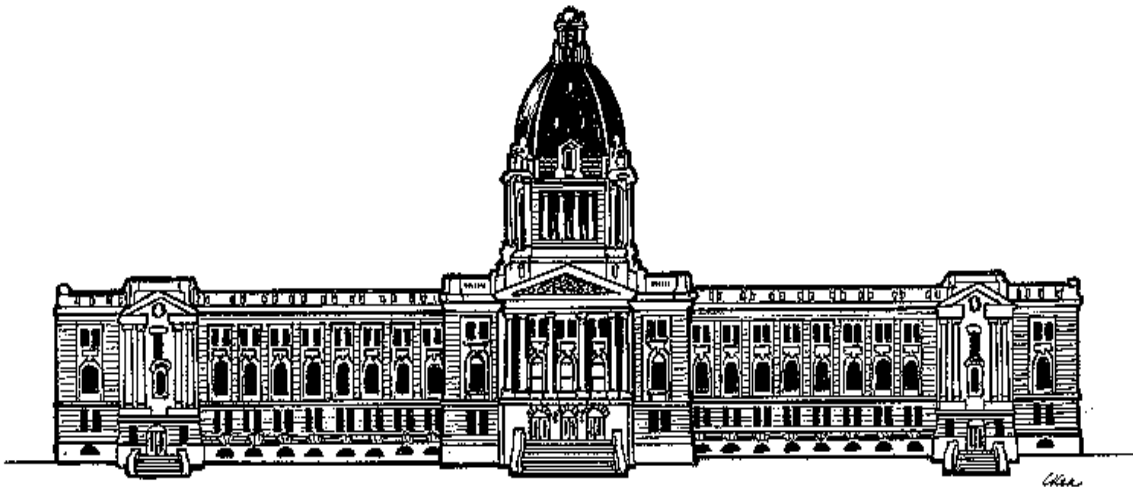




Standing Committee on Communication

Hansard Verbatim Report

No. 2 – June 4, 1998



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Twenty-third Legislature

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION
1998**

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The Chair: — So let me call the meeting to order. We've, in notice of the meeting, indicated 9 to 11 but I think it's quite likely we won't need that amount of time although I leave that in your capable hands to determine what you wish to do.

As we have some new members for the committee, I'd like to take about 60 seconds just to put the purpose of the committee, the mandate of the committee, into perspective for you. As you may know from the review of the last *Hansard* of this committee, it was on May 28, 1996 that it last met, and so, therefore, obviously it doesn't necessarily meet each year but as needed.

The Communications Committee came about in 1991 . . . or sorry 1981 by combining two previously existing committees. One being the Library Committee, which included then the attention to archival material because one of the library's responsibilities is the retention of documents, and secondly the Radio Broadcasting Committee was the other and they were rolled together then to form the Communications Committee in 1981.

And the Communications Committee then deals with in essence the things that we have on our agenda here today: the retention and disposal of materials; and then the Legislative Library; and then our television and modern-day legislative function — our television broadcasting.

The schedules determined the maximum of length of time that records must be retained by a department before the department can make request to the Archives for disposal of them. And the staff of the Archives Board are called to appear as witnesses and I'll be introducing our witness — in fact let me introduce him now and ask him to take his place at the end of the table. From the Archives office, the director of the information management project, Don Herperger, is our official to assist us in that regard today.

This committee is empowered to consider any matters related to televising or radio broadcasting of the legislative proceedings and matters related to the Legislative Library. And then I'll be calling as witness — later of course when we get to the library report — our Legislative Librarian.

So I think what I'm going to do is ask Mr. Herperger to very, very briefly put into context the significance of the decisions around retention of records from an archival point of view. The authority to permit departments to request to no longer have to retain rests with this committee, and that's our first three agenda items then it will be the schedules that have to do with that.

And so having said that, Mr. Herperger, if I can ask that you just give us a brief summary.

Mr. Herperger: — Okay thank you. Back in the '40s when the Archives was created, it was charged with the responsibility for ensuring that records of continuing value of the government were retained and available to government and, as possible, to the general public beyond that.

About 1950 and 1951, very early in the process the Saskatchewan government became involved in the processes

relating to records management. This is a systematic way of identifying what records should be kept, how long they are required for legal or fiscal purposes and then an orderly destruction of records which no longer had value, and transfer of records which did have continuing value to the Archives which had the proper kind of space and environment to retain those records for the lengthy period of time that would be required. And that process has been ongoing to this date.

The process involves first that government departments or agencies or Crowns do an inventory of records which aren't scheduled. They then prepare a listing of those records, have them go through their fiscal people and their legal people to identify how long the record is required for any kind of legal or fiscal purpose, and then assign a retention period to the record.

Once the process has been completed within the department or the agency it then goes to the Public Documents Committee which is a body which is spelled out in The Archives Act as being responsible for reviewing them and making recommendations to this committee.

And that Public Documents Committee has a representative from Finance and a representative-at-large from government. And we currently have somebody who is in the field of electronic records in that position right now. We have a representative from Justice as well the Legislative Library and the Provincial Archivist are on that committee.

Once it goes to the Public Documents Committee it's further reviewed at that point, any amendments suggested to the department, and then it is brought forward, it's tabled in the legislature, and comes forward to you as a committee for final review of the documents.

Any documents which you approve will then go to the floor of the legislature and once approved by resolution there, will in essence become law and the departments or agencies will then be able to utilize the schedule for the orderly disposition of their records.

The Chair: — Thanks very much, Mr. Herperger. Now you have before you three recommendations related to retention and disposal, one having to do with the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, one having to do with the Saskatchewan Securities Commission, and one having to do with Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation. And what I'll ask Mr. Herperger to do is to — with each of those — is to briefly outline the intentions of that and then open the floor for questions or discussion if you have any, and then I'll call for a motion. All this as Mr. Herperger said, ultimately leads to a committee report to the legislature for final adoption.

So if we can begin with no. 335 related to the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. Mr. Herperger, if you could comment on that specifically for us.

Mr. Herperger: — The Saskatchewan Pension Plan has been in existence for a few years. The records of that plan . . . of course some of them are required for an extensive period of time in relation to the kind of function that's carried out. Others do have a purely administrative function in terms of sorting

through information and administering the plan.

This schedule does speak to all of the business conducted by the Pension Plan. It has been a couple of years in process . . . in preparation. The Pension Plan people I think have done a fairly thorough job of investigating the impact of the records and the needs for retention of the records.

If there are any specific questions relating to any of the elements, I can try and speak to them — if not, certainly get answers for you.

Maybe a brief comment on the layout of the retention and disposal schedules themselves. About five or six years ago we began working with government to come up with a system of dealing with disposition of records which also dealt with the classification of the information. And the need here was expressed by government in relation to freedom of information legislation and the need to be able to access information more quickly than had necessarily been the case before.

And so this is all set up on the basis of each function of an agency or department being identified as a primary within their records management system. So in terms of that first one, the Pension Plan, the first primary has got a classification number of 11000 and is called asset management general.

Then, in order that anyone relating to the record within the corporation or department or outside can understand that there is a scope note assigned, and then any kinds of further sub-functions of that business practice are then defined by a secondary within the primary. So that all of the items that you see here are arranged in that fashion.

There will be primaries, which identify a primary description for a kind of business function of the entity or jurisdiction. And then within each, there are secondaries, which identify types of records in relation to that business function.

Almost all of them will have 00, which is for policy and procedure, and 01, which is for general. And then if there are case files or other particulars, they'll be identified beyond that.

The Chair: — Okay. So you have listed within the package under item no. 335 the recommendations to the committee regarding the retention or disposal of materials in the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. Are there any questions anyone would like . . . or comments that anyone would like to make or questions to put to Mr. Herperger?

Mr. D'Autremont: — I guess a question would be what time frame are we looking at here for the disposal of these records? What time frame do the records cover?

Mr. Herperger: — In terms of the date of creation, it could be something that the Pension Plan acquired even from prior to the actual creation of the Pension Plan if it related to its function up to the present. And then the definitions here just identify . . . all of the retention periods for records are assigned in relation to years from the date that a file is closed, or from the last date of action on a particular file.

So that for instance, under the first primary here, that "11000

asset management", any records that relate to policy or procedure for asset management function in the Pension Plan . . . the record would have to be retained at least six years beyond the period during which that policy was in effect. So that's what that six indicates.

The numbers before a letter . . . or the numbers before a slash, rather, identify the period that an official record has to be kept. The numbers after the slash identify the period of time that any additional copies of that record have to be retained by the jurisdiction. So in that instance we see that the policy and procedure records remain active until they're superseded or obsolete — that's what the SO (superseded or obsolete) refers to.

And then beyond the period when they become superseded or when it becomes obsolete, the second column indicates that that record would have to be retained an additional six years.

So that the general guidelines that are used in government: that policy-type records or records which relate to a financial transaction have to be retained for seven years, to meet the statute of limitations; and that records which have an audit or a review function are to be retained for two years beyond the date of last action.

So the six years is six years plus current, which equals seven years. And then in other instances — like under the general records you'll see two years — which would be two years plus the current year which is a total of three years for the records which relate to a review function or an audit function. And then any records that are particular or unique would often have a different kind of a retention period based upon any kind of statutory requirement or administrative need for that particular record.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So what kind of records would general be? Like how much paper you order or something or . . .

Mr. Herperger: — Well if it was something like an order, then that would be something that would be under a procurement function. And that's an oversight in my introduction that I should have mentioned.

Back in 1993 this committee approved for the first time in this province a general schedule relating to administrative records. So that for all jurisdictions in government there is a set of . . . well they're not guidelines; they're approved by the legislature. So it's a retention and disposal schedule for all administrative records created by all departments or agencies in government.

So something like the procurement function, which is an administrative function used by everybody, is dealt with in that general schedule which is called the Saskatchewan administrative records system. And so if the Sask Pension Plan or the Department of Energy and Mines or any other jurisdiction ordered something, that would be dealt with in the procurement section of the general schedule.

In terms of these operational schedules, it relates solely to the records relating to the operational function of the jurisdiction rather than any of the administrative functions of the jurisdiction.

So the two years here might be things like circulars that the Sask Pension Plan might receive from other provinces in terms of reports on how they are carrying out their function. Something that's general would be something that is not specifically relating to or defining the policy or procedures used by the Saskatchewan Pension Plan.

And quite often the general material ends up being things that are received from outside of the organization as opposed to things which are generated from inside it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I think initially that's all the questions I have.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes. I planned to ask the same question as Dan did, so that helps a lot. Just a couple of additional questions.

What is the difference between original records and additional records?

Mr. Herperger: — It's up to the jurisdiction to define within their function what particular copy of a record is going to be their official copy. And once they've designated that then they have to ensure that that copy of the record survives for the maximum period of time required in a legal or fiscal sense . . . for the retention of that information.

The reason that we went to that kind of process is that, the way business is conducted today, it's very difficult and indeed in many instances impossible to define what is an original and what's a copy. By virtue of the fact that a lot of this is originally defined, developed as an electronic record, you can spit out exact facsimiles of that a hundred times without having one copy being the first copy and others copies that were photocopied.

So we have a definition that we utilize which says . . .

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — All right.

Mr. Herperger: — . . . one of the sources of that information, one particular place where it's filed is the official record, and then others are additional records.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — All other copies are called additional. All right.

I think I know the answer to the next question; I'm going to ask anyway to be sure. What's the difference between active and semi-active then?

Mr. Herperger: — This is simply a guideline for departments or agencies; it's not something that's required of them. But what it does is when they're doing their original inventory and analysis of the material, if they go through this process, they identify when they need that record at arm's length and that's the active period. That during . . .

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Can you explain that "when they need their records at arm's length?"

Mr. Herperger: — It's during the period of time it's active is

the period that they are likely to have to refer to that record on a continuing basis, therefore that they should have it in their primary office space.

The semi-active is a period of time that it's still required for legal or fiscal purposes. But they're probably not going to be referring to it on a continuing basis and therefore it could go to the government records centre or to some other facility that they may have where they store that information. But they still can't send it to final disposition because it could have some kind of a purpose in litigation or in terms of demonstrating something in a physical sense.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Okay and one final question then. When we see no letter following the numbers we assume it's years. If it's month or days there'd be an M or a D there, is that correct?

Mr. Herperger: — Yes, if it is a shorter time period it would be defined in terms . . .

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Okay, thanks.

Mr. Herperger: — . . . of the unit that would be involved, yes.

The Chair: — Thanks, Mr. Shillington. I just; maybe as well for additional clarification on your first question, you'll notice when we finish your discussion here I'll call for a motion. And we have our, from the Legislative Assembly, we have our own retentions that we record as well. The one whoever moves the motion, this will be the official document; it's marked original. And this is retained in our records indefinitely. So I may just have to put it into a practical context as well.

Ms. Stanger: — Just one question. If you look under "planned governments" and you see history and legislation, legal opinions and minutes, those would seem to me to be important documents. Am I correct in saying that that's 25 years, 25 years, and 23 years for those?

Mr. Herperger: — Which primary document?

Ms. Stanger: — Oh sorry, it's "planned governance", primary 18000.

Mr. Herperger: — Right. So yes under history and legislation for instance, that means that as long as that information has some continuing relevance it stays active. It's only after it's superseded or obsolete that the time clock commences. So that the legislation relating to that or the history that is documented would have to become superseded or obsolete and then from that point the 25 years begins to count down.

And then the other part of this, that the Archives is involved in of course, is that once a record no longer has any value or relevance to the jurisdiction which created or collected it, when it requests disposal of it, then we have the opportunity to appraise that record and determine whether it should continue its life as an archival document. And this is the kind of record that we certainly give close scrutiny to in that process.

And quite often this is the type of record that would be retained as an archival record to demonstrate both the activities of the

Pension Plan, the functions of the Pension Plan, but also because presumably it might help to shed some light on Saskatchewan's society in general.

Ms. Stanger: — Well that certainly gives me some comfort because even after the legislation has been displaced it's still another 25 years that you keep that there and then the clock starts counting down. So I feel very comfortable with this. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thanks, Ms. Stanger. Is there any other questions or discussion? If not then it would be in order to have a motion that the retention and disposal, schedule no. 335, of — and this is sessional paper no. 185 of the third session, twenty-third legislature — be adopted. Would someone wish to move that?

Ms. Stanger. Is there a seconder? Oh, don't need a seconder. Sorry, that's right. Further discussion? Those in favour? Opposed? That's carried. Thank you.

We'll now move to no. 336, related to the Saskatchewan Securities Commission, and Mr. Herperger, is there some more comment that you can make for us here?

Mr. Herperger: — The Saskatchewan Securities Commission was one of the first agencies that began working with the SARS process, which is the Saskatchewan administrative records system, and they found that to be a very efficient process in terms of organizing their records, of having the information that they needed on a timely basis.

So they became involved and then interested in developing a similar situation for their operational records. And so this is the completion of that process where they now have developed a schedule for their operational records which complements the way they've classified and dealt with their administrative records for the past two or three years.

Again, it speaks to the general business function of the Securities Commission. It's a very specific function but yet it does involve the accumulation of large amounts of records. So they are very interested in having a good classification system for that information and a means of disposing of information which no longer has value on a timely basis because of the accumulations that they do develop.

The Chair: — Okay. You have the recommendation in its total detail before you. Are there questions or comments anyone would like to make regarding no. 336?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I am reluctant to display my ignorance but I'm going to ask a more general question. As I understand it, before any of these documents are destroyed, the Provincial Archivist has the opportunity to select whatever documents are thought to be necessary or permanent for storage in the Archives.

Mr. Herperger: — Yes that's correct.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm not sure therefore that I totally understand the importance to the Legislative Assembly in establishing these years. I'm not sure I see why it matters to the

members of the legislature whether we keep policy and procedure for six years or five. I'm afraid I don't understand exactly what we're doing here, to be very blunt about it. I don't understand why we're . . . the legislature . . .

The Chair: — Deal with them specifically as opposed to in a . . . Yes.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, I'm just not sure the importance of what we're doing here actually. As I say I hate to display my ignorance but . . . So perhaps you can give me . . .

The Chair: — Well perhaps some comment upon the legislative requirement I think is in order, just to respond directly to that.

Mr. Herperger: — Yes. In a very specific sense I guess the reason that the schedules do come here for approval is that it is a requirement currently of The Archives Act.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I see.

Mr. Herperger: — And that as the Act was written in 1949-50, when we began the process of using retention and disposal schedules, it stated that it was a process which involved first the department identifying its needs and trying to meet the requirements, then giving it to the Public Documents Committee, and then having it forwarded as a recommendation to the legislature. And it has been dealt with by this committee.

In terms of other jurisdictions, this was a normal practice during the '50s and '60s. During the '70s and '80s and early '90s some other provinces have been developing a process whereby the process stops short of going to the legislature in terms of specifics, where the retention and disposal for a specific series is dealt with by a committee that is similar to our Public Documents Committee.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — In your view does the review of these schedules by this committee still serve a practical purpose beyond meeting the requirements of the legislation?

Mr. Herperger: — It doesn't . . . not as specific. One purpose that it does fulfil is it certainly does lend additional credibility to the schedules, and authority to the process. That certainly is true.

You know, in terms of whether it's appropriate on a continuing basis to take the time of legislators in this process is something that's, you know, beyond my purview certainly in terms of any kind of an observation.

We currently are, in the Saskatchewan Archives Board, undergoing a significant review looking at, as are grandly titled: strategies for the 21st century. But the 21st century is right around the corner now so that's not too far away.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — A year and a half away, yes.

Mr. Herperger: — And this is one of the elements — legislation and what legislation relating to the Saskatchewan Archives Board should be in the current setting — is one of the elements that the consultants are reviewing and that there may

perhaps be some recommendations in relation to.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I see. So the role of this committee is part of the consultants . . . the mandate given to consultants to make a recommendation on it or not?

Mr. Herperger: — Just in relation to the legislation and whether the legislation as it is in Saskatchewan is similar to, relevant to, or not relevant to the common experience in Canada at the moment, I would think.

The consultants can make recommendations and it would be up to the Saskatchewan Archives Board to determine whether or not those recommendations would be forwarded for consideration. I think certainly if there was any kind of a recommendation, which impacted upon this committee that, the board would, if it saw fit, forward that for consideration at a future date.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I don't in any sense, Mr. Speaker, begrudge the time given to the committee. This record retention is very, very important — not for us but for our great-grandchildren so they understand a little of what we did to the extent that anyone can make sense out of what we do here.

But it strikes me that after half a century it might be appropriate to, because it seems that this procedure is that old, it strikes me after half of a century it might be appropriate in some fashion, Mr. Speaker, to review the mandate of the committee. Because I, initially when I came here, I had the notion that we were dealing with . . . we were deciding what documents were saved for the Archives. But that's actually not the case. The archivist does that.

So it strikes me that we should consider, Mr. Speaker, a forum in which we review the mandate of the committee. That is not in any sense a motion. It's just a comment.

The Chair: — Well and it's a comment which is legitimate for the committee to choose to undertake.

In a political sense, I think the point you make is that the process, although it may seem a bit burdensome at times, is in fact an extremely important one. And I would think important that at the end of the day the decision about authorities to retain or be required to attain or enable to destroy information rests with the Legislative Assembly.

The Legislative Assembly has delegated to this committee to give it some scrutiny in recommendation, and that's precisely what's going on here. But at the end of the day I think we can all — it's really quite obvious to all of us should any government ever at some point in time decide that it was in the . . . perhaps in the government's best interest to just undertake massive destruction of information and records — I think we can imagine a scenario that would cause all parliamentarians to feel uncomfortable about that.

So the process . . . It may very well be that in fact the process which requires legislative approval and scrutiny by legislators before the legislature makes its decision — because it would often consider other things much more weighty than this — but it's the very existence of the process itself that causes the

retention of records to occur in an orderly kind of way.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm not taking issue with you, but I wouldn't necessarily have assumed, Mr. Speaker, that the detail of how long a record is kept, whether it's two years or six, would have been a legislative function as distinct from an executive function of government.

The issue is, I guess, how do we best add value to this process. It strikes me that, as I say, it strikes me that we might well give some thought to rethinking that question: how do we best add value to the process — is this the best way of adding value for the process? I don't know.

Perhaps we can finish this up, and I may have a thought or two at the end.

The Chair: — Okay. And the committee has other mandate areas as well. Okay, thanks, Mr. Shillington.

Ms. Stanger: — Well it would seem to me, unlike your opinion, sir, it would seem to me that this committee would be a final kind of check. It would seem because legislation . . . the Legislative Assembly, that legislators are responsible for this. That this is a committee . . . (inaudible) . . . after you approve of what's happening, and not even take that long, because it checks on the processes that are happening.

But I can foresee a scenario like you describe, Mr. Speaker, where somebody might want to destroy documents. This would be a final place.

Now I'd just like some comment. That's what I see in my mind — that this is a final place where legislators would have the ability to stop something that's happening. And that would bring it to people's attention. Am I right about this or wrong?

Mr. Herperger: — Certainly. If that kind of scenario did ever develop it would be one possibility; it would be one place that something like that might be addressed, certainly, yes.

Mr. Osika: — I think perhaps that Mr. Shillington might have been concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the regularity of the meetings; are they held far too often?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, we need one of these once a month. No, I wasn't begging for more meetings.

Ms. Stanger: — He just wondered if the function was necessary.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, I just wondered if we're adding much value to it, going over these schedules in this detail. But I have a thought that I'll share with the committee at the end when we're done, actually.

The Chair: — Okay. Is there any other comment or question related to schedule no. 336? If not, then it would be in order to have a motion that the retention disposal of schedule 336 be adopted. If someone would . . . Mr. D'Autremont. And is there further discussion? Those in favour? Opposed? And that's carried. Thanks.

We'll now move to schedule 337, the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation. And again, Mr. Herperger, I'll ask that you make comment there and point out if there's anything that's unusual about this recommendation.

Mr. Herperger: — This is in some senses a model, not in terms of . . . necessarily in terms of the content, but in terms of the timing.

The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation is a relatively new jurisdiction within the provincial government, and it has gone ahead and adopted the Saskatchewan administrative records system as its means of dealing with administrative records at its inception.

And it began work almost immediately on developing an operational record schedule so that from the time the corporation was created it's going to be dealing with records in relation to the newest accepted classification system that we have.

So that we have a system in place, which the legislature approved in 1993; we have this corporate entity coming into existence about the same time and they immediately began working with their records in this new context approved by the legislature.

And they have been working on this schedule again for a couple of years, got it into shape where they're satisfied with the retention periods and the definitions involved, and have put it forward this year. So that it is intended to cover the full business operation of the Gaming Corporation.

And it is a schedule, which will be able to deal with the records more or less from the period when the filing system is being defined. So that there's hopefully fewer opportunities for records to slip through the cracks in terms of records that no longer have significance or are no longer being collected, not having been defined in the schedule, and then being left off to the side.

So it's a new corporation and it's become very quickly involved in the records management process.

The Chair: — Okay, thank you.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just, and I probably know the answer as well but I'll — Mr. Shillington will take comfort that perhaps there's someone here that lacks more knowledge than he does with respect to what's happening — and I'm going to make that assumption. But I'm going to ask the question anyway with respect to this one and the previous ones.

The recommendations for the retention of these documents come from the department itself. Recommendations go to the Archives Board and then they either approve or question and confirm the length, whether appropriate, inappropriate . . . suggestions. Is that the sort of dialogue before it comes to a decision as to how long they should be retained?

Mr. Herperger: — Right. It works in a very . . . it's an informal process but it's often much as you've described it.

What happens is the motivation for the schedule comes from the department or the corporation and what they usually end up doing . . . They can go ahead and do the initial work within themselves and then submit it to the Archives as the secretariat to the public documents committee.

But what usually happens is, even before they get involved in the process, they approach the Archives. And we have one of our staff archivists go to a series of meetings with them to identify for them what kinds of guidelines they should be utilizing in terms of defining retention periods and things along those lines.

So that one of our staff will go and, you know, note that — well over the last three or four years in relation to this kind of record the Public Documents Committee and the legislature has been looking at this kind of retention period — so that they have some context when they begin the process.

Then it is up to the department to go through the process of inventorying the records, identifying what are appropriate retention periods. Then they submit it to their department solicitor to see that the legal requirements are being met.

They send it through their people who are responsible for financial management to ensure that all the fiscal requirements are being met for the various types of records. And then they submit it formally to the Public Documents Committee through the Archives as a secretariat. The government records branch serves as a secretariat to the Public Documents Committee.

And then we do the formatting of the document for them. We do a final review with them to identify that what they're doing is in sync with current practice. And then it goes formally through a meeting of the Public Documents Committee where it's reviewed, and quite often challenged.

They have witnesses from the department or Crown who will attend the Public Documents Committee meeting. And the Public Documents Committee members have all reviewed all of the schedules in detail prior to the meeting. You know, they will question the witnesses in relation to various primaries and the retention periods and the appropriateness of them.

Occasionally the clients then go back and make changes and bring them forward because the PDC (Public Documents Committee) will not approve the schedule for recommendation to the legislature until those changes are considered. Then the final documents are signed off by the Public Documents Committee and sent forward to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you very much.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I guess it would make things easier if I knew what some of the items we're talking about were. And I'm not sure that anybody here actually has the answer to this.

If you look at section 10200, which is player relations, we're going to keep records for players club and jackpot for two years. What is that?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Why should they be kept for two years and semi-active documents, the-point-of-sale kept six?

This was going to be my comment at the end. Now, I agree with you. I'm not frankly competent to judge whether those years are accurate . . . or the right ones or not.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And there's a number of other items that I look through here that I have similar concerns with: items no. 20400, gaming control tapes and desk VCR (video cassette recorder) tapes. We keep one of them for semi-active for seven days and the other for one day. Now if you're only going to keep them for a day, what's the point of keeping them at all?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — What happens to some poor soul who throws it out after three-quarters of a day.

A Member: — That's it.

Mr. Herperger: — I can speak specifically to the second because it was one of the issues that was dealt with at the Public Documents Committee.

The Chair: — Mr. D'Autremont, you're not the first person to ask this question.

Mr. Herperger: — And it was one of the sections that they brought forward to the Archives and said what kind of practice is there so far in dealing with these types of tapes — these are security tapes. So that the cameras that are set up throughout various buildings and corporations, like at banks, is one of the more obvious examples — it's those types of cameras. And the rationale for the retention periods is that if there is an incident on the floor, it's going to be . . . it'll be identified at the time the incident occurs.

And then they have a process whereby those incidents would be filed in a log over the course of that day. And if there was an incident that day, the tapes then would be retained. But if there's no incidents during the course of that day, then the tape can be rewound and reused.

So that's the reason for the one-day retention period in terms of that particular item. It's a security video tape and the assumption is that any kind of incident that's going to be relevant to the tape would be identified at the time that it occurred.

There isn't any process in place at the Gaming Corporation to retain video tapes and scrutinize those tapes after the fact. It's just that the tape would then be an auxiliary piece of evidence that could be used in the event that some kind of incident occurred and was identified at the time of the occurrence.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So when we talk of active in that particular case, you're talking of that day, and semi-active would be from the point that the tape ceased to be used that day and retained?

Mr. Herperger: — Yes. So if they worked on a 24-hour basis — I don't know, I'm at a disadvantage because I've never been inside the casino.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So are we all.

Mr. Herperger: — But I think that the casino's hours . . .

The Chair: — I don't think the tapes have inside tips on how to beat the odds there, Mr. D'Autremont. They're not those kinds of tapes.

Mr. Herperger: — Well I think the casino is open until something like 4 in the morning. Now if it were 4 in the morning, I would assume that the one-day retention would be from 4 a.m. on. You know tonight, or I guess tonight, it would be 4 a.m. on June 5 . . . the retention would be until 4 a.m. on June 6. And, if in the course of that period of time, an incident did occur on the floor then the tape from that particular camera might be relevant. Then as the superseded definition at the bottom, you know, with the asterisks identified . . . if the tape is not necessary for a court case, then the superseded or obsolete period would have been served, then it's kept for one day beyond that period of time. So that it would be one day beyond the close of business on any given day.

Mr. D'Autremont: — What would the difference be between the desk VCR tapes and the gaming control tapes? Why would you keep one for seven days and one for one day?

Mr. Herperger: — The desk VCR tapes, it appears, relate to . . . The gaming control tapes would be the . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — View of the tables themselves, or whatever.

Mr. Herperger: — It is relating to the tables themselves. It looks like the desk VCR tapes are a security feature in relation to the employees themselves. And so we see a different retention there that it's upon termination of an employee and then a period of time kicks in for the retention of those types of security tapes. So it's a different function and that's why there'd be a different retention period.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well if TV reflects real life or vice versa it always seems the police miss it and it's the private detective that finds it a month later or so.

A Member: — I take exception to that comment.

The Chair: — The Chair has great difficulty determining just at what point we got off topic, but we definitely are off topic here.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Another area of concern is 30000. It talks about vendor equipment technical information, and it will be retained until superseded or obsolete, and then two years thereafter. When you talk about the technical information, it's obviously related to some of the machines that you're using in there. As long as those machines are being used, then the information would be retained?

Mr. Herperger: — And it would be retained for two years after the machines stop being used.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. Because on my farm I go to museums once in a while and half of my equipment is in there, so . . .

Mr. Herperger: — It would be though, the particular piece of equipment.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And the same with . . . on area 30400 talks about gaming supply or registrations. As long as a gaming supplier's equipment is being used by the Gaming Corporation then that file would remain active and then records kept for two years thereafter?

Mr. Herperger: — Right.

Mr. Osika: — I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just going to make an observation when we were talking about the tapes. The security people at the Gaming Corporation have been very kind in offering the opportunity to come and visit and view how they operate.

Some of the questions that you were asking, Dan, I was able to relate to because they go through the process of explaining exactly what tape does what, and what happens with respect to those tapings of the parking lot facility, zeroing in right on the dealers hands where they pick the cards out and focus right on a particular activity that's going on. And they have their specified tables and tapes and lengths of time, and they'd be happy to explain that to anybody that made arrangements to go down and take a look. And it is very interesting and worthwhile. Then you can relate better to perhaps to these issues. Just a comment.

The Chair: — Okay then I don't have anyone else on the list. It would be in order then to have a motion:

That schedule No. 337 be adopted.

Mr. Shillington. Further discussion? In favour? Opposed? And that's carried.

Thank you very much and thank you, Mr. Herperger, for your assistance. I think, Mr. Shillington, I think you wanted to . . .

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Before Mr. Herperger is excused. I gather from Mr. Herperger's comments that they have a consultant who is reviewing their operations. I wonder if it would be useful to ask the consultant to extend their review to this committee. When they've had an opportunity to consider the committee and its role, perhaps invite the consultant to return and discuss it with the committee. I'm not entirely sure that what we're doing makes the most efficient use of the committee.

I just . . . Mr. D'Autremont's comments struck a note with me. I don't have any evidence as to whether or not this is accurate . . . I, we just sort of pass it. And it struck me it might be useful to have the consultant review the committee and then at a time of your — Mr. Speaker's calling — invite the consultant to come back and discuss it with the committee.

I'm not sure if that should be written — I'm not sure, Greg — if that should be written out in the form of a formal motion or not?

The Chair: — Yes, I think it should be because in effect what the committee is doing is calling a witness. And in saying that, I would point out as well that, it is the authority of the committee — should there be any matters about which the committee has concerns that are not able to be answered by the witness that we have with us — then the committee has the authority to then call witnesses from that operation of government to have them

appear before the committee to respond to committee's concerns.

So it is, and that's important to note that as well, in order to satisfy members' needs to have accurate information before making decisions — to make recommendation to the Legislative Assembly. And it's really precisely in that context that you're making this suggestion I think.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Perhaps a couple of details then. Perhaps I could get from you now the name of the consultant.

Mr. Herperger: — The successful bidder on the RFP (request for proposal) is a consortium of consultants and the name that they went by is Michael Swift & Associates.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — M-I-C-H-E-A-L, Swift as in . . .

The Chair: — It's A-E-L, I think.

Mr. Herperger: — Yes. Mike Swift himself is the principal consultant. He's had a 35-year stint in Archives and records management in Canada. He finished up as the assistant national archivist and he is primarily charged with looking at legislation in Saskatchewan in relation to our mandate.

The other individual that would be of interest, who happens to be here for his second period of a week in terms of conducting interviews and assessing the situation, is Carman Carroll. It's C-A-R-M-A-N C-A-R-R-O-L-L. And he is looking at records management and information management in government as his specific task in relation to this study.

So I certainly could make both of them aware of your interest, and I'm sure that, you know they would make every attempt to be available to you.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Give me the spelling of Carman Carroll.

Mr. Herperger: — Carman Carroll. It's C-A-R-M-A-N, Carman. And it's C-A-R-R-O-L-L. And he was most recently the provincial archivist of Nova Scotia. Prior to that he was working at the National Archives of Canada for 15 or 20 years as well.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Okay. All right. Mr. Speaker, why don't I write this out and you can go on to something else.

The Chair: — Sure, and then we can come back to it.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — And then come back to it, and I'll have it written up.

The Chair: — Yes, yes. And I think what I'm hearing, just to be helpful if I may make a suggestion . . . Because I think your intention is for this committee to request a review of the retention process and the role of this committee and then to bring its advice to the committee. This is quite a different thing from the legislative requirement for this to be done — there's only one body that could change that, and that's the legislature itself of course.

And that's not what I hear you suggesting. So we'll leave that with you and we'll come back to it at the end of the meeting.

Is there anything else then just in a general way having dealt with these that members would like to ask of or comment to Mr. Herperger before we let him go? If not then, Mr. Herperger, on behalf of the committee, I want to thank you for your assistance today. And for your succinct responses to the questions of the committee and your provision of information to assist us in our job. We appreciate that very much.

Mr. Herperger: — Thank you and I'd like to thank the committee for their interest and their time as well.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you.

If we can then move to the second item on our agenda, which is review of the Legislative Library report, and I'll ask Marian Powell to take the witness seat at the table. If I can refer you then to the Legislative Library report and very quickly walk through the report with you and then open the floor for questions or comments to Marian.

Given that the library falls under the jurisdiction of authority and responsibility of the Speaker, perhaps I can just assume responsibility to quickly summarize this. If you want to open your reports to page 7 and if I can just walk through this and highlight some significant things from the report to you . . . no doubt you will take it with you and can do whatever further detailed review you'd like to do.

But first of all if you'll note that this report covers a four-year period from 1992 to '96. I think in going through the report what it does is it brings us fairly current in terms of the operation of the legislature, but also helps us to appreciate the changing operation of the Legislative Assembly.

On page seven, the increased library use by MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) — the traditional library reference service as well as the customized current awareness services have grown dramatically. And I think that probably that sentence is the most significant summary of the operations of the legislature, related to the elected members.

You'll see there the reference service provided to the individual MLAs continues to grow — by the chart — even though in fact there is a slight reduction overall in total reference transactions. But the MLA use of the library is, during this period, rising distinctly.

Over, page eight, you'll see from the chart there, the number of registered clients for services has increased from 27 of the 66 MLAs in 1992 — or 40 per cent — to 50 of the 58 MLAs currently, or 86 per cent. So there's been a sharp increase in use by the members.

The on-line information has grown dramatically from a low for the period of 15 registered MLAs, to 1995-96, 28.

The newspaper clipping service has risen substantially as well. The number of members registered has remained relatively stable with 40 to 43 per cent, but the number of subjects has risen from 200 in 1992 at the beginning of the report, to 387 —

nearly doubled at the end of the report period.

After the election in June '95, a substantial increase — 27 members subscribing to the service, increasing to 38.

And new book alert, from 395 notifications at the beginning to 1,258 at the end.

Also you'll note the library has undertaken, when there are special committees or select committees of the legislature, to provide a support to those committees in doing their job. Having chaired the Select Committee on Driving Safety, I can certainly comment about the significance of the library support there, drawing news reports from across the nation at that time related to the subject matter, reviewing them for the committee, and then just feeding them to the committee. Similarly for the Independent Committee on Members' Remuneration, the library supported there as well.

Over on page 11 services to legislative officials and staff. And you'll see at the very bottom of that last sentence there, the legislative group accounts for about 20 per cent of the reference work done for primary clients of the legislature.

Over on page 12 you'll see the public use of the reference services is reducing, the civil service use is — and that's one of the mandates of the library — is pretty constant, and, as we've just been saying, the MLA use has been rising substantially. You'll see that from that graph.

If you flip to page 16, a comment there that summarizes the current face and the changing face of the legislature. Top paragraph on page 16, right-hand column; a rapid shift towards electronic subscriptions, which have risen 72 per cent since the beginning of the report. And the library now spends more on electronic products than books; has made that shift in terms of budgetary emphasis.

Also on page 17, the Saskatchewan government publications deposit. It is one of the obligations of the library to retain six copies of all publications issued by the government, and in the bottom of that section you'll see the reference — in the four years, 4,251. Over 4,000 serial titles published by the Saskatchewan government were received on deposit. It's welcomed some collections from the ZEN-NOH National Federation of Agricultural Co-operative Associations in Tokyo — also former MLA W.S. Howes — have been valuable.

The physical security — page 18 — continues to be something about which the library is concerned because of the value of some of the items in the library. We, on occasion, have toilets cracking and water running and that jeopardizes some of the ongoing security of our documents.

Page 23, if I can draw your attention to one, two . . . the fourth category down: current awareness service for MLAs — it gives you a picture there of how it's changed. In the newspaper clipping services, you can see they increased from 43,000 to 54,000 plus; and the registered clients in the period from 7 to 27, those are MLAs; and the computer-assisted searches increasing from 19 to 71 on a weekly basis — on average per week. So it gives you an idea of the, again, the changing face of the library.

And then in the appendix beginning on page 24, I think all of the members who have participated in legislative committees, and also in CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) professional development kinds of activities, will recognize the research that the library does to assist members when engaging in professional development — to give some background preparation for doing that effectively.

And finally, if I can refer us to page 31, the goal of the Legislative Library to provide information and reference services to the members of the Legislative Assembly is the primary goal and the primary clientele. Then the primary user group of the Legislative Library consists of the members of the Legislative Assembly, the caucus research staff, the personal staff of members, and other legislative servants. So I think that paints a picture of the primary area of emphasis of our library and where it's at today.

So just having quickly highlighted those items in the function of the Legislative Library, I'll turn the floor over for questions or comments that anyone would like to direct to Ms. Powell as the Legislative Librarian.

Ms. Stanger: — I'd just like to say thank you, Marian. I particularly have appreciated the parliamentary conference information; it's just done really, really well. And it helps us to look like we're informed when we go to conferences and gives us backgrounds on topics and the material is just really good. I just wish I could keep it all — I have so far, I don't know what I'm going to do with it someday — but . . .

A Member: — Archive it.

Ms. Stanger: — But the thing is I really appreciate that service, and the new book alert and the clippings. So I just wanted to say thank you.

Ms. Powell: — Well and thank you very much, we're glad to hear that because that's certainly our goal and we do aim to be able to provide you with what you need. And maybe the Archives can set up a retention schedule for you.

Ms. Stanger: — Would you be providing information . . . I'm going to Yellowknife to the Canadian public accounts . . .

Ms. Powell: — Yes, we certainly will.

Ms. Stanger: — You'll be giving us some information on that again?

Ms. Powell: — Yes, we will.

Ms. Stanger: — I'd really appreciate that.

Ms. Powell: — Yes that's great.

The Chair: — And that should probably be noted because I think you're attending on your own initiative . . .

Ms. Stanger: — Yes, I am.

The Chair: — Not officially as a member of the committee, although you are.

Ms. Powell: — And I'll take note of that.

The Chair: — Thanks.

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Chairman, I just want it added to what Ms. Stanger has just indicated, I know that . . . I'm sure that CAs (constituency assistant) across the province as well appreciate the assistance that they get from library people when they get hung up searching out some information that you currently provide through the electronic media. So I just want to add my thanks you and commend your staff for their patience and their kindness to us.

Ms. Powell: — Well I'll certainly take that back to them; they'll be glad to hear that too. One of the things we've done over the past few years is to try and focus increasingly on the constituency offices because they are remote from our location. We've been trying to identify a way that we can work with them most satisfactorily to help them in their work.

The Chair: — Thanks, Mr. Osika.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I really want to reflect Vi Stanger's comments about the effectiveness of the library. When I've asked for information, either about travel or about other issues, which our office has asked you for, it's really very good.

I had a question for you. The question was whether or not you think our constituency offices might be able to . . . I'm not sure whether they are linked electronically to the library and whether or not they're able to make use of the services you have here. I just don't know; it's a question I perhaps should know but I don't.

Ms. Powell: — Sure. Well we don't know entirely if all of the offices are linked either. But what we do have, and I was prepared for this, Mr. Shillington, because at our last meeting you asked what the electronic Act says and you were very interested in the functions of the Internet and were we available on the web. And so if I can just pass this around — I'm afraid I only have one copy.

But since our last meeting we have developed a substantial web presence and anyone with access to the Internet including the constituency offices . . . And I believe all of them have some access to this and many have contacted us for help in making sure they could connect. They have access to our card catalogue on-line, directly from their office wherever it may be. They have access to the documents that we put up on the Legislative Assembly web site including things like links to other parliamentary sites and news sites that they might find of interest. We're trying to develop a package of this kind of material that the constituency offices and others can readily access from a remote location. Does that answer your question?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It does. It strikes me that periodically the constituency secretaries get together in Regina or Saskatoon. It might be useful to ensure that our constituency offices know that these services are available. I frankly think many of them don't. And so that might be something that the staff could put on the list of things to do when these folks get together as they do occasionally.

The Chair: — Well why don't we make note of that and I think probably the most effective way is to simply advise the caucus offices and the independent members of that because when a professional development for constituency assistants is done, I think it's virtually always coordinated or organized from the caucus office, and that's probably the most useful way of doing it.

Ms. Powell: — Yes, and if I may say, some of the caucuses have already taken advantage of it. We from time to time approach the caucuses. Sometimes they approach us directly to try and link in with these professional development opportunities for the caucus assistants. We don't always know about them and we would welcome an opportunity . . .

The Chair: — Okay. Thanks, Mr. Shillington. Is . . . oh, sorry, go ahead.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — One comment. I spent, during the last session — the 76th session — I spent 13 weeks in a hospital in Toronto. I made use of your library on the Internet. It was my most effective link with the legislature, which was ongoing, was through the Internet. I was referred to your Internet section fairly often actually. I remember it now when I see that thing. So thanks again.

Ms. Powell: — That's great. We're glad.

Mr. Trew: — You're not to be confused with you keeping in touch with reality, Mr. Shillington.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, not at all, not at all, not at all, not at all . . .

The Chair: — I assume we're done now.

Ms. Powell: — Yes.

The Chair: — Okay. If there's no further question or comments then there is not a motion necessary here. This is simply a review of the report and it brings us much more current in terms of the operation of the legislature. I think in the big picture, what's been happening substantially over the last small number of years is that the role of the library has been much more active in terms of the lives of the MLAs for provision of information.

And I think before letting Ms. Powell go, two things: would simply say to members and through you to your caucuses that the library is always open to suggestions or requests as to how it may improve its support for your needs for information in order to do your job. That's the role of the Legislative Library.

Just in that context I just share with you the other extreme. As members will know, I had opportunity to go to Ghana last year and a new emerging democracy. And it is a significant impression to walk into their Legislative Library which is . . . Their entire Legislative Library is a room no bigger than this with the entire collection of books of their parliamentary library being one single shelf no larger than the shelves over here.

And recognizing that at that point in time they weren't on the Internet yet and that virtually their sole source of current

information was copies of the newspapers of the country. And then talking to members and listening — and particularly for opposition members — listening just to the great frustration about being able to do their jobs because of the lack of access of information . . .

And I think I probably found myself appreciating the role of the library in the life of an elected member more greatly . . . the greatest at that time than I ever had before because it's there . . . We take it for granted and don't think of about it often.

So point number one, your suggestions and your requests to the library are most appreciated and will continue to guide. And obviously in the report, the thing that's increasing most substantially is the use by MLAs.

And secondly, on behalf of the committee to thank Marian for the production of the report and your response to questions here. But more importantly than that even, the ongoing direction to the library and service of members. So we appreciate that very much.

Ms. Powell: — Thank you very much. And thank you to the members of the committee. And on behalf of my staff, we really welcome your input — to echo the Speaker — and to again thank you for the very kind comments and appreciation. We're certainly striving to meet that level of assistance and we're glad to hear that we're finding those right spots. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thanks, Marian. We move then to our final item on our agenda, and if I could ask Gary Ward to take the witness chair at the table.

What I'd like to do is just give you a brief report under the area of interest and concern of this committee which is broadcasting. And I want to bring you up to date on this item — up to date as of specifically today.

This is what I want to give you. More important than a brief history of where we've been is where we are now. And then to welcome any comments that you may want to make although not necessarily a motion. But given that this is the Communications Committee I think it is most appropriate . . .

It would be . . . this may very well be the first time this committee has had any discussion at all related to the televising of the proceedings, because I think the discussions originally would have occurred under the previous committee before the Communications Committee was formed as it currently sits now.

Members will be aware that we installed television in the control room and the chambers in 1982 and then began live television coverage in 1983. I think at that time becoming the first or second jurisdiction in Canada for — provincial jurisdiction — televising our proceedings. We've come a long way in the time since, not in terms of our total coverage because in fact it's impossible to become more comprehensive than we are now. We're substantially more comprehensive than the large majority of jurisdictions in Canada from gavel to gavel.

In the Legislative Assembly you'll also be aware that we have dramatically increased the access to communities to the

broadcasting in the last couple of years. And you'll also want to acknowledge the work that Gary Ward has done in dealing with the cable companies to assist with that. Also to acknowledge the role that SaskTel has had in their willingness to renegotiate our contracts to free up monies to use it more effectively.

And that we've moved. From two years ago when the original eight communities that were receiving the signal from back in 1983 up until two years ago where we've now expanded to 68 communities where the broadcast is taking place.

So I think the role of the broadcasting in the lives of the citizens of Saskatchewan and their link, if they choose to use it, to the Legislative Assembly has increased substantially, and that's a positive thing in the service of our system of parliamentary democracy. Now that's the good news.

The bad news is because we were among the first at the beginning that also means that we also have some of the oldest equipment in the nation. And it's really with focus on that, that I want to bring it to our attention now because we are, in these very days, not just in these months but in these very days we are starting to approach what could potentially be a crisis circumstances with our equipment. And I wanted to bring that to the attention of the members.

We've had some upgrades over the years, and 1988, 1990, and 1993 some changes in equipment and purchases that in a minor kind of way upgraded what we have.

But in 1996 our problems began to show up. And it's related, I think essentially, and Gary can expand on this for your information, to the age of our equipment. Also technology has just, as you know, gone leaps and bounds since that time.

But we began to get intermittent failures in 1996 on a more frequent basis and we began to, at that time, rethink the time frame for a system of replacement of our equipment. At that time we were still relatively confident that we could make the system last until the year 2000. We were aware that it was starting to malfunction but we thought we could get through to the year 2000.

What I want to report to you today is that we can't; is that in 1997 and then again this year, one of the malfunctions that may not seem like a big deal on the camera it's on but it becomes a big deal when it shifts to the other four. There are five cameras in the House as you know, the one facing directly over the Speaker's chair and then the two from each of the corners on each side of the House.

And what has happened is that the camera from . . . towards the Speaker's chair, the one in the centre, is now on lock. It does not move. It's been put on lock because — Gary can be more technical if you wish . . . I'll give you the layman's explanation but — we've had to pirate some of the pieces from it to make the other cameras functional. And what we've got is obsolete equipment that we can't get parts for any more.

So what we've done is we've put the distance shot, which is the most functional place to put it when you've got it on lock, that camera is incapable of . . . it's not only incapable of going in and out, it's also incapable of moving from side to side. It's on

. . . We have a still shot.

Now what's been happening in the last two weeks is that we've now been getting more frequently-occurring time spans where the primary, one of the primary cameras goes . . . And the primary cameras are the ones off the Speaker's shoulder. As you'll know, most frequently when members are speaking in the House they're speaking towards the Chair.

And that is . . . those become the two cameras that are most frequently used because they're the most flattering to members when they don't have a behind-the-head shot or off-the-side shot. And they're the ones that are coded so that when the member is recognized, the light goes on; the camera automatically goes there.

And we've had some periods of time — I can't be precise to just how long but it's been more than just a few seconds — where we've been incapable of moving one of the cameras. And so we are at a stage now where we'll get through this legislative session okay, but in my judgement we need to change our camera equipment before the House sits again.

We are at a point now where we may have, it could occur any day, that our . . . we have one of the primary cameras incapable of moving. So it can only be used to cover whoever is on and everybody else gets a shot off the side and the shot . . . or a shot from behind which would be totally unacceptable and would clearly result in us having a broadcast system which would put some members on one side of the House being presented in much more favourable kind of posture than members on another side of the House. The Chair will be silent and so will the director of communications as to which side it is because that's irrelevant. What's . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — We recognize, Mr. Speaker, that the government needs all the help they can get.

The Chair: — So we are . . . What I want to report to you is that we are at high risk now of being incapable of offering the same consistent picture for all members when they're in the House. Now if it . . . And even if we had the . . . it takes time to order what's required and to install it so that even if it goes on lock now there's not a darn thing we can do about it.

We're stuck with what we've got for the rest of this session. We don't have the ability to replace it during the session and when we do replace it literally the camera would be at least incapable of being used for three weeks, probably longer than that so that's our circumstance. I bring that to the attention of the Communications Committee because one of the items of concern is broadcasting.

This is obviously a budgetary matter which has to be dealt with by the Speaker and by the Board of Internal Economy but I want to give the committee an opportunity to comment if you wish. I would be happy to take that into consideration, and also report it to the Board of Internal Economy in dealing with the budgetary matter of broadcasting and its implications.

So I don't bring a recommendation for a motion to you but I bring the issue to you and welcome your comments and suggestions. I've got Mr. Trew and then Mr. Shillington.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off it will be just unacceptable for Saskatchewan to revert to some system of inferior broadcasting having led the nation in televised broadcast, having provided expanded services throughout virtually all of Saskatchewan now.

The bottom line for me is we must do what we reasonably must do to make sure we've got a good system for the next session. It sounds like we lived through this one and from what I'm hearing — the way you described it and I know having you describe as having consulted with Mr. Ward — I don't think there's any option. You're not requiring a motion I don't believe, but I hope what happens is you just proceed to get a very adequate system and keep one eye on the adequacy of the system and one eye on the adequacy of the expenditure of tax dollars in getting it. I have no idea what we're talking in terms of dollars here.

The other comment I had for you, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Ward, is I'm wondering if anyone has contemplated further changes to the five camera system and whether we were looking for instance right now in this room we've got three cameras set up. It's an unusual circumstance but is there some consideration of perhaps setting up another room to be used by standing committees or should it even be. I'm really asking the questions, not commenting yea, or nay to it.

The Chair: — Perhaps I'll comment first, then ask Gary to make additional comments. By the way if I may also introduce the technical technicians with broadcasting services who I think everyone will know — Ihor Sywanyk and Gary Ward who are here as well to assist . . .

A Member: — And Kerry Bond.

The Chair: — Sorry, Gary Ward and Kerry Bond . . . it is Gary Ward, sorry, and Kerry. Just from a political perspective that's certainly legitimate subject matter for this committee to discuss. And as you know, we don't have a permanent committee room set up capable of televising. What we've got in this room is a temporary and expensive response to televising because it has to be rented. And that might be a subject that this committee would like to give direction regarding the Legislative Assembly. So it's a most legitimate subject for this committee specifically.

In terms of the television itself, there's really two things in television — one's the picture, the other's the sound. And what I'm bringing to you today is a report that we're approaching what some might say is an urgent matter, perhaps a crisis, potentially a crisis, on the picture side. On the sound side, too, we're aware that we need to improve but it's a secondary and we need to attend to the picture first.

The sound is also . . . it is possible and we're looking very carefully at the improvements in the sound, not only for television, but also there's a relationship between sound and TV and sound in the room, including in the galleries. And I got a large number of complaints yesterday from people in the galleries who couldn't hear what was going on on the floor of the Chamber — we're aware of that.

Part of our difficulties, we've got a large room with a massive

amount of hardwood that reflects sound and then when you fill it up with people it absorbs sound, and so it's a changing circumstance when you trying to meet two things at the same time. We're advised that technically this is . . . you can do substantial improvement, but it means making changes and that costs money, and in my judgement that's not our priority. It's important, but not our first priority at the moment.

To attend to the camera revisions based on the best price that we're looking at right now, and it would be with a very reliable source, we're talking in the neighbourhood of \$170,000. That is the financial implication of what we'd be looking at to get us ready before the next sitting with reliable equipment. But I'll turn to Mr. Ward to add any additional comments he'd like.

Mr. Ward: — Yes, the figure that you're quoting is correct. And that is about 25 per cent of the original cost that we paid for the system that we have now. Because that was custom made for us and it was leading-edge technology at the time. And within eight years of its production, it was obsolete.

We did buy spare parts over a number of years. We just budgeted for additional boards — circuit boards — for the system. But those too have . . . you know, we're using them but there is no replacement for those. So we're virtually out of spare parts on that.

As far as the committee rooms — you had asked a question about that — the system that we're proposing has the capacity to handle three more cameras that could be controlled from our television control centre to this room. So it would essentially do away with having extra staff on hand. You may need one extra staff person depending on how many hours you were sitting but basically we could do that. The only addition to that — the wiring is simple, most of it's here already — would be the cameras and the camera heads, the robotic heads that control the cameras. So it would run essentially like the Chamber does.

The Chair: — Okay. Thanks, Kim.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes. Kim said part of what I was going to say. I had anticipated that the revision price for the camera system wasn't going to come cheap. And it struck me that this is perhaps an appropriate time — and Kim hinted at this; said it, I guess, directly — this is an appropriate time to review our audio and visual system in the Chamber and out of the Chamber.

There may be a limit to the public appetite for legislative proceedings. They may not want to watch Crown Corporations or Public Accounts. But it strikes me this is a time to consider our audio and visual approach to the Chamber. And we always have to consider budgets.

I don't entirely . . . I haven't quite thought out what the process of that should be, whether it's this committee, whether we should strike a special select committee rather than using this standing committee or what, but we really should . . . I think that more than replace the cameras, I think we should review what we're doing.

The Chair: — Mr. Shillington, just in response to that. The committee does exist and it's this committee that would be the

appropriate committee to deal with that subject, if there is a desire to do it.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It just seems to make sense at this time. This thing is expensive — this private system.

The Chair: — Very.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — It's wild. I don't know. It strikes me that we should be thinking about it at least. I would be a little uncomfortable with simply putting \$170,000 worth of cameras back in again without thinking about what we're doing eight years hence.

It's not in the form of a motion. That's a comment which is not, as you can tell, a finely tuned comment.

The Chair: — Yes. The equipment that's been anticipated is not the camera per se; it's the electronics. And as Mr. Ward has said, what we're looking at would meet our electronic needs plus three additional cameras that . . . so our current electronic needs for a camera in the House plus three additional.

In my judgement, without being able to speak technically, I think number one, we have no choice about moving forward unless we're prepared to accept what I think in the next session would be a virtually certain, you know, prediction that camera use would become irregular and inconsistent.

So on that matter I don't think we have choice. But our broadcasting staff here as well, in looking at this, are trying to look at the longer picture down the road and at equipment that would be state of the art at this point in time, with the ability to then do what's necessary to adjust on the sound side. Making adjustments on the sound side later on, in my judgement — not at the same time just for budgetary reasons — would also significantly increase the potential for members to go on the Internet with speeches. In fact, using . . . in the House to put that on a home page if members chose to do that. But we don't . . . that's obviously not the technical capability at the moment.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Many years ago — it's got to be close to 10 years ago — I was in Bismarck, North Dakota and all of a sudden realized I was driving by the state capital, so I got out and went in the state capital. They were sitting — and it's on a Friday afternoon — and interestingly enough strangers, indeed people who weren't even citizens of the country, could wander onto the floor in Bismarck state legislature . . . the same as you could through a supermarket. And their system at that time was much more advanced. I don't know if any of you have seen it but . . . You have, yes. It's much more advanced.

They have little, what we used to call dumb terminals, on their desk. I think . . . pull up Bills and do all sorts of things right on their desk, and telephones to which they could speak but don't ring. You know, we may be looking at a lot of hay, a fair cost, but it just struck me this may be a time to review all of this, and it is likely close to the end of the legislative term, so all of this could be done . . . all this stuff could maybe be done in the beginning of a new legislature or something.

I don't know it just strikes me that we may perhaps want to consider reviewing the whole system.

The Chair: — The appropriate process, if members are feeling that way, would be for a reference from the Assembly to this committee to undertake a review. I don't think the committee has the authority to make the decision itself, because the committee is a creature of the Assembly and it would . . .

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I, for my part, would rather not make the decision today. I'd rather think about it for a little while. Maybe deal with it before the legislature adjourns, but I'd like to think about it. I don't want to make a decision now.

The Chair: — No. And I think that's legitimate.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you. Mr. Shillington mentioned . . . not sure if people are interested in seeing any more of this Assembly in their homes. I was at a trade fair last weekend and it was surprising how many people came up and said, gee I wish we could get it. Because . . . I've only got two communities in my constituency, that's Carlyle and Oxbow. And Oxbow was the community I was in that actually gets access and people from other communities wanted access. Now how much they would use it, I don't know. But they were interested.

A Member: — That's positive.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes. Yes, I think that is positive.

Ned was mentioning Bismarck. They are ahead of us in some areas and way behind in others. Their mike system is a hand-held mike on about one desk in four and you reach over and grab the mike. It was terrible. Half the mikes didn't work and it was just a zoo that way.

But certainly I was one of those people who was reluctant to have computers in the House at all times. I've since changed my mind on that after seeing what was going on in Bismarck and the benefits that that gave to members. And I think that's an area that I agree with Ned that we need to sit down and take another look at.

As far as the cameras and the sound systems, again I agree with Ned. I think we need to sit down and look and see where we're at today. What is available — and a makeshift to keep us working for five years — and whether or not we should be looking at a system that's going to do us again for another 10 to 15 years.

And I think, as Ned said, we can't make that decision today. We could only make, I think probably, a recommendation because it has to go to both Rules and the Board of Internal Economy depending on what recommendations we make. So I would think that it would be well worth our while to take a serious look at where we are today and where we want to be tomorrow.

And with those other changes, we may very well end up in a situation where we've changed the robotics on the cameras but the camera technology becomes obsolete in five years and we can't fix the cameras anymore. And I don't know if we're going to get into that situation but we may do that. So I think we need to take a look at the whole system.

The Chair: — So Dan, I'll ask Gary to add . . . if I just may say

a couple of things in support of the point you're making. As new communities have come on the legislative broadcast . . . And as Speaker of the House, I've tried to link my visits to constituencies with announcements by the local MLA. And it's really quite interesting.

If you want to know whether it's important in communities or not, just go back and look at the weekly newspaper reports which . . . in fact this is often an announcement on the front page and maybe at the top of the page of the weekly newspapers. So communities, I think, that tells you something about how communities see it.

In terms of use of computers in the Assembly . . . in fact as I've attended CPA conferences within the world. Actually, one of the jurisdictions that's moved the farthest on that is next door in Alberta. And it may very well be worth our while, if we're thinking in those terms, before starting to get specific in any way, to pay a legislative visit to Alberta for the purposes of reviewing that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I think one of the things we need before we make these decisions and before we do the camera stuff is part . . . Would the computers and telephones would be tied in with the electronic system somehow? Are we going to be ripping wires out to do cameras and mikes, should we be laying cable for computers and telephones at the same time? And those are sort of the things that we need to take a look at.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — If we did it exactly like we did it in 1980, it so happened we had to replace the carpet at the same time and so the wiring was easy. The carpet is getting; some of it is getting kind of shabby. So these are all questions — I agree with Dan — these are all questions you have to review. The installation of it can be costly if you go about it . . . if you replace . . .

A Member: — Do it piecemeal.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — That's right, if you replace the carpet and then a couple of years later you want to replace the wiring, you look like fools.

The Chair: — Let me ask, Mr. Ward, I think you had a comment related to the potential use of getting the electronic equipment that gets outmoded with cameras.

Mr. Ward: — Yes, the technology today is off the shelf as opposed to having it custom-made and that's why it's a lot cheaper because it's used all over the world. And the particular product we're looking at is used more widely than anyone else. There's only really two manufacturers in the world that have the technology available to give us the quality that we need.

It's very unlikely that we would become obsolete in five years. The average length to become obsolete, I would think, would be anywhere from seven to ten years. In our case we've made our system last 16 years so far. And I think that just because of the state of technology . . . parts, spare parts for a new system, would be available for a considerable length of time.

But I want to stress in how bad a shape we are in. Yesterday we lost one of our secondary cameras which, Mr. Speaker, I

haven't relayed to you yet because it just happened yesterday at the beginning of session. The close shot that we have of you, we lost that shot. That's why the shot . . .

The Chair: — Oh this is a serious matter now.

Mr. Ward: — And so that's our secondary system. And what we're losing here is not the cameras because the cameras are in excellent shape but the movement of the cameras. And with the primary system, we're on the verge of losing complete control of that system. And I'm not optimistic that we will make it out the session on this one.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well my concern was how long are the actual cameras going to last?

Mr. Ward: — The cameras themselves?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes.

Mr. Ward: — The cameras we've had for . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Oh these aren't original cameras then?

Mr. Ward: — No, these cameras have been replaced.

The Chair: — Can I ask you to go to microphone and then your comment will be recorded as well for anyone else who's following this through *Hansard*.

Mr. Sywanyk — As far as the change in the cameras, I think we kept the original, the first cameras for approximately 10 years. And they were two pick-up cameras, which are very obsolete in the television industry now. Then we changed to CCD (charged coupled device) pick-up cameras and they're working fine for us. It's difficult to say when they're going to become obsolete. They've had a good track record for us and we expect them to function properly for many years. Spare parts are readily available for them.

The Chair: — Because it's off-the-shelf equipment now?

Mr. Sywanyk: — Right.

The Chair: — Kerry, do you want to just slide up to the table too. Oh what the heck why don't you say it yourself?

Mr. Bond: — I've always wanted to do this. No, just changing the cameras has nothing to do with robotics. We can put any camera on these heads. If we change our cameras, five, six, seven, eight years from now, they'll go right on these heads — no problem. And as far as wiring goes, there's no wiring required in this installation. We're going to use our existing wires that go to the corners.

Mr. Sywanyk: — Also I wanted to mention that Kerry and I would be doing the complete installation so that we don't have to get anybody in to do the installation.

Mr. Ward: — That's provided we go with the same system that we have but made by a different company. I'm sorry I . . .

The Chair: — Okay. We've got a long list and we'll keep

charging along here. Mr. Lautermilch . . . Are you done Dan?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Just as . . . you know, as I listened to the discussion this morning, I think it's pretty clear that some of the thoughts and the ideas that have been put to the committee here today are in more of a long-term nature. I mean some of the things that come to my mind is this Legislative Assembly, and are we, ready for a system of electronic voting?

And if we're going to be going through the whole discussion here, I think it begs a lot more discussion than we're going to have time for here today. I think we're going to have to come back to this because I think we're now talking about the potential of developing a whole new system of working in the legislature. And I think all of these things have to be thought through and have to be discussed before we would make any kind of a major investment.

I want to go back to one question — well not one; I guess a number of them — with respect to short-term solutions. You know I have some background in electronics and although I'm not certainly an authority — it's been many, many years since I've been involved in the electronics industry. I guess my question would be, if you were to use all of your technical expertise and all of the knowledge that you've built, if we were to ask if you could limp this system through for one more session, is there anything in terms of a mechanical or electronic nature that you could do to make another 60 sitting days function. Because I don't think we're going to have the time to be able to put this thing together for you in terms of the bigger package in time for you to be able to order your equipment and have it installed for a spring session.

I guess what I'm asking, have you got any old PC (printed circuit) boards that you might be able to retool, rob you know parts from one to another, or has that already been done? Is that no longer an option? Is there any way that we could make this function in a reasonable fashion with still cameras for a session, as an example, rather than to rely on the robotics and the shots that we're using now?

I guess what I'm saying is, if we have to make a decision to spend 170,000 to do the robotics here, and then we're going to be doing some other changes of a grander you know scale, that would make the spending seem somewhat a waste of money. I don't think that's where we want to go.

Bottom line is, is there anything that you can do to make one more session a tolerable scenario and still allow reasonable optics out there.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — And I just had a supplementary to that. Could we for instance shut down the two cameras at the back of the place and get by this one session with just two, and move . . . I gather the two at the back still function; we shut them down and move them to the front and get by for one session with just two cameras — something like that. I agree with Eldon.

The Chair: — The thing you have to keep in mind here is what's at the back of one caucus is at the front of the other.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — But everybody faces the Speaker to talk.

The Chair: — Yes, those are the primary ones.

Mr. Ward: — In my opinion, no, we couldn't say with any degree of certainty that we could make it last another session. As it is now we're running . . . we feel on luck, and if it did last another session, it would be purely luck. But I can't imagine that happening just with the amount of problems we're having on a daily basis — not a weekly — but now a daily basis with these things.

But just a point with respect to your question, the replacement of this system would in no way affect future plans for developments such as digital audio, or as you mentioned, maybe electronic voting, or anything else that we'd be doing. All this would be doing would be replacing the robotic heads; and it wouldn't be like we'd be wasting any money because if we were to upgrade to a digital audio system in the Chamber, that wouldn't mean that we'd upgrade anything to do with our robotic heads. This is just a function of directing the cameras to the member that is speaking. So it in no way would affect any further development.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Gary, but I think Ned's question was — have you got two cameras that would sit over the shoulders of the Speaker that could focus on the members who were speaking. Irrespective of whether it's a good shot or a bad shot that it would be the same for the opposition and the same for the government side and that when the Speaker gets up, the light comes on, that camera would go there. Can you make two out of the five do that for a 60-day session?

Mr. Sywanyk: — Well it's a split system. Right now two of the five cameras — I forgot what date it would be — in 1988 when we upgraded the secondary camera control system, that part wasn't part of our automated system. So I think your question is can we run the . . .

Mr. Ward: — Could you move those cameras from their present location up to the front of the Chamber adjacent to the Speaker.

The Chair: — No, not to the front. No, I think leaving them physically where they are. But you would have the two primary, what you call the two primary cameras, totally reliable and you had the secondary cameras perhaps just in a long shot. But that you would . . . because you've pirated the parts from the one in the centre to make the other four work; and I think the question is, can you pirate from two of the four to reliably keep the primary cameras . . .

Mr. Sywanyk: — Well we have been pirating from the Speaker's camera, we have for sometime now. We pirated boards — PC boards — and everything from that system already to keep the two primaries going. We've been doing that for quite a while already now.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Can you cannibalize the two far cameras at the back and keep the other two going.

Mr. Sywanyk: — They're two different systems.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Those are different systems.

Mr. Sywanyk: — Totally different systems.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Oh they are, okay. Can you make out of those two in the back a system work for one side and the other system work for the other side?

Mr. Sywanyk: — The two at the back are not tied into the automated microphone switching system . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, so when you're microphone is activated, those cameras don't move.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, I mean, we're talking here for 60 days and if we have to punch the switching manually, if you were to move that up, we do . . . I mean, *Hansard* does a manual piece here every day. And I guess what we're looking for is some time here to be able to answer for ourselves these questions. And is there anything at all that you can do to make fairness in terms of one side of the House and the other side of the House, but still allow us to have the coverage during, say a 60- or 70-, or whatever, day session.

Mr. Ward: — As I said, sir . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Because I will tell you, I'm very reluctant to see an expenditure now. Not being comfortable with where members of the legislature may go with in terms of the system that they want so that we ensure that we've got, as Mr. Trew says, a top-rate system for the long haul. And if we're doing a temporary fix, I would want to see it done as cheaply as possible.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — This may be something, Mr. Speaker, that we might want to leave with these people for a period of time to let them consider it — this question that Eldon's asked.

What's the best you could do for a 60-day . . . That would give us a year and a half to review the matter?

The Chair: — Although I think in fairness, I think these questions have been considered for some time actually. And we are at the point we're at because of the answer I hear being made, which I consider to be legitimate and I share that with the committee. The robotics here would not impact on options, other things considered down the road, other electronic options that would cause a future committee to look back and say, darn, we ended up wasting some money. So I mean I think that's the short of it.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well then let me rephrase this in another way. If we were to suggest that we want to wait until the appropriate budget process to make a decision, as opposed to a special warrant, which quite clearly this will require, can you make that system function till then?

Because the Board of Internal Economy has dealt with special warrants to deal with some special circumstances already this year — one of them being the purchase of shelving for the library that's occasioned by the need to move the library during the time when the renovations of this building are going to take place.

And I tell you, as a member of the board, I assumed that that would have been an expenditure that was agreed — and it was agreed to, by the way, by all members of the Board of Internal Economy, but still became a political football.

And so let me suggest to you that I'm very reluctant to move into any kind of a special warrant expenditure prior to a discussion during the budget. Simply because I fear that it might be something that frankly some members of the Board of Internal Economy or the Assembly may want to use to play some politics with.

It may be a very legitimate expenditure, as was the purchase of the filing system for the library, which all members of that board agreed to, but then subsequent to that determined that it would be a good political piece to use against the government. And so I'm very reluctant, frankly, to do it outside of the budget. I would rather see it go through the normal course and if there's any way at all to delay this until our budget process, which will start at Christmas time . . . That's what I would want to do because I really am very hesitant to do special warranting for this.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — . . . management; we shouldn't be getting off budget anyway unless we have to.

The Chair: — Yes. And let me respond to that because that's not a technical question, that's a . . . it's a process question, and as Chair of the Board of Internal Economy and Speaker, let me respond to that.

The short answer I think is no, that in my judgement, the normal process of budgetary proposals which would require then of course that the money not be spent until fiscal year 1999-2000, would put us in a position where it would be impossible to have the upgrade in robotics that I think is absolutely essential for the next session of the legislature. To be made in advance of the session or through the session, because as I said earlier, it is literally impossible to . . . once you've received the equipment after having ordered it you're purely and simply out of operation for at least three weeks while the wiring is done and so on . . . to get the new robotics in place. So you can't do it during a session without going off air for about three weeks.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Would it be possible to do mechanical switching until we could use the budget process to make a decision?

The Chair: — Well is it possible to do mechanical switching? The answer is yes. However the mechanical switching I think is done from the cameras that are from the . . . not from the Speaker's end of the Chamber but the other. And they become . . . Or you mean of the primary cameras — the ones at the Speaker's chair?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — If the electronic system will not allow for an automatic — as your light comes on — move of that camera. Is it possible to do that mechanically?

Mr. Ward: — No. Once you've lost control of it you can't call up the shot — and unless you have the camera on the whole wide shot of the one side of the House and left it there . . . but

once you've lost control of the robotics, you can't call up the shots any more.

And then the problem, even if you could, even if we had the facility to call the shots, you'd have to rely on the member to stand up in the same place and that's never happened. A member never stands up in the same place twice in a shot you know. They may be slightly off so you'd have them sort of . . .

The Chair: — Because as members move this way . . . I mean if you look at the frame, it's a close enough frame and by rules of the Assembly it's a close enough frame that as members move so does the camera move. So you'd have members literally moving out of the picture and back into the picture.

Mr. Sywanyk: — Yes, we don't have the capability of panning with the member as the member moves.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — But would you be able to zero-in at least on the member, and if the member wasn't behind his camera and moving to and fro he'd be out of frame and in frame?

Mr. Sywanyk: — Once we've got . . .

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — You couldn't really switch to the narrow shot is what you're saying.

Mr. Sywanyk: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I mean there's no way to do that. You'd be on the wide angle, you couldn't switch to the specific member manually at all, and it would just remain as a wide shot?

Mr. Ward: — That's right. You need the actual robotic controls so that you can pan the . . . zoom, tilt, focus, fill all the parameters that are necessary to complete the shot. And that's what we're losing, is that ability to communicate between . . .

The Chair: — Well what's happening I think right now, Gary, is that as it's going on glitch for a period of time, you're switching to the other manual camera which is coming off a different angle and often from the side of the member.

Mr. Ward: — Yes, the secondary system is . . . If we lose a primary camera we go to the secondary shot which is behind, looking towards the Speaker. Which is sort of a back shot of the member, depending on which way he's facing of course. But that is a system that I mentioned that we began having problems with yesterday. It was a temporary thing. It lasted for what, 10 minutes or something like that, and we did get it back. And we don't know why it came back either or why it went down. It's just that, you know, when you get a system that old, nothing that I know anywhere . . .

The Chair: — This is significant when he says the shot of the Speaker, because we're not talking primary camera now . . . we're talking the only ones that can catch the Speaker now are the secondary. And I wasn't aware of this when I came to committee meeting this morning, that we're having trouble with secondary cameras now too.

Mr. Ward: — It is still working and the primary system is still working.

The Chair: — Okay I've got . . . if we can ask members to be brief because we're nearing our time of intended adjournment as well.

Mr. Jess: — Yes. I don't think I have much to add because I don't have knowledge enough of your technology, but what I'm hearing from you is obviously that this system is pretty well reached the end of its life span. And from a technical point of view, the only option is to replace it, and that doesn't relate to the political discussions that we may have over it.

But I think that one thing we should keep in mind as legislators is that the quality of the product that you are able to put forward, not only to the local or to your own recordings but to the communities in my constituency and others that are recently being able to access this, it's very important that that is a good quality program. If it is nothing more than to keep the interest of the general public in it for the support of the democratic system. I think it's . . . we're maybe looking at something bigger here than just swinging cameras.

And from the technical point of view, I don't know why anybody should be surprised that your equipment would fail after that period of time, having been focused on the Speaker so much.

But that's about all I would like to comment on at this time. But I don't think that we're really qualified to gain much by continuing this discussion, with our lack of knowledge on the technology right now.

The Chair: — Ladies and gentlemen of the committee, I've got three more members who'd like to comment on this subject. We're now at our normal adjournment time, and unless the committee approves continuing, I really need to put to you the question regarding the draft report to the Assembly.

So I'm in your hands. Do you want to continue the meeting for about another 15 or 20 minutes? Is that agreed? Okay.

I'll ask everyone to be as brief as they can because we do have some business that we must wrap up to report back to the Assembly. You're done, Mr. Jess? Thanks.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you. I'll try and be brief but after listening to some of the comments and observations, I feel I have to make some of these comments. We've finally come a long way in what I believe is a very important and welcome process in our democratic system here. And that's bringing what we're doing here to the public. I just want to make a comment that Mr. Jess had made as well with respect to the equipment having survived this long . . . it speaks well for our technicians that have guided it along for all these many years.

I just want to make . . . I'd be afraid that if they did put some of these cameras and equipment in stationary positions that it could sometimes wind up perhaps a breakdown . . . it would be like a broken record, and the same thing is being said over and over and over or the same person is there that we might not want to hear or vice versa. No, I'm just being a little facetious.

I recently was on an exchange to Columbus, Ohio. The people there . . . and I . . . when I was hearing the cost of \$175,000 to upgrade our equipment. And I know that it wasn't the total amount but part of \$132 million that that state had just spent on renovating their building, a good portion of which went to some pretty sophisticated electronic equipment, and they are still behind us because they can't reach as many people as we do given our technology. So in a lot of respects, they're still behind us but they're now working on the higher technology to use satellites and so on.

Again going to the microphones and the computers and the telephones on the desks, that's . . . yes, those are all perks for members in the Assembly. The Senate has it; the House of Representatives don't have it. The hand-held microphones are still there in the House of Representatives. So you're right — the observations from state to state are different.

But for us, we're talking about upgrading some equipment and then all of a sudden we get into the future needs . . . and I believe it's necessary and very, very essential. I think back to when new buildings are being built, and even now, with the potential for additional facilities to be included — the wiring is put in place, the wherewithal is put in place — without needing to spend a horrendous amount of money to actually have the equipment. So you add. You don't spend \$500,000 all in one shot. You spend what you need to and as you progress, you add on. And that's my observation.

I believe it's important that, as Mr. Jess had said, and that was my point — if you're going to have a good product, okay — or a potential existence of a product that becomes Mickey Mouse — then you'd better not . . . better off not to have the product at all. So it's either got to be a quality or nothing at all in order to preserve the quality and the integrity of the product, as Mr. Jess has said. And I firmly believe that because it would not take long for people to say, well, heck half the time the picture is cutting out.

I get calls from my constituents now that we just recently, up in the area, got online, and they phone my constituency office when the cable company is not carrying it. And they're saying what are you guys doing? Well of course I blame it on the government, mind you . . . it gives me an opportunity.

But I just want to make those observations. You've obviously can tell I feel very strongly about the need to ensure that we have the proper type of equipment. And I appreciate the need for the budgetary process and whatever, and I would hate to see this really get into a real political battle over something that affects each and everyone of us in the Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'm obviously thinking sort of on the run here. But given all that's been said, I wonder if it wouldn't be perhaps useful to have these people who — no one is second guessing them — but I wondered if it wouldn't be useful to have them return with perhaps a description of the options. And then we might consider where we go. I wonder if it would be useful just to ask them to return maybe intersessionally. This thing is winding down fairly quickly but you might be able to find a convenient time.

Well perhaps Mr. D'Autremont may help us. But I wonder if it

would be useful to ask the to bring back a description of the options? I think the thing is a little broader than what any of us may have expected when the report was provided to us.

The Chair: — By the options, you mean on the options on robotics or the options on electronics . . . enhancement of electronic technology for the function of the legislative process?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I was thinking in the broader context.

The Chair: — The broader picture. Yes.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Before we make a decision. We don't have to make . . . we don't want to leave it till January 1.

The Chair: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — But we don't have to make it before June 15 this year.

The Chair: — Well, and the reason . . .

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We have little time.

The Chair: — That's right. And the reason that I'm not recommending a motion to the committee today — I've introduced it as a subject for discussion — is because the appropriate, in my judgement, the appropriate body that ultimately has to make the decision about the robotics is the Board of Internal Economy. That's the budget proving . . . the budget approving body for function of the Legislative Assembly.

Now that's quite different from a discussion on the broader scale, which is, in my judgement, most appropriate for this committee to be dealing with and would probably be most appropriately be referred to this committee by the Legislative Assembly — as a creature of the Legislative Assembly — for this committee to consider options and make a recommendation.

On the matter of the robotics, in my judgement, that's a maintenance matter. It's a maintenance of a system that we've already got and which I believe to be not contradictory with potential to expand, but of significant interest to members when we come together to Communication Committee one subject of which is broadcasting, and that's why I brought it for information. But also for comments of the members because I think that's of interest to the Board of Internal Economy.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Specifically though my . . . Yes, I'm not disagreeing with you. Specifically my suggestion might be in the report, which I assume is going to be final today as a result of this meeting.

We'd like to include a section which seeks leave of the Assembly to consider this matter and report on it, and report to the Board of Internal Economy. The Board of Internal Economy certainly must handle the business . . .

The Chair: — This matter being the robotics or the broader picture?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The broader picture.

The Chair: — The broader picture, okay.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Certainly the Board of Internal Economy has got to handle the finances. But I'm not sure that's the appropriate body to be dealing with the larger issues. And I think they're intertwined. So I would suggest perhaps you should include a section asking for leave of the . . . asking for authority from the Assembly to review the broader issues.

The Chair: — Yes. Okay, because we'll have to go to a recommended report to the Assembly here just momentarily. And I'll ask Greg to pen a sentence or two which, if I'm understanding correctly, Mr. Shillington, you're proposing would say something to the effect that the committee discussed broadcasting and the use of the electronic technology to enhance the function of the legislature, and asks of the Assembly permission to review this matter and make future recommendation.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Right. That was it.

The Chair: — Is that it?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — That is.

The Chair: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — That would do.

The Chair: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — And then I've got my . . . on a dissertation on the . . .

The Chair: — Okay. And then we'll come back. Yes, that's another item. And I've got one final person on this one. Then if I can, if we can go from there to my recommendation for the committee report, and then we'll go to yours as well. Well maybe we should go to yours first because it's potentially in the committee report.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well the first question I had — and I think you answered it — was how long would the work take? And about three weeks I believe you said. Is that correct — to do the robotics?

Mr. Ward: — That's just the wiring for the . . .

The Chair: — Yes, the wiring . . . the actual, where it becomes inoperative because the wiring work is being done.

Mr. Ward: — Yes. We're looking at 45 days delivery for the system.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So you'll have to order it prior. But the actual physical labour will take about three weeks or so.

Mr. Ward: — It would be more than that. Probably I'd say allowing ourselves a month to five weeks would probably be a better time frame to look at.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So from the time of ordering to completion we're looking at roughly three months?

Mr. Ward: — Roughly. Yes, okay . . . three months.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes. I think the camera situation with the robotics is separate from the larger concern. It sort of led us into that larger concern. And I agree the larger concern needs to be looked at.

But I think if we buy the robotics it's not going to impact on all of the other things that we were looking at, such as the audio computers, telephones, and electronic voting. It does impact though on cameras in the committee room. That would be an area that goes with the camera one rather than . . . So I think, and I'm not sure about the budgetary process, Eldon. I think you said it starts January 1. Does it?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I mean we'll start preliminary budget stuff right into the new year. And the . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — But the approvals wouldn't actually pass?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — They don't come until budget time, Dan.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, and estimates.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And basically the end of the calendar . . . the end of the fiscal year is March 31.

The Chair: — Yes. Because the Board of Internal Economy plays the same role as Treasury Board; it makes recommendation to the Assembly.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes. I haven't obviously talked to caucus about this because you know so . . . from making political opportunism out of the purchase. I don't think that would happen, but I would have to obviously talk to caucus because I can't say just so myself. I think this is a need that the entire Assembly has and it doesn't reflect on partisan politics, rather it reflects on the availability of the legislature to communicate with the people of Saskatchewan.

When you look at wide-angle shots, one of the rules that we have in our Assembly is that you cannot comment on whether or not an individual is in the Assembly. If we're sitting there using wide-angle shots all the time, it's obvious who's in and who isn't in and so that's totally inappropriate based on our rules.

So I think we can't go to that kind of a situation. We have to have the tight shots on the members when the member is up speaking. We have to have the shots on the Speaker at other times. So if we get into a situation where we cannot focus on the member who is speaking we're obviously — while it's not written — we're breaking the spirit of the rules that we operate under in the Assembly, and we simply can't operate under those kind of procedures.

The Chair: — You're breaking the letter of the rule as well.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So I think we need to take a very serious look at doing the camera work, making that decision as soon as possible. And that very well may mean that we need another committee hearing quickly, but since we need 90 days to do the work from ordering to completion we need to make that decision by September . . . at least whether we're going to go ahead with it.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Could I just . . . Mr. Speaker, if I could just comment on that. If the caucuses are in agreement that the \$170,000 expenditure is critical, and that they would agree to a special warrant and recommend to their caucuses and from their caucuses to the Board of Internal Economy that this special warrant would be appropriate . . . I certainly would be willing to take that discussion to our caucus along with my colleagues from this board. And if we could get agreement to that I don't see a need to call another committee meeting to deal specifically with that, but I do agree that the broader issue should be looked at by this committee.

But if we as members representing three different political parties agree to go back to our caucuses and see if we can find consensus on the expenditure, we should probably then have a Board of Internal Economy meeting sooner rather than later to approve that because I think that the technical people — and having a little bit of knowledge and background in what they do — who've been serving us as members and people of Saskatchewan — have been doing very, very, very good work. And they have been somewhat constrained by the lack of ability to replace their equipment when they need for the very reasons that we've discussed here today.

So I would be more than willing to approach our caucus if we got some consensus here that we will do that. Then I think there's really no need for further discussion on this and it could be dealt with at the Board of Internal Economy so we can get the equipment ordered and get it installed prior to another session.

The Chair: — Well perhaps to just facilitate the conclusion of the matter and also as Chair of the Board of Internal Economy, can I ask of the caucuses that you give me a quick — by quick I mean the next day or two — a quick heads up about whether there would be support for special warrant consideration for the Board of Internal Economy to be able to proceed with the robotics decision. And that helps me then deal with the members of the Board of Internal Economy on that matter. Would that be acceptable?

A Member: — Yes.

The Chair: — Okay. If I can then bring this discussion to a conclusion and just simply advise . . . recommend to you words to go in the draft recommendation which the Clerk will circulate to you. But then if I can add a sentence, which I think, captures what we've just been talking about here in our report. In my judgement, in our report to the legislature . . . what's available to the members of course is the *Hansard* of the meeting, so any member can have full access to that.

And what we need to report to the legislature is our

recommendations — not our discussion — but our recommendations. And therefore what I recommend to you then, is the draft before you, which I . . .

Mr. Trew: — Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. I thought we were going to go to Mr. Shillington's motion because it I think is included in your draft report and I'd suggest we go to that and then your draft anxious as I am to hear you too.

The Chair: — That's right. It may very well be that this motion doesn't even need to be part of our report to the legislature anyhow because we're just the committee following its own procedures. But let's do this with the possibility of being most efficient and go first of all to Mr. Shillington and your motion then.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'll be quick then, given the hour. It struck me that in inviting these consultants to review the work of the committee; we ought to leave with Mr. Speaker a large discretion. My experience has been if you ask consultants to give you an opinion on something and don't talk to them about how long they're going to take, the cost can truly be staggering.

So my motion leaves most of these . . . refers to "in the discretion of Mr. Speaker" and I thought it appropriate just to leave you with the discretion and the responsibility to contact the consultants and kind of reach some agreement on what they're going to do and to keep the cost to something that's reasonable.

Anyway, it reads as follows:

That this committee, in the discretion of Mr. Speaker, invite Michael Swift and Associates — Carman Carroll to review and report on the mandate and operations of the Standing Committee on Communications in so far as the committee discharges the responsibilities delegated to it under the authority of section 7 and section 11(3) of The Archives Act, chapter A-26;

And further, that the said consultants review and report on any other issue which Mr. Speaker may in his discretion refer to them;

And further, that at the discretion of Mr. Speaker, the said consultants be invited to return to the Committee to consider any report so prepared.

The Chair: — It's in order. And it's moved by Mr. Shillington. Is there discussion on it? Obviously members don't have a written copy but is there further discussion on it?

Mr. D'Autremont: — The company name . . . these are the consultants that you're already dealing with, are they?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, that why I specifically asked them for the names so we can include them in.

The Chair: — And in fact just a few days ago I did meet with Michael Swift not on this subject but on a matter related to the review of the archival process. Is the question clear? Do you want it re-read? No? Those in favour then please indicate. Down. Opposed? And this is something that I can follow

through and will, without it needing to be part of the recommendation to the Assembly because we're not . . . this is not a recommendation to the Assembly.

If I can then . . . you have the draft before you. Have you had a chance to read it through? Okay. Can I just recommend then one additional sentence that would come . . . I think it would come at the end following the Legislative Library reference:

Your committee also recommends, your committee also recommends that the Assembly do issue an order of reference to the Standing Committee on Communications to review the matter of enhancing the use of technology to support the parliamentary function of the Legislative Assembly.

I'll go through it again.

Your committee also recommends that the Assembly do issue an order of reference to the Standing Committee on Communications (back to us) to review the matter of enhancing the use of technology to support the parliamentary function of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Osika: — Would it be appropriate to add electronic technology? You said less specific . . .

A Member: — Well that would allow any technology then.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I think that's satisfactory. It's very broad but we'll . . . I think that's, yes I think that's satisfactory.

The Chair: — But it would then be recommended to the Assembly . . . yes, it will recommend that for committees to deal with and define and refine, I think. But in essence we're saying to the Assembly, it's time to do a review. We don't have recommendations, but we think it's appropriate for the committee to be mandated to consider it with the expectation that if there's appropriate conclusions, recommendations will come at a future time.

So with that additional sentence I recommend to you this draft report which will go to the Assembly today. Would someone wish to move that?

Mr. Osika: — I'll move that.

The Chair: — Mr. Osika. And further discussion? In favour? Opposed? Carried.

Now the Vice-Chair of the committee . . . Obviously the Speaker can't present the report, and the Vice-Chair of this committee is Ms. Murray, who's not here. So if I could ask for a . . . the report can be read from the Table, but I need someone to move and second the motion in the Assembly for the committee report today. Would someone like to volunteer to move the . . .

The motion is simply that the report of the committee be now concurred in. It doesn't require any debate unless you choose.

Mr. Trew: — I'll happily move the report.

The Chair: — You'll move that, Mr. Trew? Would someone second it? Mr. D'Autremont? Okay. And so we'll do that under committee reports in the House today then. We'll call on you, Mr. Trew, to move that motion and, Mr. D'Autremont, if you'd be there to second it then.

Okay, I don't have . . . That's the end of our agenda, with thanks to our broadcast crew. As has been said here several times much more eloquently than I, I think there's a high level of satisfaction and appreciation of the quality of work that the broadcasting service has done.

And we appreciate your advice and comments here today, and obviously we're going to be looking forward to a far amount more input from you if the legislature approves of the motion today. So thank you very much to the broadcasting group.

And is there anything else? Then if not, I'll declare the meeting adjourned. Do I need a motion? Oh, somebody wish to move? Mr. D'Autremont. Those in favour? Opposed? Fortunately it carried so you can go now. I don't know if you didn't carry that motion I guess you've got to stay.

The committee adjourned at 11:20 a.m.