library technicians in government libraries. We still have these ancient dinosaur very junior-level positions and we would like to . . . and yet say the museum technicians were covered, which is a very parallel sort of level of education and so on required. And we felt that it's fairest to apply it to these people as well.

The Chair: — Okay. Any further questions or discussions?

Mr. McLane: — I'm having a little trouble following this and I apologize.

The Chair: — No. Fine. Go ahead.

Ms. Ronyk: — It's complicated.

The Chair: — Yes. I don't blame you.

Mr. McLane: — I'm just wondering, the positions that were increased that caused this problem, when was that done and how is that done?

Ms. Ronyk: — The proposal . . . sorry, it is April 1 of '96 so it's coming . . .

The Chair: — Hasn't happened yet.

Ms. Ronyk: — . . . in the new fiscal year.

Mr. McLane: — Are we approving that, that increase?

Ms. Ronyk: — We were assuming that the board would maintain its previous policy of applying the changes within PSC, changes with respect to public servants or government staff, to legislative staff. That's been a decision the board made at the beginning when the board was first established, and it hasn't varied from that. So we were assuming that the board would apply that, but we have identified, you know, the costs and so on, so that you have that information.

The Chair: — I think I misled you. I think I contributed to the confusion here because that isn't . . . the motion doesn't address that. It is assumed that that has always been the practice and that was in the budget.

Mr. McLane: — So that is indeed the practice. Any increase in salary or positions within SGEU is automatically transcribed to the staff here.

The Chair: — Yes.

Mr. McLane: — Okay.

The Chair: — And that was assumed in the budget and therefore isn't here as a special motion, because it has been past practice. Okay. And I apologize for being confusing and misleading on that. Thanks for clarifying that, Gwenn.

Any other questions or discussion?

Okay, the recommendation on page 2 then, effective April 1, 1996:

That five clerical classifications, seven positions, in the Legislative Assembly Office receive a special salary adjustment as provided by the PSC-SGEU collective agreement.

Those in favour? Opposed? I'm sorry, did we have . . . The mover is Crofford; seconded, Whitmore. Those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried.

Now move to decision item (d). And this is in your appendix D and this is the reclassification of the legislative guide position.

Ms. Ronyk: — Excuse me, Mr. Speaker, if I might just tell members that that same adjustment applied to the clerk 3's, which then also affects the members' constituency office . . . or constituency assistant allowance, so that has gone up a step, if

you like. And it also applies to the members' secretaries here in the Legislative Building in addition to the narrower legislative staff.

The Chair: — All right, that was on the previous item. Now back to item (d) which is in your appendix D. Recommendation, you see at the bottom of the page. And it is to be a reclassification from a clerk 1 to a clerk 2 with some changed duties for the legislative guide. And I pointed that out as we went through the budget. First of all, would someone like to move that? Mr. Whitmore. Is there a seconder? Mr. Lautermilch. Discussion. Are you ready for the question on that? Question.

The recommendation, effective April 1, 1996:

That one of the permanent legislative guide positions be reclassified from a clerk 1 to a clerk 2 and that the title be changed to senior legislative guide.

Those in favour please indicate. Down. Hands opposed. That's carried.

Item no. (e), decision item, temporary staff for administration and financial services. You'll find this in appendix H. This will largely be related to the implementation of the McDowell recommendations. On this, members, can I refer you back to your budget books, page 8. And I'll ask Gwenn to draft the recommended wording. If you go back to your budget books, page 8. Okay, I'll just ask that we have an explanation here. I don't want to deal with this until we've got a precisely worded motion. Gwenn, do you want to give us the explanation?

Ms. Ronyk: — Appendix H gives you the reasons why financial services and admin are asking for some additional help, temporary help, for this fiscal year. Partly it's because of a backlog that we've incurred over the last couple of years. There's a whole list on the first page of that request that outlines the problems that we haven't been able to cope with in terms of our workload. That includes the replacing of long-term employees with new people, the increase in the workload due to the establishment of, say, the Children's Advocate and some of the other offices for which we do the accounting administration for those offices and that's been added. This last year has been a bad year with the election, which meant we had a lot of work to do with the dissolution procedures and then orientation of new members.

In the last couple of years the board has been very busy with policy development and changes in the administration of members' pay, allowances, and our work for the McDowell Committee has meant that we have gotten behind in carrying out our normal functions. We've had some problems with having sufficient time to properly train and supervise the staff. We are concerned that things are getting out of hand.

Now in addition to those pressures, we now are faced with the implementation of the new provisions under McDowell which will have substantial impact, especially initially, while we're getting the new allowances and salaries established and start-up costs and providing the training and orientation materials and

establishing the new forms and the new processes and the disclosure reports and so on that are going to be required.

And also, an example is that we're now providing the dental and disability benefits to constituency assistants, which is adding another 85 people to these benefit plans, which we have one person in the Assembly that administers those plans along with all our other personnel work — Linda Kaminski. And we do expect that there'll be a fair bit of uptake on these new benefit plans initially, particularly, and it does take time to enrol them and establish their eligibility. And we do need some extra help for that.

So what the request is is for 2.95 person-years, temporary basis, until we can sort out what our ongoing needs will be, probably for the next fiscal year. And the difference our request of new dollars over our last year's request is \$96,000 additional money that we're requiring for those . . . actually it will be about four people but not for the full year. So it'll be 2.95 person-years.

Mr. McLane: — Just a question in the appendix H, question 2 talks about eight fewer members as a result of the election, .3 persons of a year. I guess I'm having a little trouble here understanding that we've gone . . . if you took a simple analogy of 66 MLAs — we have about 66 or whatever the numbers were, I forget from here — employees at that time. We now have eight less MLAs and I'm wondering why we can only save .3 of a person year, I guess is the question that I would ask.

Ms. Ronyk: — There is a detailed explanation of how we came up with that under (f).

Mr. McLane: — And I did look at that.

Ms. Ronyk: — But the simple answer is that you have eight fewer members but you're still covering the whole province. You're still providing the same services to as many voters in the province as you were. For example, the communication allowance has increased for some members because you have more voters. We are going to be saving some dollars because we're only paying 58 salaries instead of 66 and we're paying for 58 constituency offices instead of 66 allowances.

However, there are a lot of things that aren't a direct reduction. For example, we now have an increase in the number of constituency staff, partly because we're requiring them to go on payroll rather than fee-for-service, and because members are now in larger constituencies in the rural areas and many of them feel they need two offices, or they need a main office and a satellite. So instead of having . . . you know we don't just have 58 constituency assistants, we actually have 90 of them. And so there's still the administration required to deal with them.

The item (f) does go through in detail the actual administration reductions that there will be for fewer members, but they don't add up to a whole lot because the things that we're losing are the things that didn't take time. You know the payroll is a straight amount every month and that didn't take time, but when you're processing more members' claims because you have more constituents to deal with and some cases more funds to

deal with them, those are the kind of things that take time and we haven't saved anything there.

The Chair: — Plus I think there is one, the accountability in the travel allowance will . . . that will be a bit of a paper mountain, I suspect.

Ms. Ronyk: — Oh yes, there certainly with the McDowell implementation there will be an increase in the amount of administration required, particularly from the accountability processes that have been put in place.

The Chair: — Okay, so the figure that we're looking at is the bottom of page 8. It's the 101,637 — that's temporary services in total for financial administration. I'll give you the precise, recommended wording in a moment.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I think Mr. McLane probably raises some of the questions, the answers to which were uncertain because there is some fairly dramatic changes here, in terms of how members' accounts are handled, and I really don't think we're going to have an accurate costing of this until we have a look at this fiscal year's expenditures and have a look at a proposed budget for the next year. And I think that it's really difficult. I would like to see, frankly, this budget cut much more than it is because of some of the uncertainties in some of the areas. I'm hesitant to do that because I really think that we want this to come together in a well-organized and an efficient way so that we're not making mistakes. We want to do this right.

And so I guess from my perspective I'm certainly willing to be more lenient with this budget this year than I would had these changes not been made. Because I know other areas of government are making some fairly substantial sacrifices in terms of programs, you know. And I know what's coming in this budget and it's going to be a very difficult budget for us as a province.

But I just close by saying that I guess I'm a little more flexible with this Legislative Assembly budget this year than I probably would be at another time.

The Chair: — Well it simply has to be acknowledged that more accountable does not mean less expensive. It means quite the opposite.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I don't think anyone ever assumed, or I certainly hope that no one assumes, that because there are fewer members and the changes of McDowell, that we're going to have less cost per member.

The Chair: — And that's why I do recommend this to you because it would be extremely unfair to Legislative Assembly Office staff to expect that we implement McDowell and not have the administrative support in order to be able to carry it out.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — One of the reasons I'll be supporting this is . . . one of the things I worry about is, due to the increased public scrutiny, it's really important that our staff understand what's allowed, what isn't allowed, and what

supporting documentation is required; that each MLA understand . . . because when MLAs don't understand that, sometimes you end up in the news and sometimes you end up in court. And I think it's really important that everybody understand exactly what you can and can't do under these new rules and that we get some help, with anybody who's not sure going to be phoning for a while.

The Chair: — That's right.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Until we get that in place. I'm more concerned about that piece of it actually than a lot of the other pieces because a lot of . . . when people maybe haven't kept track of something properly, it isn't intentional but there you have it. So I think at least during that early period I'd be more comfortable if I knew that my constituency assistant really understood what can and can't happen and advise me accordingly when I'm signing something.

The Chair: — All of which is why I advise again the committee to come to agreement on those early, so that the i's can be dotted, the t's can be crossed, and your constituency assistants can be properly prepared so that the new system will work to achieve what it's intended to do.

I recommend to you a motion then:

That the Legislative Assembly Office request for temporary staff for administrative and financial services in the amount of \$101,637 be approved for the 1996-97 fiscal year.

I recommend that to you. Is there a mover? Mr. Lautermilch. Is there a seconder? Ms. Crofford. Further discussion? Those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried.

Moving to decision item (f), provision of equipment and furniture, appendix (i). Now the decision item (i), as you can see, is a directive. It's directive 24, and what's recommended to you then is that directive 24 be approved as written and before you. You will have been familiar in previous details with the proposal, unless you want . . . I'm not recommending that we go through the proposal in detail. I'll assume, unless you tell me otherwise, that you're familiar with it. So what I recommend to you is a directive. If this is approved then there would be . . . the directive would be released and the instruction related to it would then follow shortly thereafter.

So this is the furnishings and equipment, and it's in order to have a motion to adopt directive 24 as recommended. Mr. Lautermilch. Is there a seconder? Mr. Whitmore. Is there discussion? Okay. Are you ready for the question? Those in favour then please indicate. Down hands. Opposed? That's carried.

Ms. Ronyk: — Could we add to that motion, effective April 1 . . .

The Chair: — Oh yes, I'm sorry. We need to have an effective date. . . . (inaudible) . . . to the amendment, effective April 1 on the beginning of the new fiscal year. That was the assumption

in the budget.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — In the terms of this directive, are you getting any pressure right now, Gwenn, and I don't know what the impact would be on this budget, but if there are members who are looking at some changes prior to . . . Are you aware of any of that, and I don't know how you could be but . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — Actually since a lot of this is actually provisions for the term, there would be no problem with making it effective today.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Why don't we make it effective today and then that wouldn't create difficulties for anyone who wants to change a photocopier or whatever.

The Chair: — Okay, we'll get the directive and the explanation out as quickly as we can.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Are you guys good with that?

Mr. Boyd: — Just to be clear what we're doing here then, can you just go through that for us?

The Chair: — What the provisions would . . .

Mr. Boyd: — You want to implement that today, directive 24?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Hey, it doesn't matter to me; I'm just saying if a member wants to use this directive and if a member next week would want to go out and change a photocopier and have it supplied in the method that we . . .

Mr. Boyd: — How does it affect existing equipment?

Ms. Ronyk: — It doesn't. Your existing equipment will remain in your offices until you want to replace it. And then you can replace out of these provisions as you need. But it only is . . .

Mr. Boyd: — You don't know what the SPMC guidelines with respect to this are, though? A photocopier — there's a fair difference between a little desktop photocopier and an industrial photocopier.

Ms. Ronyk: — What has been . . . basically the guidelines would be the dollars that are approved in the budget item and it's . . . the photocopiers, we've budgeted roughly at \$200 a month, which . . . and SPMC's is just rental so it's no usage in there. So they've suggested 150 as kind of a basic photocopier or a generally acceptable photocopier and 200 is about a mid-range, a mid-range photocopier, according to their standards. Now if you wish a top-of-the-line model, you'll be able to do that by supplementing it with your existing allowances.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Let me make a recommendation. I mean, if there's some concern with respect to this, why don't we just leave it. Let people go as they're going now and we can do this with the rest of the package or do it . . . Can we do it effective July 1?

The Chair: — No. I would recommend to you that you do it effective immediately because it does make it . . . if a member is sitting and wondering when this is going to happen . . . because what this, for example, does provide is the provision of a photocopier. So if you're saying effective whatever date, then to be able to access this — and this is for the term and not for the year; that's why the date it comes into force is not particularly relevant because what this provides is the furnishings and equipment description for the course of the term, and for that reason, I'm not troubled by doing it effective immediately, effective April 1. I mean the members can wait if they're wanting to put in a good photocopier in their office. But I would recommend sooner rather than later just for the benefit of the members.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Now maybe if I can just throw a little practical example on the table, given when I first got elected what I thought the electoral time frame would be. I had an agreement that just ran out recently and so I'd like to do something else, but would like some certainty with which to move into a new agreement.

The Chair: — Yes, and I'm most concerned about the new members actually when I recommend this sooner rather than later because many of them have not been making decisions. They've been waiting to get this thing clarified so they could get on with establishing their offices.

Mr. Kowalsky: — The clarification I need, is there any closure time for this in terms of a person has a certain lease agreement now or a copier in terms of the transition to this?

Ms. Ronyk: — No. We expect that members, especially those who have more than one office, will still have to maintain some of your existing arrangements and we expect that you will move into this as you need to throughout the course of the term. That for example, particularly in the computers, it's very difficult under your current allowances to find \$4,000 to buy a new computer system because your office allowance is based on so much per month and you have to save up a long time to get that much. So this, at least, gives you an ability to make a purchase which is far cheaper than having to make long-term lease arrangements or something of that sort.

The Chair: — This is of particular concern for new members.

Mr. McLane: — This will not have any effect on the present allowances that are finished as of March 31, then? Would that affect that at all?

Ms. Ronyk: — It doesn't affect them?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I would . . .

The Chair: — Then effective today?

A Member: — Effective today. Okay.

The Chair: — Can I just have a show of hands on that? Okay, so that shall read: effective today.

Ms. Ronyk: — I must caution you that we're not quite ready for tomorrow. So it will take us a bit of time too, you know, and SPMC isn't really aware of this in detail yet either but we'll be working with you in your offices just as soon as we can to fulfil your needs.

The Chair: — Yes, but you can go back to your caucuses tomorrow and report that it's been approved and they can . . . your constituency assistants can start to plan now. Okay, so that's carried. Did I say that? All right, then I guess it must be.

Then item (g) which is indexing, and which you find then it's (j) right behind (i). I don't know if yours has a tab on it or not. It's just the one-page item. And as we had said in the assumptions for the budget these were assuming that all of these allowances — the per diem sessional; the constituency office; the caucus grants for sessional research as well as secretarial expenses; the grants to the independent members; to the Office of the Leader of the Opposition; per diem caucus expense allowances; the grant to the Office of the Leader of the Third Party; the committee per diem and expense allowances; and the Speaker's per diem and expense allowances — the recommendation is that those will all be frozen once again.

Moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. Boyd. Discussion? You have the recommendation then before you in detail and with the list of allowances and then the section of each directive for each of those will read as follows:

This adjustment will not be applied for the fiscal years beginning April 1, 1992; April 1, 1993; April 1, 1994; April 1, 1995; and April 1, 1996.

Therefore frozen for the fifth consecutive year.

Okay, that's the recommendation before you. Do I have a mover? The mover was Lautermilch, seconded by Boyd. Okay. Discussion? In favour? Opposed? That is carried.

Now you can go back and report that to your families. They'll wonder what you're doing on the Board of Internal Economy. How the heck did you get on that board? Okay. For the last several years, every time I head out the door, heading to a board meeting, my good wife winces. Okay.

We'll now move to motion (h) to approve revenue estimates. And that is those last two pages there of your budget which is revenues in the amount of \$50,000. Is that correct?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes.

The Chair: — Yes. Okay, and I'll recommend to you then the motion worded:

That the Legislative Assembly revenue estimates of \$50,000 be approved for the 1996-97 fiscal year, and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Does someone wish to move that? Mr. Lautermilch. Seconder? Mr. Kowalsky. Discussion. In favour? Opposed?

And that's carried. And can I have the mover and seconder fill that in and sign it. Oh here's the original. Okay. That's item (h).

Now do you need a brief recess before moving to item (i)? About a five-minute recess? Okay. All right. So you want to take a five-minute recess?

The meeting recessed for a period of time.

The Chair: — Order. Now before we word the precise motion, what I want to do is make crystal clear what we're recommending to you. If you will turn, on your budgets, to page summary 2, on the bottom line, you'll see total budgetary, and the figure there is 4 million. In the second column, right-hand side, the total \$4,872,590. Do you see that? And I recommend then to you an additional 10,200, if you want to just write this in for your own information, 10,200. That's the B budget item which would give you then a grand total budgetary if you approve the B budget item of 4,882,790. Our motion will differentiate between budgetary and statutory. So what I'm recommending to you is budgetary rate 4,882,790.

And then in addition to that, what I'm recommending to you on the next page, sum 3, when you go to the second last column from the bottom, total statutory, I'm recommending to you the figure again in the second column, the total \$9,585,120 as it's listed there. You see that? And then the two of those added together will be 14,467,910, which is the figure that you will see if you go back to the page 1 in the upper left-hand corner, 1996-97 estimates with B budget, 14,467,910. So that's how it's arrived at.

And so the motion that I will recommend to you if you don't have amendments to make will be that. And Mr. Lautermilch is waving his hand there, but that's our starting point. And Mr. Lautermilch.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay, I think with respect to the B budget, the seating for the gallery, that we could probably put that off for this year. And I would recommend that we do not include that in this year's budget.

Gwenn had indicated that with respect to *Votes*, orders and *Journals*, item 3(19) on page 19, there might be an additional \$15,000 that we might be able to save from that particular item. And so I would suggest that we look at those two and I'm recommending that we omit those from the budget for this year.

I had a question on page 24 and I didn't want to stop you as you were going through. But with respect to miscellaneous services — what that is.

The Chair: — Miscellaneous services.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Page 24. Supplies. Miscellaneous supplies, sorry, item 278 under *Hansard*. I'm not sure what that is. I see actual expenditure '94-95, 1,200; '95-96 estimated, 6,000. And again requested 6,000. I'm wondering if we might not be able to cut that back to say 1,500.

Ms. Ronyk: — Perhaps I'll ask Janis to look at what our actual expenditures to date are in this fiscal year. But what those are are the cartridges, the diskettes for the computers in *Hansard*, the audio cassettes and video cassettes that are used in *Hansard*. And they do kind of just need . . . we use a lot of them and they are reused but they do wear out and have to be replaced. But I will check to see what our actual is. You can see our actual for '94-95 is low. It looks like it is low again this year. It is less than \$500. So I think yes, we could probably cut it back. Now I don't know if they've been saving up to . . . you're a *Hansard* person . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well it's piddly out of \$15 million . . .

Ms. Ronyk: — . . . to buy new stuff, but I would think we could cut it back.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — . . . but it just sort of jumped out at me. Why don't we pencil that in at 1,500.

The Chair: — Reduced by 1,500, Eldon?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Put it at 1,500 as opposed to the 6,000 that was requested.

The Chair: — So reduced by 4,500. Okay.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And I guess I'm questioning as well . . . and I know we've got to pay for the CPA conference. And I understand what you're doing in terms of half of it basically this year and half for the next . . . putting half in the next fiscal year. Is 50,000, is that a fairly accurate expenditure for this fiscal year in terms of the expenditures to prepare for next year's CPA?

I need to say that I really worry about the optics, cutting eight members. We know that McDowell is going to cost more money and that's all into this thing.

The Chair: — It would be my judgement that's not an unrealistic number, although I think it's difficult to say with certainty. As Gwenn has said the Winnipeg regional which will be held in 1996 has got an operative budget of 120,000 and our objective will be to host for substantially less than that, but we do realize that there are commitments that will have to be made in this fiscal year — because this fiscal year will run until March of 1997 — for a conference that will be hosted in the summer of '97. So it's my judgement it's not unrealistic.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay. We'll let that go.

So then I've got just those three items. And the other area, and I'm onto this and I don't know in what format I would feel more comfortable, but with respect to the Legislative Assembly, and Gwenn I think you said something in terms of the whole Legislative Assembly budget, the aggregate travel is about 15,000?

Ms. Ronyk: — Yes, for out of province.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — For out-of-province travel. And I don't know what it is, Marian, but every time we hit the library budget and see the different trips to Chicago and Halifax and there's . . . I don't know how many would there be, there would be about eight and I think if . . .

The Chair: — There's four.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Is there four trips?

The Chair: — Four.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And was it cut back from two people at one time . . .

The Chair: — It was.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — . . . with one person going?

The Chair: — That's right.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And I guess this is basically what we approved last year, as I recall. So I guess we'll . . . I just want to flag that. It catches my eye every year and I don't know how we could . . . maybe I got a one-track mind.

The Chair: — Well I'm convinced we should recommend to Marian that she print it in smaller print some year.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes. Every year my eyesight gets worse.

The Chair: — It takes less space.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So anyway, Mr. Speaker, those are just three small areas that I wanted to suggest.

The Chair: — Okay. So if I'm hearing this correctly, \$19,500. If I can refer you back then to the summary 2, the \$4,872,590, less \$19,500, because you're not counting the ten two on B budget. Correct me if I'm wrong, Janis, or whoever's got the calculator, \$4,853,090. It's \$4,872,590 for budgetary minus 15,000 minus 4,500. \$4,853,090. Okay.

So following through on that it would . . . if that is your wish then I would recommend . . . then can you add to that \$9,585,120. \$14,438,210. I've got it. I'll fill in the numbers here.

Okay, if I can recommend to you a motion. It would be in order to have a motion

That a budget of \$14,438,210 be approved for the Legislative Assembly for the 1996-97 fiscal year as follows: budget to be voted, \$4,853,090; statutory budget, \$9,585,120; and that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Is there a mover? Mr. Lautermilch. Is there a seconder? Mr. Kowalsky. Is there further discussion? If not, are you ready for the question? Those in favour please indicate. Down. Opposed?

And that's carried unanimously.

And I'll ask Mr. Lautermilch and Kowalsky if you'll fill in the original there. I thank you for that, members of the board.

We will now move to item no. 4 on our agenda and I will ask the Provincial Auditor's office to come forward. I'll introduce them to you. I suspect they don't need introduction, but perhaps they do.

The Provincial Auditor leading the way here, the guy with the curly hair — both have quite a bit of hair there, actually . . . it's all relative — is Wayne Strelloff. He's the Provincial Auditor and he's accompanied today by Mr. Fred Wendel, who is the Deputy Provincial Auditor and I'll ask them to take their place at the front here.

I'll refer you to your business and financial plans for the Office of the Provincial Auditor in your package.

All right, members of the board, if I can refer you to page 3 of the business and financial plan. And what I'll ask the auditor to do is to present us a brief description of the services and the operations of the office of the auditor. Can I ask you as well, Wayne, right first of all before you do anything else, if you will point us to the budgetary requests so that as members are listening they can be listening in the context of budgetary request.

Mr. Strelloff: — The page 20 has a more detailed schedule of the budget requests for the last five years and the '96-97 budget request is \$4.288 million.

The Chair: — So, members, if you'll keep your eye on that page and that will be the figure that I will be recommending to you. So with that in mind then, the Provincial Auditor.

Mr. Strelloff: — Thank you and good evening, members. On page 3 of our business and financial plan has the organization of it. It's organized into several sections explaining what we do, where we're going in our operations, how we plan to get there, how we measure our own success, our financial plan, and our proposed budget for '96-97, and the impact of alternative funding levels. We have appendix 1 which includes a more detailed support for our budget proposals, including five-year trends and analysis, and appendix 2 beginning on page 65 includes answers to questions that were posed at previous board meetings and at the meetings of the Standing Committee on Estimates.

Turning to page 4 gives an overview of the office in terms of the legal status, The Provincial Auditor Act which provides direction from the Assembly to our office and tells us what to do, our vision, our mission, and then how we carry out our work, examining the government's reports and its management systems and practices.

And we carry out a number of examinations. The first one is the examination of financial reports, and the question we ask, or try to answer, is that are the financial reports provided by the government reliable. So they come to you and we try to say and

examine are they reliable. We also examine whether the government complies with the main legislative authorities or legislative auditing group working for the legislature. So one of the examinations that we carry out at each government organization is: does the government comply with the main legislative authorities?

We also examine and report on the adequacy of the government's management systems and practices for safeguarding public assets, for ensuring economy and efficiency, and compliance with legislative authorities. We report on other kinds of reports that the government sets out and provides to the Assembly. And again, trying to answer the question and providing you some assurance on whether they are reliable.

On page 5, we also note we serve the Standing Committees on Public Accounts and Crown Corporations. We also train professionals for the public service. We train articling students. At any point in time we have perhaps 15 to 20 people of our 60 people who are new graduates from universities trying to earn their chartered accountancy, mainly.

We also encourage discussion and debate about key accountability and management issues. We think what our work does is important. It contributes to confidence in our system of government. It helps you as legislators scrutinize what the government is doing and hold them to account. And we also try to encourage the government to carry out its responsibilities to use sound management systems and practices. And we're always recommending improvements in those practices.

On page 6, we identify what we think are some of the special abilities and skills and knowledge that we bring to the table when we work for you. The objectivity part, because of our full independence from the executive government — we work for the Assembly; we're paid for by the Assembly — it provides us a significant degree of independence and therefore we can take on tough issues with government officials.

And we also have knowledge of the complex structure of government, the legislative authorities, the information systems. The accounting and auditing standards recommended by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants guides our work; we adhere to them. We're audited to make sure that we're — as an office — complying with those standards.

We also have the professional institutes come into our office and inspect how we carry out our work. We also have a working knowledge of many of the issues facing government organizations, and that, as you know, the lines of business that government has . . . gets into, are quite diverse — education, health, pension, gambling, transportation, non-renewable resources, insurance, construction — a whole array of lines of business.

The next section talks about where we are going in terms of our goals and objectives. The goals and objectives, the first two are externally focused, trying to encourage government to manage better and also to provide better reporting, both publicly and to the Assembly. The third goal relates to our own internal focus,

which is the ongoing effort to manage our business effectively.

The next part sets out our values to make sure that we adhere to our values in carrying out our work and our staff remind us of those values constantly. Factors affecting our work plan — the intent to audit each government organization each year; that our work plan that we're proposing is what information we knew at September 30, about the level of government revenue and spending; the number of government organizations that are out there; the quality of the government records systems and practices; the use of appointed auditors.

We carry out our work with appointed auditors using the recommendations of a task force on the roles, responsibilities, duties of appointed auditors which provided a framework in which we're working together with management groups, appointed auditors, and our office.

The professional standards, the professional standards on the accounting side and the auditing side constantly change and that's important to carrying out our work. The cooperation we hope to receive from government officials and appointed auditors. Usually it's good. Sometimes we have to struggle through it.

And also the public expectations which really move into some of the forces and trends that affect our work plan. The constant pressure on scarce public resources and changing demand for services as we explain in page 9. The ongoing demand for improved public accountability which you in particular know about, are sensitive to. The changing computer technology and also the more, ever-growing concern about the effect of society on the environment.

How we're going to get where we plan to go, achieving our goals. On page 10, setting out that we plan to audit each government organization each year. The reliability of financial statements; compliance with the law; adequacy of management systems and practices.

We report in a fall report and a spring report to you each year, some of the issues that we plan to continue to emphasize in terms of the importance that we think those issues are to you. Paragraph 32, where we talk about the need for a complete business and financial plan for the government as a whole. An annual report by the government showing what it did with . . . during the year compared to what it planned to do.

Ongoing encouragement for government organizations to provide you better accountability reports so that you can assess their performance as well as identifying some of the key issues that government organizations face. And how they're handling those issues both on an individual government organization basis and more government wide or sector wide.

Some of the steps that we're planning to take to improve our own performance — monitoring and moving forward; our short-term and long-term plans; priorities, and work programs; to actually complete the detailed work plan that we have set out here in pages 22 to 25, that we want to get that work done; meet our established deadlines; comply with professional standards

and gain your support as legislators as we report to you. And the success of our office depends on whether our recommendations that we provide you are supported, adopted, and implemented. And we also are trying to improve our reports, our working relationships, our own skills and practices.

On page 12 we also move into how we measure our success. That we want to be able to come back to you and say that we have worked at accordance with professional standards. And in pages 62 and 63 shows the Institute of Chartered Accountants last inspection report as they move into our office and inspect what we do. Work according to our values — we have corporate culture surveys that we do internally in our office to make sure that our employees believe that we are working according to our values and identifying areas that we need to do better.

Complete our work and reports within the costs in our business plan, deadlines, that our work is valued by the committee . . . or the legislature and its standing committees. Our recommendations for improvement are accepted. That we were successful in terms of identifying some of the key areas of significance and risk — the government needs to manage well — and that we comply with the recommendations of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Now we move into our financial plan in paragraph 53. Our plan, of course, is directly affected by the state of the government's management systems and practices, the number of government organizations. In one of the pages in the detailed schedules we show which organizations have been created versus which organizations have been wound up; the use of appointed auditors. And our work plan reflects what we know about these factors when we provided this plan to you and completing our analysis at September 30.

On page 14, it says that our detailed work plan is described on pages 22 to 25. Table 1 shows our plan cost for the last three years, including this year and next year and the year after.

Page 15 shows, explains some of the changes — the decrease, for example, to the '95-96 year. And then the change in the '96-97 proposal, explaining the elements of that; that we are recommending a reduction in our budget which reflects some of the savings that we're putting in place and trying to do a better job; also, in some of the changes in the organizations that government has created or wound up.

At the bottom of page 15, 63 begins to explain how we plan, how we propose to finance our current work plan. And on table 2, page 16, shows the spending practices over the last three years, including this year, the '96-97 budget proposal at 4.288. And then also what we see in '97-98, at 4.2.

Let's see. I'm a little bit over. Page 17 shows now, if there are different funding levels, the decisions that we plan to make and then we move to the appendixes in terms of more detailed information.

Appendix 1 provides a five-year summary on page 20 and more detailed backup including five-year historical trends: the

organizations created, wound up, our salaries and the use of our staff resources, the work that we hadn't done in previous years; our own audited financial statements including our auditor's report on our financial statements, our management systems and practices, and our compliance with legislative authorities.

Appendix 2 which begins on page 65 sets out answers to questions posed in prior years by this board and the standing committee.

The Chair: — Well that was very good and I appreciate your pithiness. We've been working on pith all evening here so I appreciate it very much.

I recommend to the members then this motion before we begin your questions and discussion. The motion that I'll recommend to you is that the board approve an allocation of \$4.288 million for the Office of the Provincial Auditor for the fiscal year 1996-97. So that's what I recommend to you. We'll open the floor for discussion and when you've had your questions and discussion then we'll deal with the motion specifically. Questions or discussions?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I'm just wondering if you could answer the question: how do other provinces scrutinize the auditor's office? I notice here that you have an auditor that does an audited report of your office. But is that the standard practice across Canada? What would be the mechanism by which most people do that?

Mr. Strelieff: — all of the legislative auditors have an audit done of their organization. The audit that our auditor does, Arcsott & Partners, is the same audit that we carry out on other government organizations. Are our financial statements reliable? Do we have sound management systems and practices to make sure that we're managing well, and three, are we complying with the key legislative authorities that govern our operation? And the key one for us is The Provincial Auditor Act.

So they do have external auditors examining their own operations. In one or two cases the auditor of an Auditor General or a Provincial Auditor comes from within the government somehow rather than an external one, but most of them are external.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes. Why I ask that question — and I thank you for your past work on Public Accounts and Crown Corporations Committee — I guess, helping us know what the important questions to ask are when we're scrutinizing the various programs of government.

I guess what I find a little more difficult for myself when I look at this is it's difficult for a private member to know what is an adequate amount of scrutiny for what size of government budget. And unlike when you sit with us on Crowns or on Public Accounts, there's no one I turn to at this point in this meeting for advice on what kinds of things I should be looking at and what things might be important questions to ask.

Is there any way that members again in other provinces get that

kind of advice on how to do that or what not, or is it . . .

Mr. Strelieff: — How to ask questions about what the legislative auditor is doing and proposing?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, and whether what we're spending as a province on auditing is reasonable compared to what other jurisdictions might be spending for the size of budgets they have, and what not.

Mr. Strelieff: — One of the hard parts of that is that only in Alberta is the province where the legislative auditor pays for all the auditing costs. My office pays for the costs of our work; we don't pay for the costs of auditors appointed by government organizations. In Alberta, they do, and that's the only province in Canada that does that. So you can get a good starting point on what the total audit costs are for Saskatchewan and for BC (British Columbia) and for Manitoba and Ontario and the rest of them. That information doesn't come to you or it doesn't come to the legislatures because the costs are paid by a number of different sources. So it's hard . . .

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — You're saying it's hard to compare it?

Mr. Strelieff: — It's hard to compare it. The other issue is, from province to province to province, what is the extent of government in that province? In Saskatchewan, government . . . I mean, it very much dominates the economic activity of Saskatchewan. I think the GDP (gross domestic product) of Saskatchewan in '94-95 was . . . the gross domestic product was something like 22 or \$23 billion. The government and Crown Corporation spending was about \$8.6 billion. That's a significant portion of what happens in the province. And that's more in a percentage sense than Alberta, BC, Manitoba, Ontario.

And then the other factor is the extent to which a particular province or government uses public accounting firms very much varies from province to province. And it is hard. My best sense of evaluating a Provincial Auditor is, do you think your Provincial Auditor and his office helps you do your job? I mean you can always do more or do less. But there is a . . . it's hard.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, I guess after having just gone through the last couple of months we've gone through in our own attempts to squeeze yet more money out of the rock, it's difficult to . . . and it's difficult for all departments of government, but it's difficult to know when it's reasonable to ask for economies to occur and when it isn't. And of course even more difficult in this area because auditing is a more specialized field and maybe have less familiarity with it than others.

So that was really the nature of my questions, is how we could determine that because there's very few places . . . I know we had this discussion before, I think when I sat on Estimates. There's very few places where we haven't, I guess, cut back to the bone on almost everything. And again, wondering if you feel that this budget we're looking at today reflects your office's best efforts to economize without sacrificing your mandate.

Mr. Strelieff: — Well that is our best proposal. We have reduced our costs a little bit this year. But what worries me, as other government organizations are cutting back, is they will be cutting back on their administrative and management people, and those are the people that we rely on to get work done.

And as we move through the organizations, I don't know to the extent to which management roles will affect the quality of the information systems that are going . . . that are out there. This assumes that the management systems and practices that are out there won't be negatively impacted. And so we'll be doing our best to try to compensate for some weakness in the administrative practices.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — My last question is whether the range of activities undertaken by your office would be fairly similar to what . . . to other governments. For example, things that maybe veer a little more into accomplishing goals and objectives or measurements of success. Would this be a common practice across Canada or is this something different we're doing here?

Mr. Strelieff: — Most of our practice is on what we describe as our meat and potatoes work, and that is examining the financial statements, compliance with legislative authority, and the internal control practices — the financial reporting, internal control practices. That's most of our effort.

We have a smaller effort on what we call cross-government issues that pertain to all government organizations or issues like, are you getting the right information in annual reports? Compared to other legislative offices, we do less, significantly less work on those broader issues and more work on sort of the basic management practices of government organizations.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Okay, well you've answered my questions. I still don't have a huge comfort level that I know exactly which questions I should be asking when I look at the hours and the costs and what not dedicated, but I'll leave it at that for now. Thanks very much.

The Chair: — Thanks.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Looking at table 2 on page 16 where you were forecasting 4.377 million for this current year, what are your actual expenditures to the end of February?

Mr. Strelieff: — The actual to the September 30, 1995 was 2.351 million, but to the end of February — four zero nine nine to the end of this February.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Four zero nine nine, so you're a little bit over eleven-twelfths — four zero nine nine. Eleven-twelfths would be four zero one six.

Mr. Strelieff: — Okay.

The Chair: — I don't know if the auditor brought his calculator or not.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Okay, now another question. With respect

to out-of-province travel, page 68, you indicated that here your actual . . . let's see, your budget was for . . . your actual '94, '95, '96, your budget was twenty-eight seven I believe.

Mr. Strelloff: — The budget was forty-six two five zero. The actual estimated to the end of the year is twenty-eight seven thirty-eight.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Yes, at the end of September you were at twelve eight.

Mr. Strelloff: — That's right.

Mr. Kowalsky: — So are you on target there?

Mr. Strelloff: — Well the actual is less than what we had budgeted for, for the year. We'd budgeted forty-six two five zero, and our best guess at, or estimate, at September 30, 1995 was twenty-eight seven thirty-eight. Our actual at the end of February was twenty-one five thirty-four, the end of this just this past February — twenty-one five thirty-four at the end of February, 1996.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Okay, so now it looks like you're going to hit underneath that one particular item.

Mr. Strelloff: — On the forecast of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . it looks like we're going to be lower than what we had forecasted back at September 30.

Mr. Kowalsky: — And that is due to reduced . . . you're doing more training in-house.

Mr. Strelloff: — Training internally and instead of sending people elsewhere, we try to bring people in particularly from other legislative audit offices. We try to bring in their skills into our office to give us training programs and also to do more internal work than external.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Just further to the question asked by Ms. Crofford, and that is, is there anybody that's got a process to audit the auditor?

Mr. Strelloff: — Well we do get audited each year by . . . our auditor for the last number of years has been Arscott & Partners. And they carry out the same examination we carry out on other government organizations. They look at the reliability of our financial statements, whether we comply with legislative authorities, and whether we have sound management practices. Their auditor's reports are on page 60 and 61.

And then also, because we are a public practice office, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan carries out a practice inspection, where they come into our office and examine our working paper files and the way we carry out our work. Their inspection reports are on 62 and 63, the last couple of years that they have come into our office to examine whether we are meeting the standards.

Mr. Kowalsky: — On page 60 or 61, is that all they give you?

Mr. Strelloff: — 60 or 61?

Mr. Kowalsky: — I mean, when you give the government an audited statement, there's a book that takes three or four days to read through.

Mr. Strelloff: — We issue clean . . . this is a clean opinion, which means they've examined our practices and said, your practices are okay. We give a lot of clean opinions to government organizations. But when we have something to report we say, for this organization, their practices are fine except for the following matters, and then that fills up our annual reports, the following matters.

Mr. Boyd: — When you get a clean opinion . . .

Mr. Strelloff: — You get one page. When you get a clean opinion, you get one page like this. And then the second one, page 61, is that we've complied with legislative authorities. We are quite careful on how we carry out our operations because we know that we are subject to a fair amount of scrutiny.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I have a few questions in a number of areas. You indicated earlier this evening that about 20 of your 60 employees are new graduates; I would assume new accountants. So about a third . . .

Mr. Strelloff: — They are university graduates.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — They're university graduates.

Mr. Strelloff: — So they've come out of the University of Saskatchewan Commerce college or the University of Regina Faculty of Administration, so they have their degree. Some of the people may have carried out co-op work terms with us as they were going through the university. But once they get their degree, they then apply for a job at our office or a public accounting firm saying that they want to article for their chartered accountancy.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — So you would basically then . . . you could refer to those as being junior accountants, right?

Mr. Strelloff: — There we call them student or . . . audit assistants.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yeah. For whatever term you're using.

Mr. Strelloff: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Out of your compliment of . . . how many staff? I think you said the number.

Mr. Strelloff: — About 60.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — About 60. How many would you define as being of a clerical nature?

Mr. Strelloff: — Let's see. We have audit assistants who are articling for their accounting degrees. We have professional

accountants and other professionals. And then we have an administrative staff. We have five . . . just let me count them . . . six.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — You would have six then that you . . .

Mr. Strelieff: — Six administrative staff.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I'd refer to them as clerical. You would refer to them then as administrative staff.

Mr. Strelieff: — Administrative assistants.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay. About six. How many do you have that you would categorize as, say, senior management, and how many would have in terms of, say, junior management, director level, supervisory, that kind of thing?

Mr. Strelieff: — Our senior management includes . . . I would categorize that as our executive committee.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Right.

Mr. Strelieff: — There's me, Fred. We have three executive directors: Judy Ferguson, Mike Heffernan, and Brian Atkinson. And we have a general director, Mobashar Ahmad; and Phil Creaser is our professional practice information technology person. That group is our senior executive management group.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And that's how many, about?

Mr. Strelieff: — That's six.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Six. So then how would you define the rest of the 28, say, out of the 60? Those would be of managerial nature, supervisory I'm assuming.

Mr. Strelieff: — There's six. There's 10 students, 15, 25, so there's 35 that . . . they range from new CAs, new chartered accountants that just got their chartered accountancy in December, to people who are quite senior that have been with our office 15 to 20 years. They are senior managers, directors, supervisors that take on large audits and assignments, supervise staff. I guess we do cut our organization in terms of field staff and management group, but they're all out there in the field as well.

All the professional staff in our office work on audits, and they're all involved in it. There'll be teams, audit teams led by one of those. Each of the executive committee members have an audit team that have a group of professional accountants with varying levels of experience.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — No, I guess maybe I should explain myself because I'm not sure that you're understanding what I mean. And I guess, when I look through the directory, and this is why I'm asking these questions, and I think I . . . I'm not sure if I got an answer but I think I do. But if I look through the list of your employees in terms of directors, executive directors, operations directors, managers, supervisors, senior auditors, it

would appear to me that out of your staff complement, there are a lot of senior managerial type titles which would suggest to me a salary commensurate with that title as well.

And I guess it leads me to ask whether or not the senior levels within the Provincial Auditor's office would be appropriate; whether that ratio would be appropriate, senior to junior type of . . . and it's just the optics, is what I'm saying. And it may or it may not be appropriate. I don't know. I only know as a layman when I look at the complement of staff, it seems everyone here has a title — is either a senior this or a manager or a supervisor. And you know, so then this is really why I'm asking this question. It may not be an appropriate question. But I just say that the optics of this are such that it would appear to be a fairly top-heavy title group of people that work for you.

I guess there's one other area I'd like to ask you and I still, I guess I don't have an answer to this. But I'm going to ask some questions first and then I'll finish up with a question. You rely on value-for-money audits in a lot of cases. How many people would you dedicate, in terms of your staff complement, to that?

Mr. Strelieff: — We have one of our executive directors, Judy Ferguson is in charge of our value-for-money group. They carry out work that primarily relates to cross-government examinations. For example, they're the group that has been examining the need for a complete plan for the government as well as the roles, responsibilities, duties of boards and directors. As well, they have a regular audit portfolio of regular audits. Now she has a group of six that work for her. I would say that a third of her work relates to regular audit work. About two-thirds of the work of her group relates to examining broader issues, mainly cross-government issues or issues that affect a sector. For example, the District Health Boards, her group would be the group that leads the examination of the annual reports that District Health Boards provide the public and the minister and others.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — If you weren't doing value-for-money audits — and I know every year in your annual report you indicate that you're unable to do audits on 34 entities or 35 or 40 or 56 — if you were not conducting value-for-money audits, how would that impact on your ability to scrutinize a broader base of government agencies?

Mr. Strelieff: — This year, for '95-96, we're reporting that we're able to carry out all our work. Now if we didn't carry out the examination of what would be in a complete plan the government would put together to provide the Assembly and what should go in annual reports of government departments and how well does the government ensure that boards of directors understand the roles and responsibilities of duties of boards of directors, how would that affect those issues we're examining because they're very significant to the Assembly understanding and holding the government accountable for how it carries out its operations?

If we never carried out examinations of a broader nature, well we wouldn't be as effective. We wouldn't be able to provide that perspective to the Assembly. Most of those issues are basic management issues, but they don't pertain to individual

government organizations. They pertain to sort of systemic issues.

And so with her main focus of her group . . . is to look at those cross-government issues or issues that affect a whole sector. It could be the health sector, or it could be education sector or Crown corporations. It adds a very valuable dimension to the work that we do for legislators. I would say it would significantly weaken our ability to serve the Assembly if we never focused our efforts on those kinds of issues. They're very important. They're the ones that sort of cut through a lot of issues that government and legislators have to deal with. They deal with the more systemic kind of issues and problems.

The Chair: — I'm just going to interrupt momentarily to remind the members that we have an order of the day that calls for adjournment in about nine minutes. And I'll ask you to consider possibly extending it just a little bit to finish up tonight with it if that's possible. So I remind you of that, Mr. Lautermilch.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, I'm pleased you reminded me of the time because it was getting away on me because I was starting to get involved in this a little. And I would really like to finish this up if we could tonight because I know we've all got lots of work to do tomorrow, and if it took us a few minutes past 10, I hope that wouldn't . . .

The Chair: — I'll put that question at 10 o'clock, if we're not done by then — the whole agenda.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Okay. I guess the reason I'm asking these questions of the Provincial Auditor is that in terms of . . . I understand you have an audit done and you've indicated that on page 62, whatever, and the document is here, but I guess what I'm not comfortable with, and we have done this in the board for a period of time now, where the Board of Internal Economy has been dealing with your budget.

I, you know, recognize I think the reason government wanted to move it from Finance, the Department of Finance's scrutiny and their analysts and the analysis that they do. I think we both understand . . . we all understand the reason that it was moved to the board.

And I think Ms. Crofford has probably raised one of the issues that's concerned me as a member of this board. And that is that frankly we don't have the tools, we don't have the financial analysts as backup to be able to, I think, adequately scrutinize the budget that you present for us.

And I think that that really is not a good situation. I believe quite firmly that there needs to be not just an audit done. I mean, you know, I think we need to do an analysis of your presentation in a little more detail than what we are able to do.

Like I mean, we don't monitor the compliance of your business plan. We can look at technical elements of your report, but I think in order to have comfort as a member of the Board of Internal Economy, it would be my thought that an independent party outside of this board should have the ability to have a look

at the Provincial Auditors' budget. We could have a look at that prior to setting, say, perhaps next year's budget, and then based on the information that we could gather from that body, be able to determine whether or not it's . . . the amount that we are voting on is an appropriate amount.

I mean, I think we all want maximum value for the work that you do. We're all as concerned, from the government side as I'm sure the opposition's side, is that the different arms of government are acting appropriately within their mandate and spending public funds in the most appropriate way.

But as I said, I don't think that we as the Board of Internal Economy have the tools . . . And this has had some consideration in terms of who might analyse the information that you put before us, because I don't think any of us here are trained, first of all, to be able to do that. And I think that we need that type of assistance.

I've looked at your budget request for this year, and I guess the one comment I'll make is over the period of time as I see government expenditures decreasing, over a period of years I've seen the auditor's requests increasing. And I've seen your graphs in the back as well, you know.

So you know I wonder how this happens. I think the auditor's budget is increased by about 50 per cent since about 1990, and I know that that's not where government's expenditures have been. We've been spending less. So you know, so as a layman, I would say well perhaps there's less to audit. How does this budget go up? So I mean these are all the questions that I guess I need some satisfaction, and I need someone to satisfy for me.

And I'm thinking that one vehicle . . . and I'm going to make a recommendation tonight. I think it's appropriate that for this fiscal year we would approve your request, but I would like this board to have the provincial audit committee and the expertise that could come from a committee like that to be able to have a look at your budget over the year because I think it's healthy for you, and I think it's healthy for us on the board. It's healthy for government.

And then based on the recommendations that may come out of that, there will be analysis that may come out of that. We could deal with next year's budget, I think, in a much more educated and prepared way. And I can tell you that I would feel personally much more comfortable as a member of the board voting after having that kind of scrutiny. And I think the bottom line is it would be healthy for all — for your department and I think for the board as well.

So the other members may want to speak before 10. I'm not going to say any more other than to suggest that that would be something that I'd be comfortable with. And based on that kind of analysis, I'd be willing to approve your request for this year.

The Chair: — Do you want to put a motion on the table? Do you have precise wording? Do you have some prepared precise wording?

Mr. Whitmore: — Yes, I do. Yes I'd like to move for

consideration of this committee . . . when we've been discussing what's gone on this evening and the discussion in terms of the auditor's report, the Provincial Auditor's report, and the question of detailed analysis, I think we need to set a flag of where we've been and where we're going in terms of outside analysis. I think it's good and healthy for everyone, just as you do in terms of your analysis of government operations.

And I propose this resolution or motion to be dealt with:

That the 1996-97 budget of the Provincial Auditor be approved as submitted for this year, and further that prior to consideration by this board the Provincial Auditor's 1997-1998 budget be submitted to a provincial audit committee for detailed analysis and commentary. The Board of Internal Economy will issue a detailed directive on this process at a further meeting, and further that the Board of Internal Economy consider the results of this detailed review when examining the 1997-98 budget of the Provincial Auditor.

The Chair: — Just by way of clarification for the motion, because I'll have to determine whether it's in order or not, are you referring to the provincial audit committee that exists by virtue of the Provincial Auditor's Act? Yes? Okay, then motion is in order.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I believe that's the committee.

The Chair: — Is there a seconder for that?

Mr. Boyd: — Well I see, frankly, little benefit.

The Chair: — Bill, can I just stop you? I just looked at the clock, and I don't want to interrupt you in the middle, so let me interrupt in the beginning. Our order of the day calls for us to adjourn in about 2 minutes. I would recommend to you that we stop the clock if that's acceptable and then, after dealing with this item, determine whether you want to finish the other two items. Is that acceptable to the board? Okay. Sorry.

Mr. Boyd: — I understand, I think, certainly your concern; or at least I should say I'm trying to understand your concern. I see it as little or very questionable benefit to doing what you are suggesting. It seems to me like it would be nothing more than a make-work project — a very questionable result. If you agree with the goals and the direction and the information that the Provincial Auditor provides on an ongoing basis to government — and I do agree and support fully the operations of the Provincial Auditor — if you agree with that, that is exactly the same criteria that the Provincial Auditor is subjected to by his audit. Is that not the case?

So if you take from that then, the Provincial Auditor has received, using the exact same scrutiny that he scrutinizes the Government of Saskatchewan and all the operations thereof and received a clean report from his auditor, the auditor that audits the Provincial Auditor . . . there seems to me that we have got the highest degree. We should have the highest degree of confidence in his operations. And I do. And I think that we are doing little to question his operation there that hasn't already

been questioned because he scrutinized in the same way he scrutinizes every aspect of government. So I just don't understand. I don't know where your doubts are or your concerns.

Mr. Strelloff: — You might want to call my auditor in and ask him questions. And I do have an auditor that audits our organization, and you may want to ask that auditor to come in and say, well here's the examination that I carried out, rather than a cabinet appointed group.

Mr. Boyd: — We're talking about trying to keep a handle on the expenditures, and if we're going to be setting up another audit committee to audit the auditor that audited the Provincial Auditor, it seems to be pretty much redundant to me.

And I just don't understand. I would like to know, and I would be interested in the government members' thoughts on where you see a problem or where the doubts are or where your concerns are.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — You know, I'll just go back to the point I made earlier, Bill . . . is when we sat in the Public Accounts and Crown Corporations, we always had the auditor to advise us on questions we might ask about people's reports. And having been involved in many organizations, I know that having an audited report is not the same as having an analysis of what one might look for within a report. And I don't necessarily say that's something you'd want to do all the time, but I think it might be useful to have that kind of advice on at least one occasion, one year's occasion, so that it then increases the comfort level.

I can understand where we'd feel under a little more pressure there than you might, not from the point of view that you're not concerned about accountability but from all the stress that we've put so many people under in trying to cut budgets and bring things down. It's been not the easiest of times to govern. And I think what we're doing here is trying to apply the same pressures for analysis and economy that we've done in every other area of expenditure that we have. So I don't see this as being extraordinary or special; it's kind of the same process that's been going on across a whole wide field of expenditure.

But I mean I have no particular reason to doubt that we would have a good outcome to that. It's just a thing that would increase our comfort level with the amount of monies that we're spending. And I think in the budget we just discussed earlier tonight, again we've tried to put that scrutiny there, and after this year's operation with the transition we would be re-looking at that again. So this is not, I don't think, an unusual thing. It's just part of the attempt to apply the same standards to all the budgets that we do to the departments and to everybody else.

Mr. Boyd: — Well I certainly understand what you're saying. And frankly I disagree. When you ask for direction from the Provincial Auditor to scrutinize any aspect of government, if he has no concerns about it, there are never any questions that I recall from my experience in public accounts or Crown corporations.

When the auditor says in the operations of, I'll just use as an example, Saskatchewan Crop Insurance, if they — probably a poor example — but if they happen to have received a clean report, there are never any questions after that. I think that would be the case in almost every situation. It is only when the Provincial Auditor has any concerns about Saskatchewan Crop Insurance, to use the same example, that there are questions raised to Saskatchewan Crop Insurance officials.

So in this case when the Provincial Auditor has received a clean audit, there shouldn't be any questions.

Mr. Whitmore: — When one looks . . . and I'm again looking from a layman's standpoint. The auditor's report deals with the financial aspect within the operation of the Provincial Auditor. I think we want to see all the tests in terms of managements and efficiencies and economies to scale. I think too in the proposal . . . and I think too is to do it within the purview in terms of, as I said before, a measurement of an independent body outside the government in terms of we don't want the government to be doing that kind of review.

I think it is healthy, as any other company, any other management tool is used, sometime to review process, just to do an analysis in terms of the management team to see if improvements can be made. And I think that's what you have to reflect on too in terms of what we're requesting.

Mr. Strelieff: — Just a point of clarification. You mentioned that the group, the proposed group that you're going to ask to examine our practices is an independent group. It's a group that's appointed by cabinet. It's a part of government. And one of the reasons why we've come here is so that the group that scrutinizes us isn't who we audit. And to have a government-appointed committee examine whether we are examining government organizations, well, is a little . . . I mean it's not the independence that you were thinking about.

Mr. Whitmore: — Yes, I guess it's the purview I would think, in terms of the Finance department and in treasury, in terms of that respect, in terms of before.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well I don't know if there's much point in going further; I think it's getting late. Because I might say in response back to that, because we appoint people it doesn't mean we always get results that are particularly favourable to anything. We discussed McDowell earlier tonight.

I still think it would be useful to have that view. Because I know that even though I've over the years, in the many organizations I've been involved in, we've had auditor's reports and what not, that what that told us about was that procedures were followed, practices were followed, but it didn't always tell us whether the activities of that organization were what they should have been or whether . . .

Mr. Boyd: — It most certainly did.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — No they don't. It is a particular view of what goes on, the auditing view. And I don't know; maybe I'm misinterpreting this line in the chartered accountant's letter, but

it says — and tell me if I'm interpreting this wrong: We did not examine certain aspects of internal control concerning the effectiveness, economy, and efficiency of certain management decision-making processes.

What I gathered from that is that all the procedures are correct, but that doesn't tell you some other things that you might look at in the whole conduct of any organization. It's interesting; I noted that in mine when I read it as well. And I don't know, am I interpreting that wrong?

Mr. Strelieff: — That's correct. When we examine government organizations, we don't examine economy, efficiency, effectiveness issues. We don't do that for you. So when we report to the Assembly, we're not saying whether the program is effective; is that the right program to examine. Just like when our auditor examines our office, they don't do those kinds of things . . . the effectiveness issues.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I think that's what I'm really getting at, Bill, is that piece of it.

The Chair: — I'll remind members, rather than debate across the table to one another, just debate through the Chair here.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — We forgot you were there.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Strelieff, I agree with you in terms of your mandate and your role and what your responsibilities are. I think there is a group that has a responsibility to scrutinize arms, different arms of government, and that is the government itself, in terms of every department and every arm of government — whether it is effective, whether it is efficient, and whether it's delivering the kind of service at a reasonable cost. We do that. That's what Treasury Board does. Which is why . . . and that's what we do as a cabinet. And we tear every expenditure of government apart to try and find those efficiencies and effectiveness, and as much effectiveness as we can.

And I mean, clearly the audit that is done on your arm of government doesn't do that. And what we're saying is that we would . . . and what I'm suggesting and what my colleague has recommended is that we have a body with the expertise and the ability to be able to give some recommendations to this board, which we can choose or we can choose not to accept. But I think that it would be a positive thing for you to be assured that we're comfortable that you're delivering as efficient an arm within this government as you can.

And I think that this is a process that can help that to happen. And so I think that I'm very comfortable in supporting the motion and I think we can have a look at it, see how it works next year, and when you put together your budget for next year and when we're making a decision on it, that we will be comfortable that we have taken the appropriate measures to ensure we're doing the right thing.

The Chair: — Is the board ready for the question? The question before the board then is this, and there's been just a slight alteration here to put in the precise numbers, which I've

asked. So it's slightly different from what Mr. Whitmore moved earlier. It's moved by Mr. Whitmore, seconded by Mr. Lautermilch:

That the 1996-97 budget of the Provincial Auditor be approved as submitted in the amount of \$4.288 million; and further, that prior to consideration by this board, the Provincial Auditor's 1997-98 budget be submitted to the provincial audit committee for detailed analysis and commentary. The Board of Internal Economy will issue a detailed directive on this process at a future meeting; and further, that the Board of Internal Economy consider the results of this detailed review when examining the 1997-98 budget of the Provincial Auditor.

That's the question before you. Those in favour, please indicate. Opposed? Carried.

I want to thank the Provincial Auditor and the Deputy Auditor for your assistance in this. And we wish you every success in carrying out your mandate in the fiscal year. Thank you.

Mr. Strelloff: — Thank you very much.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thanks on behalf of the government members for your time this evening. I know it's late, but when the session's on I guess we have more difficult hours than other times. But thanks again.

Mr. Strelloff: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Members of the board, I would like to recommend to you, if we could, to deal with items 5 and 6. I suspect it's possible to do this within about 20 minutes or so, unless I'm misreading. But I can never know with absolute certainty.

We are past the order of the day which calls for adjournment at 10 o'clock. Is it the will of the board to proceed with the agenda?

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Chairman, if it's possible to keep it under 20 minutes, I would agree with that.

Mr. Boyd: — What's the agenda for tomorrow?

The Chair: — Well if we finish 5 and 6, we're done; there is no meeting required tomorrow. If we adjourn now, then we need to come back. Our agenda calls for us to come back at 8 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Boyd: — Let's stay then.

The Chair: — And I think we're about 20 minutes from completing our agenda. Thank you, gentlemen.

Item 5 then, allowance clarifications. And this is in your material under item 5. Now when you find them in item 5, decision item allowance clarification is requested by members, you'll find that they're not in the exact same order as listed in your agenda. However, I'm recommending to you that we deal

with them in the order that you find them in item 5.

So item 5, meeting no. 1, 1996, page 1, decision item allowance clarification is requested by members. Has everybody been able to find that? Okay, just take a minute.

Mr. Boyd: — Where are we at now?

The Chair: — It will be in your tab called item no. 5.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you.

The Chair: — So we've got the background and it's no. 1, telephone services. And if you flip to the second page, page 2, you'll see the recommendation, which is what I want to put to you. And if I could just go through the recommendation, because I think it's self-explanatory.

Recommendation then, one, that effective April 1, 1996, members be allowed to subscribe to additional telephone services and that these services be eligible under the telephone allowance.

Two, that effective April 1, 1996, members be permitted to purchase a constituency office telephone system under the telephone allowance.

And item three, that the Legislative Assembly monitor the cost implications of these additional expenditures and advise the board of negative budget consequences.

If we could just comment on that briefly, as you will know, the telephone allowance is an unlimited allowance, and the board in past times has spent a fair amount of attention on access to telephone services. And what the recommendation here then is to allow the subscription to additional services to be the judgement of the member regarding use of the allowance in the constituency office and so on.

And secondly, we have on the second item, we have had requests from at least one member, if not more, who has pointed out that if he could purchase his telephone allowance over the course of the term of office, it will cost substantially less to the Legislative Assembly than the continued leasing of it. But current directive does not allow them that freedom.

And thirdly, this would require that we monitor the implications of this to determine if there are negative budget consequences. This has been assumed in the budget that's been passed earlier.

Mr. Boyd: — Well there will be negative cost implications obviously. The Message Manager service comes at a cost, and 1-800 — all of those come at an additional cost to the taxpayers. It may not come at additional cost to the members themselves because they have an unlimited telephone allowance, but there will be a cost associated with having those services. The 1-800 number for example would be difficult to even estimate, I would suggest. Rural constituencies obviously . . . if they put in 1-800 numbers in, every constituency office across this province will have significant costs associated with it. People will be calling those offices toll free, compared to

currently now picking up the cost themselves, of calling their MLA.

The Chair: — I think your assumption is correct. What is uncertain to us is the amount of pick-up that will result in that; and therefore the third item, that it will need to be closely monitored so as to be able to report it to the board. Gwenn, was there anything more you'd like to comment on that?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Just the 1-800. I'm not understanding why members would request 1-800, if they have. I mean we accept collect calls in our constituency offices, I'm assuming. And I don't understand the need for a 1-800 number. That mystifies me.

The Chair: — There has been some request, not much request. And this is the difficulty in trying to determine the cost implications, because members are . . . On the one hand there is no 1-800 number now, so you don't have that to compare to; on the other hand, members are accepting collect calls from constituents. So this hasn't been a frequently requested item.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Which of these have been frequently requested? Could you give us some indication on that?

The Chair: — The Message Manager and the purchase of the telephone system to save money in the long run are the two most common.

Mr. Whitmore: — Yes, just a question to do with the changing technology. I suspect the name and number display will rise up in terms of more requirements or demand because of that being new technology that's out. But yes, I'm not sure about the 1-800 number either. I can see Message Manager in terms of that, and the purchasing, and maybe name and number display, but some of the others I'm not quite sure are required services for the members because of the cost factor, particularly 1-800.

The Chair: — It's certainly within the purview of the board, for example on the first recommendation, to place limits as to what could be considered, if that's your will.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess regarding the 1-800 number, as a rural MLA I think probably the logic behind a 1-800 number is to give the rural residents access to their constituency office the same as we have in the urban centres.

I'm not sure that I've had one collect call to my constituency office at this point in time. However, there is probably an easier fix to this and that would be if SaskTel would expand their exchanges to include more people within them we wouldn't have this problem. And maybe that's the avenue we should be looking at.

The Chair: — That's an avenue that's not . . . It can be influenced by the members of the board, but the decision is not within the purview of the members of the board, I'm afraid.

I've given you the recommendation and I'm open to a motion.

Mr. Whitmore: — Yes, I would like to amend that and define that to a much tighter degree. And I would define that the services provided would be that of Message Manager, name and number display, and to purchasing of telephone equipment at this time.

The Chair: — So leave no. 2 as is, and no. 1 to read that members be allowed to subscribe to Message Manager and name and number display?

Mr. Boyd: — What is Ident-A-Call?

The Chair: — I think that's name and number display. Yes. Ident-A-Call is when . . .

Mr. Boyd: — The same thing?

The Chair: — Yes.

Mr. Boyd: — And three-way calling?

Ms. Ronyk: — And that's where you can have a conference call between three people.

Mr. Boyd: — You can arrange that anyway.

Ms. Ronyk: — I think you can with some of these services.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a suggestion. I think that this board is going to be meeting reasonably soon. And we'll have to work here today, but I'm going to make a suggestion that we defer this to the next meeting because I'm not sure that the members are clear on why or . . . And I mean, I don't know the implications of the 1-800, and I would want some consideration given to as well, whether we're going to be using SaskTel systems, whether we're going to be out there purchasing in the market-place, whether we're going to support our Crown, whether or not . . . I mean these are all questions I think I want to think over.

The Chair: — Could I make a recommendation, if I may? If there is comfort . . . there is a bit of time limits here as well, in terms of members being able to purchase as opposed to get themselves into a long-term lease. If you're not uncomfortable, I would recommend that you approve what you're comfortable with at this stage and allow members to know clearly what they can do. If you are comfortable with the ability to purchase and if you comfortable with Message Manager and Ident-A-Call, then if you would be willing to do that, I would urge you to do that. If you're not, well that's fine too.

Mr. Boyd: — While I have no difficulty with Message Manager, I do the other ones, even the purchasing of the equipment. You can get into some pretty elaborate telephone technology that is extremely costly, and if we're not putting some limits on those it opens the door for someone to have extremely elaborate communication systems that we have no idea what the costs are. Call forwarding to your home and to your . . . every other kind of thing you can imagine. The

technology is incredible and it's available in terms of telephones to purchase these days. I couldn't agree more with the government members that perhaps we should give some thought to this before we just willy-nilly jump into \$20,000 telephone systems.

The Chair: — Okay, is it the wish of the committee to defer the item on telephone services? Agreed. Okay, deferred.

Internet expenses, the recommendation here is that effective April 1, 1996 the costs associated with subscribing to and using the Internet services be eligible expenses under the telephone and telephone related allowance.

What is the wish of the committee on this recommendation?

A Member: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Somebody needs to move it; you can't just agree to it. Kowalsky and Whitmore. Discussion? In favour? Carried — this is as opposed to just shouting agreed.

Constituency assistant travel, the recommendation is fairly lengthy in its detail. This comes forward from a decision made by the board — goodness, I think over a year ago — in which this was approved in principle, but the directive was not adopted at that time.

And the directive here is consistent and it is now before you. What it, in summary, allows is for constituency assistant expenditures to be charged to constituency office allowance. There is no additional monies available to members but it allows for an additional use of the constituency allowance which currently does not permit it.

Is there a wish to move the recommendation? Mr. Lautermilch. Is there a seconder? Mr. Kowalsky. Is there discussion? Question? Those in favour, please indicate. Hands opposed? That's carried.

Then finally, this is the one I said we may want to go in camera; we don't necessarily need to. Item no. 6 then, the early retirement eligibility, the recommendation that the Board of Internal Economy approve the application of the 1996-97 early retirement program currently being offered to provincial government employees to eligible Legislative Assembly employees.

As I said earlier, Legislative Assembly employees are not included, and the same, if you approve of this, it would simply mean that the eligibility would be there. It would have to meet the same criteria as if they were within the public service in order to take advantage of it. We have at least one employee for whom this would theoretically apply as potential.

Does somebody wish to make a motion? Mr. Whitmore, you'll move? Is there a seconder? Mr. Kowalsky. Is there a discussion? We don't want to go in camera, okay. Question? Those in favour, please indicate. Down. Hands opposed? And that is carried.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen of the board. I appreciate your cooperation. The next board meeting will be at the call of the Chair. We've deferred the telephone item. We've noted as well the desire to meet at an early time for orientation on the McDowell recommendations, and I'll be in touch with you in that regard.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. I will declare the meeting adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m.