



**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

**MINUTES AND VERBATIM REPORT**

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**No. 1 — March 31, 1999**

## **BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

Hon. Glenn Hagel, Chair  
Moose Jaw North

Hon. Joanne Crofford  
Regina Centre

Ben Heppner  
Rosthern

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

9:39 a.m. Wednesday, March 31, 1999

**Present: Members of the Board of Internal Economy**

Hon. Glenn Hagel, Chair  
Mr. Ben Heppner  
Mr. Myron Kowalsky  
Hon. Eldon Lautermilch  
Mr. Harvey McLane  
Mr. Grant Whitmore

**Staff to the Board**

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

**AGENDA** Moved by Mr. Whitmore, seconded by Mr. Heppner, that the proposed agenda be adopted. Agreed.

**MINUTES** Moved by Mr. Kowalsky, seconded by Mr. McLane, that the Minutes of Meeting #3/98 be adopted. Agreed.

**ITEM 1 Decision Item: Selection Process for Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk Position**

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

That the selection process for the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk position, as outlined, be approved.

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

**Minute #1483**

**ITEM 2 Decision Item -- Approval of Format for end-of-term Statements**

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

That the proposed format for caucus end-of-term financial statements be approved.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

**Minute #1484**

**ITEM 3 Decision Item: Approval of Dissolution Guidelines**

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

That the proposed guidelines for dissolution be approved.

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

**Minute #1485**

**ITEM 4 Decision Item: Review of Directive #24 Constituency Office Equipment and Furniture Provision**

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

That Directive #24 Constituency Office Equipment and Furniture Provision be amended by striking out the definition of "term" in clause (2) and substituting the following:

“‘term’ means the period commencing on polling day for a general election and ending on the day immediately preceding polling day for the next general election.”

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

**Minute #1486**

**ITEM 5      Decision Item: Amendments to Directive #1.1 MLA Sessional Expenses and Directive #17.1 Committee Indemnity and Expenses**

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

That Directive #1.1 – MLA Sessional Expenses be amended, effective April 1, 1999 as follows:

(a) by striking out “\$63” and substituting “\$72” in subclause (1)(b); and

(b) by adding the following after clause (2):

“(3) The amount set out in subclause (1)(b) shall be increased or decreased by the amount of any adjustment made from time to time in the rate of reimbursement for meal expenses set out in The Financial Administration Manual for out-of-scope employees under *The Public Service Act*, and this Directive may be reproduced to include the adjusted amount from time to time without further amendment.”

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

**Minute #1487**

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

That Directive #17.1 – Committee Indemnity and Expenses be amended, effective April 1, 1999 as follows:

(a) by striking out “63” and substituting “72” in sub-subclause (2)(b)(ii); and

(b) by adding the following clauses after clause (3):

“(4) The amount set out in sub-subclause (2)(b)(ii) shall be increased or decreased by the amount of any adjustment made from time to time in the rate of reimbursement for meal expenses set out in The Financial Administration Manual for out-of-scope employees under *The Public Service Act* and this Directive may be reproduced to include the adjusted amount from time to time without further amendment.”

The question being put, it was agreed to.

**Minute #1488**

The Board adjourned at 10:34 a.m. to the call of the Chair.

**The Chair:** — I may call the meeting to order and welcome members of the board to this meeting #1/99, and I have circulated to you in advance an agenda which includes a series of recommendations I would like to make to you today. And so the first item of business would be to have a motion to approve the proposed agenda. Mr. Whitmore. Is there a seconder? Mr. Heppner. Discussion? In favour? Opposed? That's carried unanimously. Okay.

The minutes have been circulated to you in advance of meeting #4/98 and they have been reviewed by the secretary and myself, and in our opinion are accurate. And it is in order to have a motion to adopt those minutes. Mr. Kowalsky. Seconded by Mr. McLane. Is there any discussion on the minutes? If not, then those in favour? Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

Decision item . . . brings us to a decision item and we have five decision items here. Decision item no. 1, and this relates to the selection process or Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk position. As members of the board are aware, the permanent position of the Legislative Law Clerk is vacant and the functions are currently being carried on by the Acting Law Clerk.

And you'll see from the notes provided to you that pursuant to section 68 of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act that the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk is to be appointed by the board on the recommendation of the Speaker. And secondly, that the duties of the Clerk are to be prescribed by the Speaker according to the Act.

And what I have done, as I think you will be aware through your membership in your caucuses, is I've consulted with the three caucuses and the independent members regarding each caucus's view of the role of the Legislative Law Clerk, satisfaction with the job description as it currently has existed, and discussed possibilities of some alternations to that. And so I've completed that.

I think generally there's a pretty fair consensus between the caucuses. And I've not yet completed that process because I will also want to do some reflections in terms of internal to the Legislative Assembly Office as different from the Clerk's services to the caucuses. And also to do a consultation with other jurisdictions, but intend to finalize the job description of the Legislative Law Clerk in a fairly near future.

What I bring to you, however, at this point in time is the advice that — it's not looking to me at this point in time as though we'll be seeing anything that anybody would call dramatically different description — but what I do bring to you is the recommendation and seeking your approval for the process of selection.

And the process that I recommend to you is this: that the position will be advertised in the Saskatchewan dailies in Regina and Saskatoon and then nationally in *The Globe and Mail* and *National Post*. And the placement will also be distributed to other Canadian legislatures and the federal parliament.

Then a short listing would be done by a committee comprised

of the Speaker, the Clerk and the director of human resources and those names and information then about the short-listed candidates be provided to each caucus at that time by the Speaker. And the caucus at that time then may redirect that a name or names be removed from the short list.

It is my view that it would be inappropriate for me to recommend to the board a candidate when I know that a caucus has concerns about the credibility and the neutrality and the reliability and the competence of the candidate. And so I want to give the board members my assurance that I would attempt to achieve that, and this would be the way of doing that.

Interviews then, after the short listing is concluded, which includes the direction to remove names by the caucuses, interviews would be conducted by the committee of three and then the Speaker would make a recommendation to the board pursuant to section 68.32 of the Act. Then the board would meet to consider the recommendation and make the appointment.

I expect that the advertisements will be done in May or early June and would proceed in as timely a way as possible with the objective of trying to achieve an October appointment. So that would be the timelines that I see in this.

In the interim, the Acting Law Clerk will continue to be available to members. And there should ought not to be a period of time in which the members of the Assembly don't have access to a Law Clerk. So that's . . . But what I recommend to you is the selection process I've just outlined and it would be in order to have a motion if you wish:

That the selection process for the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk position as outlined be approved.

So if someone wishes to move that or another motion — moved by Mr. Lautermilch. Is there a seconder? Mr. McLane. And the floor is open for discussion.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Just brief comments. I think the process that you've outlined is fair. The goal, I think, of all of us is to have an independent, unbiased legal counsel that's available to all members of the legislature. And I would think that the fact that you're including all three caucuses in terms of your deliberations and short listing, I think it makes some sense. And I certainly could support that process.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. Any further discussion? If not, then the question before you is the motion, moved by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. McLane. Those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried unanimously. Thank you.

Item no. 2 . . . Item no. 2 relates to directive #23 and involves the approval of the format for end of term statements by the caucuses. And as all hon. members are aware, I stated to you at the last board meeting that I would bring to you my recommendations for the precise manner in which the caucuses' requirements to provide accountability, disclosure financial statements, after an election would be carried out, and also that I would do some . . . include in my recommendation, consultation with your caucuses.

I've done that. And I want to recommend then to you the format that you see in item no. 2 with the explanatory notes; there are some things I'd just like to draw to your attention. The spirit or the summary of directive #23 requires caucuses, after an election, to then provide a clear audited statement of their financial revenues and expenditures and assets at the time of dissolution and then permits those caucuses to retain funds that are their obligations and then to return excess funds in addition to those amounts to the Legislative Assembly within six months.

And that's what the directive requires. And what I provide for you is the precise format and the procedure for doing that. You will see listed here then a format which has been proposed to the three caucuses and has been found to be acceptable by the three caucuses, I'm pleased to tell you.

And in the formats that are proposed here, I want to draw your attention then to a couple of things that I said that I would clarify for you and that is to do with the provisions for their obligations, and the directive requires — this flows out of the McDowell Commission — the directive requires that, and I'll quote:

Caucus accountability and disclosure allows for the caucus to retain surplus funds to meet future obligations related to employee benefits and existing lease payments.

And as at the day before polling day, the future obligations then consist of — and I define for you then two things: existing lease payments. So that caucuses will have, and the reality upon review is, do have a very small number of very low-value leases. And what I am recommending is that in defining the lease obligations that a caucus has, that if the lease obligations exceed an amount of \$5,000 then it must be . . . they must then specify what those lease payments are and the particulars about them. This gives the criteria in my judgment of transparency as well as accountability in the caucus's reporting.

And secondly then, the caucuses are . . . do retain their obligations related to employee benefits, one of which is obviously vacation pay owing, and another one of which is termination pay or severance pay that would be owing to those employees.

Now keep in mind at this point in time if there have been changes in the caucus size and their operations suggest to them that in their wisdom it's appropriate to have terminated some employees and paid them severance — that's already been done. But that I also recommend to you that those employees who are retained have also been accumulating, in caucuses' obligations, down-the-road potential for severance.

What I recommend to you then is that the caucuses, in meeting their employee obligations, be allowed to retain up to the maximum of their severance obligations to those employees who maybe have to be severed at a future time, and whose potential obligation to their caucuses will continue to grow in the months or years from this point forward.

What I am recommending that that particular termination payment for employees . . . the disclosure must also include the number of employees that it relates to and the average length of

service of each of those employees. That it will not necessarily require caucuses to go in a public statement name by name and a dollar figure for each individual, but must provide a grand total number of employees and the average length of service.

And in my judgment that preserves an element of privacy in terms of employment agreements, but provides again a transparency and an accountability that would provide for public confidence.

Then any monies that the caucus would have above and beyond these obligations then are required to be returned to the Legislative Assembly within six months.

So this is the format that I recommend to you. And I do recommend the motion to you that:

The proposed format for caucus end of term financial statements be approved.

It would be in order to have that motion if someone wishes to move it. Mr. Whitmore. Is there a seconder? Mr. Kowalsky.

Discussion? If not, then those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried unanimously. Thank you.

We now bring ourselves to our largest item of the day which is our approval of dissolution guidelines. And you will have — or at least I have — I guess you would have been given another binder with these guidelines that I recommend to you. Now these guidelines are largely a continuation of the dissolution guidelines that were . . . that applied to all elected members at the dissolution of the twenty-second legislature.

And what I'm proposing to you here now are a modified and updated dissolution guidelines for MLA expenses, benefits, and services. This becomes then, in effect, the handbook for all members, whether they are in the category of having decided in advance that they're not seeking office, having decided in advance that they're seeking office but don't successfully find themselves re-elected, and having in advance decided to seek office and find themselves re-elected. These are the procedures required that apply to members in all three of those categories.

And there are two overarching principles that exist in the drafting of the guidelines. One is that the guidelines are established in order to ensure that an incumbent MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) does not have an electoral advantage over another candidate in the election by virtue of the allowances that a member has been able to make use of. So that when the election starts, incumbent members and other candidates in the election start from the same starting point and the public funds provided to an MLA do not give that MLA an advantage — principle number one.

And principle number two that's included here is the principle that acknowledges that the furnishings and equipment which have been purchased by public funds belong to the Legislative Assembly. And so that you'll see, this will make reference to things like leases and furnishings and equipment and how, if a member is not re-elected, either because he or she did not stand or was not re-elected, how that furnishings and equipment then must return to the property of the Legislative Assembly. And it

also outlines for a new member then how those furnishings, equipments, in fact will transfer to the member elected in the constituency and become available to be used to the newly elected Member of the Legislative Assembly.

So those are the principles in broad strokes. There are five items in particular I would bring to your attention because they have an element of newness about them. They're not simply a restatement of what has existed previous, at the end of the twenty-second legislature much of which was at the twenty-first and so on.

In this and these dissolution guidelines there will be a new expression of the entitlements of constituency assistants for members who are seeking re-election.

And in this case constituency assistants, and I think everybody in this room is actually seeking re-election so these would apply to your constituency assistants personally. The constituency assistants would not be discontinued from the benefits plan in which they are enrolled at the moment — including things like the group life insurance plan, the disability plan, dental plan, the extended health plan — and they would not be discontinued during dissolution. So when the writ is issued, they would still be continued on the plan until the polling day.

And then if they're recalled, in other words you're re-elected and you bring them back to continue to work for you, then those constituency assistants would be eligible to purchase back their pension contributions for the period of the dissolution. They would not receive pension contributions during that time but if you were in a position to continue to employ them and you do, they would be eligible to purchase back the pension contribution.

It also provides something new that I think is an expression of the importance of security and confidentiality by members in the environment of developing technology. And what has been expressed to me by members is the concern that there will be — really here we're virtually always talking about either computer or palm pilot, I think would in essence be what it is and the two are actually linked — but the members have had concerns that if they're not, if they don't continue as an MLA then they will have entered confidential and personal data into computers and palm pilots which then go back to the Legislative Assembly and are made available for distribution and purchase in the usual manner. And that the concern was for the ability to retain those items which have personal and confidential information.

What I'm recommending to you is that in this dissolution guidelines, MLAs who are not re-elected or who are not continuing may purchase equipment which may have sensitive private material at a price to be determined by the Legislative Assembly administrative services based on fair market value. And so it would be the obligation of the administration of the LAO (Legislative Assembly Office) to determine what fair market value is and then those small number of items which have sensitive private material, or may have, members not continuing would have the option of purchasing at that price — take it or leave it. Okay.

Thirdly, this dissolution guidelines introduces a transition allowance to members who are defeated at the polls. And this is

really spelling out then how the directive that has been previously decided will work.

The way it would work is this, is that members who choose not to run again are eligible for zero. They are eligible for no transition allowance or severance at all. Members who are defeated at the polls or who are choosing not to seek re-election for reasons related to health or illness having to do with themselves or members of their families — so people who are in one of those two categories: sought re-election and weren't re-elected or not running again for reasons related to personal health or health of a family member — are eligible for a transition allowance which would be calculated on this basis. On the basic indemnity, not on their income that they were making but on the basic indemnity, which is lower for everybody than the income that they're currently making, calculated at the rate of one month per year of service to a maximum of four. Okay. But MLAs who draw the MLA pension are not eligible to receive this. Okay.

So I think that summarizes the transition allowance. If a member for example is — now let me make it very clear — if a member is not seeking to be re-elected for example because he or she did not win the nomination, they still do not qualify here. So I think that spells it out clearly. And this will be the transition allowance available then to those members who are defeated at the polls, not receiving an MLA pension, or not running again because of illness in . . . a personal or family illness.

Fourthly, and this is consistent with my next recommendation to you related to directive 24 as well . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh sorry.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Five is about receiving the pension?

**The Chair:** — For constituency . . . Oh, MLAs?

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Right.

**The Chair:** — Okay.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Somebody would go on this transition allowance. If they . . . My assumption is they would be eligible for the pension but chose not to elect a pension until . . . and use this transition money and then subsequently may at any time apply for pension.

**The Chair:** — That's right. MLAs, depending on age, may or may not be eligible to draw from their MLA pension. But if they choose to draw the pension, then they're not eligible for transition. If that condition exists and they do receive the transition allowance, of course at a later date they can draw their pension. But not at the same time. Okay?

Anything else on that? Okay.

Fourthly then, on leased office equipment, if you accept my recommendation on item 4, then this will take care of this. But the way that directive 24 currently is worded, when the . . . it can be interpreted that if members have, say, a leased photocopier in your office and the election is called, that you have to return that leased photocopier from whence it came.

Now clearly in these directives, once the election is called, the MLA has to turn the lock on the door and nothing that's in that office is available to be used, with a small, I think, conciliation that if you have an answering machine, that you can put on your telephone that you're not at the constituency office here for the next period of time and can leave a contact number.

But it would pose serious problems and cost the public money actually if members then at that time turned back their leased photocopiers, particularly if you were re-elected, because we would end up having to bear here lease cancellation costs that were unnecessary. And in looking at this, it is in the interest of the public purse that leased office equipment purchased under directive 24 should simply be carried for that month — not cancelled. And that the decision as to what happens with the lease will be made then after the election when it's known what the circumstances are and who the representative for the constituency will be.

And finally, in portable items, and here I'm talking about things like cell phones, laptop computers, and palm pilot organizers, which were not used to the same extent in the last election or just generally as they are these days, to make it very clear that these are not to be used during the campaign period or the period of dissolution. This isn't a change, but I bring this to your attention because it's something that may be more relevant. There weren't that many members who had cell phones, laptops, or palm pilots when the last election came. This would've been the case when you interpret it, but it will be something that may be thought to be new by members simply because they didn't have the circumstances that applied last time around.

Now you have before you 49 pages outlining in detail the how-to's. It specifies in pretty fine detail, I think, what are the circumstances and provides some checklists for members who are not going to be running again or for members who are running again. And it also spells out what will happen then if you're running again and re-elected or a new member comes in.

And for your information, it also includes the caucus's dissolution — not dissolution, but the caucus's accountability and disclosure requirements that you just passed — and that's included here for information of the members although it's not directly applicable to the members themselves per se.

So you have the . . . you have that and I recommend to you then a motion that the proposed guidelines for dissolution be approved. It would be in order for someone to move that or something else. Mr. Whitmore. Is there a seconder? Mr. Kowalsky.

The floor is open for discussion.

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to first commend the staff for the detail that's been provided in terms of these guidelines, and I think it will make life a lot easier for MLAs in terms of dealing with the area of election, you're seeking re-election or not. And I think it's important to do that. I think too what this does . . . It is the, I guess the final recommendations of McDowell and putting them together in terms of how we apply those in terms of what goes in terms of expenses, and accountability and all those things.

McDowell has led to a great deal of change. I think a change for the better, and I think these kinds of checklists and these kind of guidelines help us as MLAs to keep things in a nice neat manner. And I'm pleased with the document today and I think it really will help the MLAs and the members.

**Mr. Heppner:** — I guess basically I would support that statement in general. I think things that have been sort of cleared up — what happens with leases and those sorts of things — that we don't incur unnecessary costs and yet maintain some sort of continuity I think work out very well.

I do have a couple of questions and they're just on small items. Is there any possibility for things such as let's say cell phones — people have a line into their own homes or the palm pilot — for the MLAs to pay those costs during that time, and then maintain the use of them? Because they're installed in the car so they kind of run around with them . . .

**The Chair:** — So that is a clear no. The reason for that being, going back to the principles that an MLA shall have during the election no advantage pursuant to allowances available to him or her. And even though you'd be paying the cost, there is a lease cost attached to that and I suppose one might say a matter of convenience that came to you as a MLA. And so the answer to the question is a clear no.

When the election is called if you've got a cell phone that's installed in your car, my advice to any member is that you just take the cell phone out of the car and you put it in a drawer somewhere. Or you put your palm pilot in the same drawer if you've got that, and if you've got a lap-top put that in the same drawer too. Try to put it in a drawer that you'll remember where it is when the election is over so you can find the darn thing. But there isn't . . . There is not available to members the ability to pay the actual costs and make use of it.

**Mr. Heppner:** — And so that takes care of three of the things. The other one is on the message that we can leave on our telephones in our offices. Are there any directives exactly to what those can be? For example, can we say, if you have a question . . . Can we direct that back to the MLA at that time, can we direct it to a caucus office, what happens with that? What are we allowed to do?

**The Chair:** — The answer to that is that you would be unwise for the message to be a promotional message. I don't think anybody would do that.

But it can direct . . . you can give the telephone number of your committee rooms so that someone who's trying to reach you phones that number in the phone book, they get a recording. The recording fair enough can refer them forward to where your committee room is so that they can reach you there, could refer them to another phone . . . What the message should do is it should achieve someone who's trying to get in touch with you being able to do that.

And the guideline does not spell out a limitation or doesn't define what is or what is not . . . is required or is not required. But it should not be a promotional message, okay.

Any other questions? And on the things I covered or there's lots



of stuff in here that I didn't refer to — any other questions?

And this is extremely important that if you have them, we resolve them now. Because if you adopt this motion, this is the book that goes to members and I know it is the strong desire by all hon. members to be living within the rules and in the interest of public trust. So if there's any confusions, it's really the board's obligation to make sure what we send to members is something that is absolutely clear as we can possibly make it.

Nothing more? Okay. Then you have the motion before you, moved by Mr. Whitmore, seconded by Mr. Kowalsky. Those in favour, please indicate. Down. Opposed? And that's carried unanimously. Thank you.

Brings us to item no. 4, review of directive 24. I just want to advise you that you can advise your caucus colleagues that we think we can get the dissolution guidelines to all members in the final printed form by the end of next week.

And please urge your colleagues to take the thing and read it and pass it on to the constituency assistants and so that everybody, when the writ is coming . . . I quite recognize when the writ is coming then hon. members get a little excited about the exercise that's coming up and that's not the time to be starting to read the book. It's the time to be applying the book and so please urge your colleagues to do that. Okay.

Now item no. 4. It relates to directive 24 and you will be aware that directive 24 — which provides for purchase of one budget item per MLA over the course of a term, purchase for office equipment, mostly this is a photocopier lease, computer — and you'll be aware that the directive 24 requires that the board review this following an election.

There is another reality is that when an election has been held, some MLAs will be re-elected and some MLAs will be newly elected and regardless of which category you're in, there becomes immediately pressing the obligation to open an office and start serving constituents.

This will be particularly of concern to newly elected members who will, by the way, inherit the furnishings and equipment of the outgoing or previous MLA, but who will want to then establish their own offices and get operative. And that's really what directive 24 is particularly related to.

And what I . . . We have a circumstance here where as it is currently written what would happen is that on the issuing of the writ, leases would not be supported and members would have to return any leased . . . and I think many of the members, their photocopiers in your constituency offices are in that category.

According to the current directive, on polling day, directive 24 would kick back in again in its current format. However, it would be subject to review by a Board of Internal Economy after the election.

That may or may not pose problems because although I wish all hon. members well in their seeking of re-election, there's no guarantee that the board, you know, that the board gets returned and that we have a board that is constituted as we now know it

and would leave . . . potentially would leave, particularly newly elected members but all members, in a position of not knowing whether directive 24 was going to continue or not even though it automatically kicks in but has to be reviewed, and we don't know what the board . . . don't know in advance what the board will intend to do unless the board signals that to them. And that's really what I'm asking you to do here.

There's two options in order to clarify it. One would be to just say when the election is called, we scrap the thing — she's done. Or the other would be to say when the election's called and there is a new series of members newly elected that the intention is that directive 24 will continue. And that in the meantime for that one month during the election, we don't want people returning photocopiers that they've got leases on because that creates all kind of problems for us — costs more money and other things.

And so what I'm recommending to you, of the two options, is the second that would simplify the administration of the program during the election period, and that would also signal to the members that the board's intention is that directive 24 will be in place again for the next term. That doesn't mean that you are not required to review it, you do. You are required to review it at the first board meeting after the next election, whenever that is. But in the meantime you have signalled very clearly to the members your intention is there will be a directive 24; unless a new board amends that, your intention is that it'll continue the way it is now. And members can know that and can make office plans accordingly.

And therefore that is my recommendation to you:

That Directive #24 — Constituency Office Equipment and Furnishing Provision be amended by striking out the definition of "term" in clause (2) and substituting the following:

" 'term' means the period commencing on polling day for a general election and ending on the day immediately preceding polling day for the next general election."

That's one recommendation. And I give that to you with the other recommendation:

That Directive 24 — Constituency Office Equipment Furnishing Provisions be amended as follows:

Notwithstanding anything in Directive 24, Constituency Office Equipment Furnishing Provisions, Directive 24 is suspended . . .

Oh, sorry, no, no. No, no, sorry, that's the one that I'm not recommending to you, okay.

If you want to know the one I'm not recommending to you tell me and I'll give it to you. But we're starting with the one I'm recommending which is option (2).

So that's what I recommend to you. The term means the period commencing polling day for next general election, ending on the day immediately preceding polling day for the next general

election. And that would accomplish that.

Does somebody wish to move that? Mr. Heppner. Is there a seconder? Mr. Lautermilch. Is there discussion?

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of things and I'll certainly support the motion. But having been a new member in '95 I know what it was like to walk into an office and find myself with a three-legged couch and a computer that wasn't really a computer anymore as a package for me to start with. And so I know what I had to deal with.

However, I would say too, that members I hope will use common sense, that if just for the sake of buying a new computer that we all don't run out and buy new computers if we happened to have bought one a year ago or a year before the election. So I think that's important to recognize and I know members will use that discretion to do that.

But certainly for any new members, certainly a program like this is very important to them.

**The Chair:** — Okay. I appreciate your point, Mr. McLane, and do advise you that in fact not all members have — of the current legislature — have used directive 24. A large majority have.

And it's probably reasonable to assume that those who bought a computer — probably in most cases three or four years ago roughly — are sometime in the course of this term going to find themselves needing to update.

But I think your point is well taken and what I do comment to you from my point of view is that in fact that is what has been happening. It has been used with a sense of discretion and restraint and responsibility.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Just on the heels of Mr. McLane's comments. You know, as I watch the transition of the constituency offices and their function and the recommendations that came from McDowell, I think — which was a good document and it was really very, very beneficial for members of the legislature — I think that at some point in time the board will want to have another look at constituency offices because their role really is changing.

They're becoming much more . . . as their function evolves, they're becoming much more an arm of government and an access to government than they ever were. And I think really members are going to have to take a very serious look at whether or not we shouldn't be treating constituency offices the same way that you would say the office . . . Social Services, an arm of Social Services, or a rural service centre.

I think that's really where we need to head. And I don't think we're there yet but I think that there has to be some discussions with the caucuses in terms of where this thing goes because I think there's a lot of responsibility there that should be assumed by an arm of government, whether it's the Legislative Assembly Office delivering those kinds of services the same way Rural Development used to and now the way the Department of Agriculture does with rural service centres.

And so I think ultimately that's where we need to be and I think we should take a very, very serious look shortly as to how we can put that kind of function in place. We're dealing here with leasing, and outdated computers get changed, and they get bought, and I don't think there's enough of a central focus on what's required in those offices and that it be supplied just as a matter of course.

When a MLA comes in — a new MLA — he or she doesn't have to worry about what's there, what's left, what isn't there; that they can move into a functioning office without all of the complications that we've made for ourselves as this thing has evolved.

So I just wanted to put that on the record, Mr. Speaker. I would certainly offer to be part of discussions with members from the opposition and the third party as to how we achieve that in the upcoming months because I think ultimately that's where we need to be.

**The Chair:** — The circumstances for new members, as Mr. McLane points out, have improved, in my judgment, substantially in more recent terms in that even though the couch may have only three legs, at least there's a couch, and there was a time in which members came to the office with no walls or doors, let alone anything in them.

So I think the board has been wise in assisting new members to become active in serving their constituents pretty expediently. And probably also in the consideration, I think, members recognize — and certainly this is reported to me — that it's becoming a more sophisticated job for constituency assistants as well, and that consideration of constituency assistants is probably part of that review.

And I point out as well, you have previously directed at the last meeting a review of the whole matter of use of computers, and compatibility between computers and constituency offices and caucuses and the Legislative Assembly to facilitate the use of this technology. And I think . . . I recall very clearly as well at that time a concern that in that has to be also consideration for training and support for the people who are in those constituency offices dealing on a daily basis with your public, your constituents, and in order to assist them to make use of the technology that's here, that's in the offices on their desks, and to make sure that they have the support to be able to make use of it in an efficient kind of way. So I certainly hear what you're saying and would concur with the wisdom of it.

Is there anything else on this item, directive 24? If not, then you have the motion before you moved by Mr. Heppner, seconded by Mr. Lautermilch. Those in favour? Opposed? Carried unanimously. Thank you.

And finally, decision item no. 5. This relates to MLA sessional expenses and committee indemnity expenses. And what I'm recommending to you is that the flat rate MLA sessional expense available to members during the session be altered in a manner that's exactly consistent with the thinking of the McDowell Commission and changes made last September for public service employees.

The McDowell Commission, when making recommendations

on members' remuneration and recommending the sessional indemnity, daily sessional expenses for members, did that at that time recognizing that the public service meal per diem was \$26.75. And that was part of what the McDowell Commission took into consideration when making the recommendation that we now have, that we've adopted and implemented. Now, and on September 1 as a result of negotiations, in September 1 of last year — it's been what, seven months ago — that amount for public service employees was in fact increased by \$9.25 to \$36. And what I want to recommend to you is that in the interest of consistency with the McDowell Commission and also, quite frankly, in the interest of expediency or efficiency for administrative management of this, I would prefer to see as many members as possible choosing this way of receiving their expenses when the House is in session.

I want to recommend to you that in light of the \$9.25 increase negotiated for public service employees, that the rate be increased by \$9 — not quite the full amount — but for members. And also it is my view that this is something, this was consistent with McDowell, that if there are alterations in the future either upward or downward, that that should occur, that MLAs, the formula for MLAs just flows accordingly. And that also I want to recommend to you that if this is appropriate for members during session, it's also appropriate when members are doing committee work outside of session, that exactly the same principles apply.

Therefore I give you two recommendations. First I give to you the recommendation:

(1) That Directive #1.1 — MLA Sessional Expenses be amended effective April 1, 1999 (that's the beginning of the fiscal year) as follows:

(a) by striking out "\$63" and substituting "\$72" in subclause 1(b); and

(b) by adding the following after clause (2):

"(3) The amount set out in subclause (1)(b) shall be increased or decreased by the amount of any adjustment made from time to time in the rate of reimbursement for meal expenses set out in The Financial Administration Manual for out-of-scope employees under *The Public Service Act*, and this directive may be reproduced to include the adjusted amount from time to time without further amendment."

And then I will also recommend to you a parallel motion:

(2) That Directive #17.1 — Committee Indemnity and Expenses be amended effective April 1, 1999 (new fiscal year) as follows:

(a) by striking out "63" and substituting "72" in sub-subclause (2)(b)(ii); and

(b) by adding the following clauses after clause (3):

"(4) The amount set out in sub-subclause (2)(b)(ii) shall be increased or decreased by the amount of any

adjustment made from time to time in the rate of reimbursement for meal expenses set out in The Financial Administration Manual for out-of-scope employees under *The Public Service Act* and this directive may be reproduced to include the adjusted amount from time to time without further amendment."

So those are my two recommendations to you related to that. And it would be in order to have a motion to that or something else if you have a different preference . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, we won't deal with, we'll deal with them separately. You can't have two motions on the floor at the same time.

Mr. Lautermilch, you move. Is there a seconder? Mr. Whitmore. Is there discussion? You're moving the directive 1.1, yes. Discussion, Mr. Heppner?

**Mr. Heppner:** — I'll be supporting this but I'd like to add one other particular comment. I think sometime in the future we need to also look at people who for various circumstances need to maintain some sort of permanent residence in Regina. I think we need to, you know, make sure we address that as well.

And I think that goes from what you might call ordinary members, cabinet people who need to be here a lot and have those sorts of residences. Our allowances don't anywhere near take care of that sort of thing either. So I think that's something we have to look at in the fairly near future as well.

**The Chair:** — Point well taken and it would be in my view entirely appropriate following the next election and when this board or newly constituted board comes together to do just a general review of matters related to the operation of constituency offices and related to the supports for members in their constituency as well as in the capital city.

I would recommend that to you quite frankly, and I would be most happy to participate in that. And I think I've had the benefit over this term as Speaker of enjoying the confidence and comment of members on all sides of the House related to some of the real and actual difficulties that they've experienced having to do with directives. And the Speaker would be most happy to participate in the review.

I think it's a healthy thing to do. Times change, sometimes circumstances change. Review doesn't necessarily mean everything changes, but it does mean that you either reconfirm that what you're doing is sensible, or that you're making some adjustments to reflect the realities. I would recommend that to the board generally. However not today. Any further discussion?

You have the motion before you moved then by Mr. Lautermilch, seconded by Mr. Whitmore. And those in favour? Opposed? That's carried unanimously.

And then secondly, I recommend to you, I've outlined it to you the parallel amendment to directive 17(1). Is there someone who wishes to move that or something else? Mr. Kowalsky. Is there a seconder? Mr. Lautermilch. Is there discussion on this? If not, those in favour? Opposed? That's carried unanimously.

That brings us to the end of our agenda and I thank you for your diligence today. I also want to say thank you members of the board, for your work through the time that you've been of service. Who knows, it may be that the next time the board meets is in a new legislature. We don't know that. But with that possibility in mind I do want to thank you for your service in this legislature and for your co-operation.

I think the board has done its job well and in the interests of the members, and as well in the interest of public accountability and transparency. And I appreciate that very much and although I think it's probably rarely said, I think it is something that is just generally appreciated by the most important people in the world in which we live and that's the public at large.

The attention that you've given to accountability and to transparency I think is important. And you've done good work in my judgment and I commend you for that. Having said that the meeting stands adjourned.

The board adjourned at 10:34 a.m.