

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

February 9, 1989

Mr. Chairman: — I call the meeting to order. And speaking where he was yesterday, I believe Mr. Lingenfelter had the floor when we called it 5 o'clock. And I don't believe that I had anyone else on the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay. I have Mr. Lingenfelter and then I have Mr. Neudorf.

Before we left yesterday, if I just might before we get to Mr. Lingenfelter. Mr. Neudorf, I think it was in passing, said something that there might be a motion that might help resolve the situation. If that's the case, are you at all inclined to meet with a member from the other side, from the opposition, to see if there might be some resolve for this committee in terms of the issue that we're dealing with?

Mr. Neudorf: — Well, Mr. Chairman, unfortunately yesterday the chair did call time and we had run out of our appointed hours, so we didn't have the time to conclude the issue. I did have something in mind at the conclusion of the motion. My intent was to follow up the motion that was on the table, but it became abundantly clear to me that there were a number of deep concerns that some of the members on this committee had about the intent of the motion.

I think members from this side were attempting, during the discussion on the motion, to allay some of the fears that members opposite had. I was very pleased with the reaction on the motion on part of Mr. Lingenfelter in particular, where he did indicate he would be very agreeable and acceptable to the idea of having a review of the mandate. But then of course he had the rider on it because of his reservations in terms of what he saw as an attempt on our part to circumvent the due process of the 1986-87 review. And that is not our intention; that was not our intention. I think that this is something that we were saying quite regularly.

There was another concern expressed by another member about the fact that we were going to try to perhaps ramrod, or hold these *in camera*, or somehow restrict all members from this committee having a full participation in this review process. And again that never was my intention, and that never was the intention of my colleagues either.

I think we do want a full review of it because I go back to my basic premise.

Mr. Chairman: — The answer to the question . . . Mr. Lingenfelter had the floor, but before I got to him I wanted to ask you a question about whether you had a motion that you referred to in passing, I believe, that somehow I got the impression might help resolve some of the issues before us.

I wanted to ask whether you might want to share that with, say, meeting with the member from that side of the table and if that might help resolve some of the impasse here. I wanted to explore that, but if that's not the case, then I think we should go back to the speaking order.

Mr. Neudorf: — I don't know if there would be any point, Mr. Chairman, in the two of us meeting separate

somewhere, if that's what you'd suggest. I would like to do it right on the table openly here. And yes I do have — I don't know if it's a motion or an amendment that I was going to do yesterday as I said, and I would be prepared to do that at this time; maybe perhaps work it on an order of amendment and then we can discuss that amendment, and if it's agreeable to you, then we'll go for it.

Mr. Chairman: — I guess I have a sense from where I sit — I saw these two gentlemen winding up here and they could go on this one for quite a while, is my sense. And now if you had some motion that might set their minds at ease, some amendment, then maybe you should let them know that in passing, or somewhere else, and that may help us expedite the business of the committee. But if not, then fine, then we should go back to the speaking order, that's all.

Mr. Neudorf: — The only objection I have to that, Mr. Chairman, is I don't want to make secret deals somewhere off with another member. I want to do it up front. I'm prepared to make an amendment to that motion at this stage. If you're agreeable, go for it, and if not, then you know we can debate it.

I'm not suggesting that there be any secret deals. There is a previous example of where we encouraged Mr. Prebble to sit down with Mr. Martin the other day to try to work something out, and that's happened before. Anyway, I'm going to go back to the agenda that I have.

Mr. Muller: — Could I make a comment, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: — Mr. Muller, yes.

Mr. Muller: — You know, just maybe it will move things along a little quicker. If the member from Rosthern has an amendment to the motion, and he was allowed to make the amendment, and Mr. Lingenfelter was to be put on the speaking list first after the amendment, then I think we could . . . this would give him the opportunity if he didn't agree with the amendment, he could speak to the amendment and the motion and he'd be back in the speaking order, and I think that this could maybe move things along.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — If I could just comment on that. I think, I mean, the idea is a good one. I think what we're interested in is getting back to the work of the committee. That's what we came here for. That's what everything was scheduled for — if the amendment deals with that, somehow getting us back on track in terms of this working of this committee, which I have no problem with the mandate.

You see what I have a problem with is one part of the committee has a problem with the mandate and the rules of the committee. The chairman of the committee and the other members of the committee and the public don't seem to have a problem with the rules. What I have a problem with is setting aside the agenda in order to do the review.

In fact, I have a letter here that, if I could, just read, and it's dated January 24, 1989, and it's to Mr. Ed Tchorzewski,

the opposition House Leader, from Eric Berntson, the Deputy Premier, and it says that:

Further to our telephone conversation Friday, January 20, 1989 it is agreed that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations will sit during the week of February 6, 1989. It is understood that it would be our intention to conclude all the outstanding work for the 1987 year under review.

Then it goes through the sitting hours which have been amended slightly by this committee on Friday, but other than that, the intention was to sit for these hours. That was an agreement between the House leaders.

If this is your understanding of our conversation, please concur, and I will inform my colleagues.

And it's signed by Eric Berntson, the Deputy Premier, and concurrence is signed by Ed Tchorzewski.

And we all came here with the idea that we were going to deal with the work of the committee. There's no mention here that the rules aren't right and the rules haven't changed. We're dealing with the same rules.

The only thing that has changed it seems is that government members don't like the way the committee is working. I mean, that's like ball teams agreeing to a ball game, then half-way through the game, the team that's losing, we don't like the rules; we're not playing any more until the rules change. And it just can't work that way.

What I'm saying is that if we're going to review the rules, wait until this is over because we have an agreement, and it seems perfectly logical. We've got two more days to go. Let's do the work of the committee; that is, to review the Department of Finance spending for the year under review, '86-87, which is an election year, which is the year the deficit of the province was projected to be 389 million and in fact it comes in at 1.2 billion. And that's what we came here for.

And I want to table this letter just so that it's on the record that we had an agreement, that we had the rules that were set by the legislature. Everything is in place. The only problem is the members of the government side, I believe, don't like the way the committee's going. And if you've got an amendment to the motion, Mr. Neudorf, that would help us out of this dilemma that we find ourselves in, I would be more than willing to look at it.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The fact that that letter has been tabled kind of underscores, I guess, the problem that we're facing here, and that is that the concurrence by both House leaders was that we would meet this week and that would be it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — And complete the work with of the committee.

Mr. Neudorf: — This week.

A Member: — Try to.

Mr. Neudorf: — No it didn't say that. It said that at the end of this week that's it. The committee would sit this week and that is it. There's no mention of sitting further, I believe.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — We can sit whenever we want. We're in agreement of sitting next week.

Mr. Neudorf: — Well, that was not the agreement that you just laid on the table if I understand that correctly.

A Member: — That's true.

Mr. Neudorf: — Well my point then is that because of the way the committee is operating, or failing to operate — this is my whole point — is that we are not operating; it's not working. And we were already tremendously behind in terms of the agenda that had been set at the beginning of these hearings, so we were not going to finish these hearings. There would not have been time, as the Chairman alluded to quite frequently yesterday and the day before, that we will have to next week or at some future date bring these others that were deleted from the time allotted . . .

Mr. Lingenfelter: — This is how it has always worked historically in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Neudorf: — And my suggestion is that if I can bring my amendment forward, I would suggest to you that it will address that, whether to your complete satisfaction, I'm not sure, but I do believe that that is something that we can debate on after it's on the floor.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Let's have a look at it.

Mr. Neudorf: — So are you in concurrence with that, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: — You have the floor. You have the floor.

Mr. Neudorf: — Your member did say that the amendment . . .

Mr. Chairman: — You have the floor, Mr. Neudorf.

Mr. Neudorf: — I originally intended this to be the motion . . . to a motion following the completion of the original one, but the way it would read right now then is to amend my original motion to add:

That the hearings on the mandate of the Public Accounts Committee be concluded by April 10, 1989, and that the Public Accounts Committee continue its 1986-87 review thereafter under the new mandate.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I don't know if you would want me to speak on that or . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Yes, sure.

Mr. Neudorf: — I think my introductory remarks already alluding to the reasons for me coming up with amendment, and I would just like to throw out to members the possibility that what I have suggested here is

not necessarily cast in stone.

My objective, my primary objective, is to . . . We get ourselves into a situation where we're all crystal clear in terms of what we are trying to accomplish so that the chairman is aware of the parameters of our mandate and that all members are and that we can expeditiously pursue that mandate.

Now when I say April 10, I'm flexible. If its better to do that April 7 or whatever date, that is something that I would certainly look forward to as being a point of discussion.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I'm not sure this member is aware of the way the process works, but the committee could complete their work by April 10, but we're still no further along because the whole change would have to be approved by the legislature. That, then, is at the discretion of the Deputy Premier, Eric Berntson, who is the one that didn't want this committee to be meeting in the first place intersessionally, but when we went through the negotiation process we had a very difficult time of getting this committee date set for February 6; and the chairman may want to elaborate on that.

But obviously what is happening is the Deputy Premier is getting his way. He sent you down here to delay this procedure so that we wouldn't get to the Finance department spending and the Premier's spending. That's what it's all about. I mean, there's no sense pretending that it's anything other than that and delaying it till April 10 in the middle of the session; then, at the discretion of the Government House Leader and Deputy Premier, Mr. Berntson, he will bring in new changes as he fits it into his political time table. Nothing to do with the interest of the public. Nothing to do with the interest of the taxpayers. Everything to do with the interest of the Conservative Party. This is our problem.

What we're seeing here is a diversion from the agenda, which was agreed to by Mr. Berntson in writing, but not agreed to, if you know what I mean. I believe there was a plan from day one when you people came into this room. And when we get the transcript from day one, I think, Mr. Neudorf, it's fair to say that from day one you were saying that we had to change the rules of the committee, building up towards this motion I believe that has been directed by Mr. Berntson because he doesn't want to have exposed to the public certain things in the Department of Finance that deal with a projected deficit of 389 million before the election that turned out to be 1.2 billion after the election.

And I want to say clearly that everyone knows that. Now we're going to vote on this some time, or we may not vote on it, we may debate this out until the committee ends on Friday . . .

Mr. Neudorf: — I hope not.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well we're not going to get any work done anyway if it passes. We're not going to do the work of the people of the province. We can't do that . . .

Mr. Neudorf: — I'd like to respond to that now. Could I

interject?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — . . . because by your motion and by your amendment, we're not going to be doing any work, a minimum, before near the end of this coming session which could be after the date that's rumoured by the Premier. He spreads the rumour that there could be a June election in '89. He has said that. You're setting up the process for public accounts to be delayed until the window closes for the June '89 election. That's what you're doing.

You're so naive that when Eric tells you that he wants to review the committee rules and that this isn't a political agenda, then I think you're very naive. This is part of the Tory political agenda building up towards a window for a June '89 election. This is why the Premier's in China talking about potash. This is the political agenda for the House to build up on a big debate on privatization of potash. You don't want public accounts muddying the water between now and the 1989 June possible election date.

Like, be sincere about what you're saying and tell the story how it is. Come here and say, look, we've got a political agenda; we think there may be an election in June of this year. The Premier has said that to the press in other places.

Mr. Martin: — There may be.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — There may be. The member from Wascana tells the truth here. There's the man that tells the truth. He agrees with me that there is a political agenda, and you don't want public accounts and the exposure on the Premier's estimates that includes \$100,000 for a colour coding of the Premier during the last election to become an issue in the months leading up to this election. That's what it's all about. You know that, Mr. Martin. You've been around here a long time. You've watched Eric manipulate committees in this legislature for political purposes. That's what's happening here. You know that.

I want to say to you that it's unfair, not to the members of the opposition. I mean, we get paid whether we're here or not. I mean, it doesn't matter personally to me whether we do this business or not. But to the taxpayers of the province who are going to have to pay the debt after you people leave, it is of major concern that we deal with these issues.

This has been in place since 1906. You're the first people who have said this committee can't function under the rules even though you wrote the rules. And later on in this debate I'm going to bring those rules in here, from 1982, that Eric Berntson and Devine passed, and read out each point in those rules and ask you which ones you don't agree with.

I agree you're confused about the rules. But I say again, you're the only people in the province, you five here, who are confused about the rules of this committee. This has everything to do with political agendas and setting the stage for a possible June '89 election. The Deputy Premier doesn't want the waters muddled by this committee asking questions about the actions of the Premier and the

spending habits of the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Finance.

So I'm saying that we're going to be voting against the amendment and against the motion, simply because we feel it's our duty in terms of protecting the spending on taxes of the public to vote against it and get on right now with public accounts, which has been a tradition since 1906.

Mr. Martens: — I'm just going to raise a couple of items that I think are important. This committee has been functioning well even beyond the beginning of this province. It has been functioning as a part of the Act that established the Northwest Territories. It has been functioning in what some people perceive to be a good way. The next person, in his opinion, says it doesn't function.

A lot of the things have evolved through that process, and I think that we have come to the place where we have to re-evaluate again, because we sat for three days talking about issues that were dealing with the auditor's report. I believe there were issues from that that were political, dealing with the areas here of public accounts. You go down to the evaluations that were made by public accounts committees in the '60s, and you'll find that some of the reasons why they didn't work was that there were political agendas in relation to the volume . . . there were political agendas in relation to the discussion about public accounts. And that's what's a matter of opinion. And matters of opinion are really what you basically suggest, or I suggest is what you perceive to be a value for your money. And you will have difference of opinion of that even among members who sit on the same side of the House.

What we have in the letter that was tabled by Mr. Lingenfelter is a conclusion to the 1987 timetable of the public accounts, the auditor's report, and if you're truly interested in dealing with them, this letter will terminate that. And it's an agreement by your House Leader with ours that that will be terminated. We are making an alternative available here for you to place into perspective the real mandate of this committee. And I think that we are stepping in the right direction.

If you vote against it, I think you're not really dealing with the issues of basic accountability for the province of Saskatchewan. You're wanting to have a political forum here to discuss, and this shouldn't be a political forum.

I will just raise this one very important point, and I don't believe that I have ever heard, in fact it is probably real that the public accounts chairman for the Government of Canada probably has never been on television, has never spoken to the media about the Public Accounts Committee's activities. And have you ever heard the Public Accounts Committee members out in the hallways talking to the media in dealing with the framework of the Public Accounts Committee.

You have every right and every freedom to deal with value for money outside of this group here. You have every right, but we cannot do it here because each one of us has a different opinion about value for money. We

can't do that. And I think it's time that we put on the proper focus the things that ought to be done so that this committee can work. And I believe that this is a beginning for it.

Last year, and I remember this very well, the member for Battlefords — and if I had my *Public Accounts* verbatim I'd be able to show you this — and he said public accounts is one committee where if we play politics you don't ever get much constructive work done, and I would suggest that we try and temper ourselves. It may be strange for politicians to not play politics, but if we play politics in the Public Accounts Committee I don't think it's very healthy for the process. And I agree with him 100 per cent, and that's clearly what we have to avoid.

In my discussions to this point, Mr. Chairman, I have tried to avoid politics in any way, shape, or form, and I think that is what we as members ought to be doing in relation to this. We have to deal up front dealing with the issues, not dealing with it from a political opinion. And if we do that we will continually come to the same point where we have an impasse because of political observation by individuals on either side can be variable.

And I think that that's where we have the problem, and I don't want to dominate the conversation here but I think that we have to get off of that agenda and on to an agenda that deals with fact. And if we do what we suggest we do, what we're suggesting we do, we will provide an opportunity for a debate about how we should be handling that political agenda inside this committee and in relation to it. And I have the freedom, I believe, to accept suggestions that would be made from any member of this committee to provide that kind of an opportunity to get on with the work.

Mr. Neudorf: — Just a quick reaction, I guess, to what Mr. Lingenfelter was saying in terms of my naivety, I guess. If that's his perception of me, that's fine. Perhaps I am naive politically in certain respects, but I am dead serious and I don't want you to question my sincerity in making this motion. When I make a motion and leave the impression that immediately following that April 10 deadline it will be coming up in the House and it will be subsequently dealt with in a forthright manner, that is what I mean. As far as I'm concerned, I'm putting my political credibility on the line here, and I'm quite prepared to do that.

My underlying theme, once again, is the fact that I want this committee to work, and I don't think under the present . . . whether it's the rules that are at fault or whether it's the interpretation of those rules remains to be seen. I think that's why we're going to have this investigation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, he's true. If the Premier is looking at an April 11 election, I don't know. He's the one that calls that. I have no influence on that at all. My feeling is of course that something like that is not in the cards at all.

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we've heard a lot of debate regarding the motion. And now on the amendment it does appear that we are willing to move expediently into resolving this issue and getting back in the workings of the public accounts and to come to a conclusion for the legislature

the '86-87, and then getting eventually into the years '87-88.

But I'm somewhat astonished by Mr. Lingenfelter's remarks. He seems to be talking around the table on many of his expressions that he's given to this committee. He first of all agreed there needs to be changes, and he's agreed to those changes, but at some later date and at some different time. But he feels that we should carry on with the workings of the committee before that takes place.

Well it's impossible to rid of the arguing and the disputing in this room without having those proper rules. He indicates that there is a cover-up. He indicates that there are ministers that have — and in not my words — but had been lying, and government had been lying. And he had indicated this prior to any questioning of those particular departments that he was dealing with.

So the perspective of partisan politics in this committee is definitely apparent. Before he even had the opportunity to question those departments' deputy ministers, or ministers in the House, he's already assumed that his accusations are firm and correct. And that, I say, is a misjustice to this committee.

You, Mr. Chairman, have been as well on TV and were trying to score partisan political points. The member, Mr. Lingenfelter, had said we have rules set by the legislature which he's going to read out. I welcome them and I welcome the debate on those rules, in his scope of interpretation of those rules. But at the same time I also want to see, then, in his comments where he agrees there needs to be changes within those rules because he said, and I quote him, that he agreed there needs to be changes.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Review, I said.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well review changes and whatever, dummy.

A Member: — Well that's quite a difference.

Mr. Hopfner: — Anyway, Mr. Chairman, when he indicates that there's a cover-up because we don't want from the government side to go into another election because of rumours of a June election, that's an article that he's probably read in a paper in an article that appeared from one of our columnists of the paper the *Leader-Post* here in Regina, Dale Eisler, that he was predicting that there could be a possible election in Saskatchewan in June. Although Mr. Eisler might be looking into his crystal ball, he didn't say what year.

Mr. Chairman, I don't think that whether there is an election or not an election, it seems to me the member has already been convinced there is that corruption, there is that misgiving with the . . . and misleading with the public from various ministers in various departments. So if he's got that in his mind and he's convinced of that in his own mind, then he shouldn't be concerned whether there's an election or not. What he should be concerned about is whether this committee can function in its proper way.

I think that when he tabled this letter from the Deputy

Premier and his House Leader, Ed Tchorzewski, that those two gentlemen had gotten together and agreed that we should be sitting, and agreed that we should go through the workings of this committee.

But I will let Mr. Lingenfelter and you, Mr. Chairman, and all members of this committee know that when I took the responsibility of sitting on this committee upon myself, I did not take that responsibility lightly. I did not take that responsibility to be dictated to by other members or by my House Leader or by his House Leader or by anybody of this legislature.

I am trying to operate in my own independent way and trying to see this committee function and function properly. And I will refuse to take any direction from anyone. And if it is to not properly function independently and to know that the committee is functioning rightfully, but I will not sit here and allow Mr. Lingenfelter to accuse me that I am being dictated to by the Deputy Premier or the Premier or anyone else, because that is not the case. I am my own person. I represent a constituency, and I want to know, as well as the member opposite should want to know as well, whether the spending of this government or any government is spent properly.

The innuendoes can be maybe debated on outside this room in a different format. If he is what I see, Mr. Lingenfelter is what I see, he is trying to bring what should be on the floor of the legislature, the political arena; he is trying to drag that into a non-partisan committee in the public accounts. And he's not satisfied, he's not satisfied that he should be doing that in that arena alone, the floor of the legislature, because he's not satisfied that he's getting the right political ammunition to be able to go out and back up what his own interpretation or his colleagues' interpretation of right and wrong are. So he's frustrated, and he comes in here and he comes and battles with the same questions that we've already gone through in the legislature to try and intimidate our witnesses in this committee.

And I don't believe that this . . . I strongly believe that this is not what this committee is about. I don't believe that any one of us should be trying to get media attention. I don't believe any of us should be trying to score political points. I don't believe that we can function until we can come to an understanding as committee members as to those particular directions so that we can get on with the fundamental, the basic fundamental rules of this committee and bring it into a range where we all know where we're going.

So, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to vote in favour of that amendment, and I'm going to vote in favour of the motion, the total motion you have in front of you, on those basic, genuine points that we are trying to clean up this committee.

When the member from Morse had indicated that there was no . . . he had no, I guess, information as to whether through the TV media, live media, or the paper, or whatever for public display had any knowledge of the chairman or any member of Public Accounts Committee anywhere else going out and trying to score political and

bias points through media. I don't know if that's right or wrong, but I too have never heard of it. And it would be very interesting and it is a direction that maybe we can bring up later on, but it would be very interesting to find that out. I'd like to know and I think you should like to know that.

But I'd like to hear it from other . . . say the national chairman . . . the Canadian government . . . to see just exactly how they operate or, you know, just generally giving you an example. And possibly later on in our workings and in our debates of how we should maybe get into this, we could maybe have them visit us or something. I don't know what the agenda is going to be or what we can decide on, but it just sparked an idea that: how do they get through a committee; how do they get through their committee without all this haggling and partisism and staying neutral and getting to the fundamental and basic workings of a committee without going and walking out of rooms and things like this?

I think when we have accusations and innuendoes thrown continually out from lips of members, off the tongues of lips from members, there's basically no way we can keep that partisism out of here. And they're convinced that they're correct. And that's where it gets probably the anger and frustrations coming out of all members.

And I think that with being able to eliminate those particular areas in this Public Account Committee we're going to be able to really work in a very unanimous fashion.

I think, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to just hold on some further remarks because I think that really it's fairly difficult to . . . I'd like to see where this motion is going to be going maybe without any further too much delay. And if not, then I'll get back into it.

Mr. Chairman: — Thank you, Mr. Hopfner. I just might, in response to one of your comments, indicate that whenever I see a government moving in a heavy-handed, antidemocratic way as this government seems to do from time to time, then I will speak out, no matter the circumstances, no matter the place, no matter the time. I will speak out, and it'll take someone a lot tougher and brighter than you and your colleagues to stop me, Mr. Hopfner.

Mr. Hopfner: — I'm not here to judge . . .

Mr. Chairman: — I have Mr. Anguish. If you want to be back on the speaking order I'll put you on again.

Mr. Hopfner: — Okay, I'll get back in.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The comments made by Mr. Neudorf and Mr. Martens and Mr. Hopfner, I'd like to respond to some of those. I think they're a bit repetitive and I think it's still the objective of some members of this committee to drag out the committee so we don't get to the actual task at hand, and that's dealing with the '86-87 public accounts.

Mr. Martens and Mr. Hopfner both alluded to the House

of Commons Public Accounts Committee. Both of them said they could not remember or had no knowledge of members of committee or the chair appealing before the press to make statements.

Well I would reflect on experiences I had spending four and a half years on the Public Accounts Committee in the House of Commons, which meet many more times. It's an ongoing committee that does in fact get the work of the committee accomplished.

One of the ways they're able to do that is that all members on the committee are allowed to ask the questions they want to determine the effectiveness and the efficiency in the economy of government spending. There's no question about that.

In terms of appearing before the national press, it happens on a regular basis. In fact if you had to appear before the national press, they'd slaughter you for the activities you've had over the past three days. The national media would not allow you gentlemen to get away with what you've done to this committee.

Have the national media not interviewed people that are associated with the Public Accounts Committee in Ottawa?

The Auditor General, the current Auditor General, Ken Dye, I recall — and I would think that you as members of this Public Accounts Committee would recall — national media attention when he threatened and took court action to get documents from the Government of Canada. That's a fact. The auditor before Dye, J.J. Macdonell, appeared many times before the press being critical of all administrations when he found that the taxpayers' dollars were not being spent wisely, or incorrectly.

The chairman of the Public Accounts Committee when I was a member of parliament was Bill Clarke, a Progressive Conservative member from Vancouver — Vancouver-Quadra was his riding at the time. I recall him many times appearing before the press. In fact, members of the Public Accounts Committee in Ottawa could not avoid the press if they wanted to because the room is full of press people any time the Public Accounts Committee is sitting. That's fact.

So what are you talking about when you say this committee is playing to the politics. Gentlemen, we are in politics, but this committee should operate in a non-partisan way to accomplish its work. There's no way you would ever get away with this in the national Public Accounts Committee, so don't talk about other committees never dealing with the press because they do, in fact, appear before the press. The press seek people out from the Public Accounts Committee and from the auditor's department.

Mr. Martens said in his statements . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, Mr. Muller, this committee should operate in a non-partisan fashion, but we're all politicians and politics enters into whether you like it or not. It's a matter of being able to put behind those political differences in this committee and allowing the committee to function.

Mr. Martin: — Are you done?

Mr. Anguish: — No, I'm not done.

Mr. Martin: — Mr. Chairman, are we on break here?

Mr. Chairman: — No. Mr. Anguish still has the floor and I gather he's composing his thoughts as long as he doesn't take too long.

Mr. Anguish: — In terms of Mr. Martin's comments about this committee not having a role in value-for-money types of questions, he's completely wrong. We do have a set of rules, and if any of you would wish to refer to the Minutes and Verbatim Reports of Proceedings in Standing Committee on Public Accounts you'd find that on Tuesday, November 23, 1982 that there were some rules that were adopted by the Legislative Assembly.

And I would refer to point 2, recommendation number 2, and I'd like to read that to Mr. Martens, if he hasn't already read it, and it states:

The written statement of role and responsibilities comprise a general statement of purpose in the list of issues that the committee is to examine, assess, report on to the legislature, and follow up with the administration, including:

- (a) the reliability and appropriateness of information in the Public Accounts to provide a full and fair accounting of operations and financial transactions;
- (b) the collection of, and proper accounting for, all taxes and other revenues due;
- (c) the maintenance of expenditures with the limits for the purposes authorized by the legislature;
- (d) the adequacy of safeguards to protect assets from loss, waste and misappropriation;
- (e) the regard for economy in the acquisition of goods and services;
- (f) the regard for efficiency in operations; and
- (g) the effectiveness of programs in achieving their stated objectives.

Mr. Martens, I'd submit to you that that is value-for-money auditing, and it is the role of the committee that your government and your members on this Public Accounts Committee agreed to. So we do have the right to ask those questions, and we do want to know as to why, in an election year, you miscalculated on your budget by 3 or 400 per cent. Was it being truthful to people in the province of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Hopfner says we can ask the questions. Ask the questions to who? You've done everything to obstruct and delay this committee since Monday, every possible thing to obstruct and delay this committee.

The recommendation no. 2.2 that I talked about is the mandate, or at least part of the mandate of this committee, and that is value for money. We have the right to determine that. We have the obligation to determine that on behalf of taxpayers in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Neudorf can laugh like his little Cheshire cat over there. You better be careful; you'll swallow the canary.

This committee has no credibility at this point because of what you members have done to it — absolutely no credibility.

So the rules and the mandate are there. And my colleague, Mr. Lingenfelter has already put on the record a letter from the Deputy Premier to our House Leader, and which our House Leader concurred with, that the work of this committee regarding the fiscal year ending in March 31, 1987 would be dealt with. And now all you've done is obstruct it — your rescinding of motions, of previous agreements of this committee, your removal of the agenda by a motion to put something else on the agenda and take all the departments and Crowns and agencies off of it.

Mr. Hopfner, when he says that Mr. Lingenfelter agreed to changes, we've agreed to no changes. We didn't agree to the change in the agenda where you take away the ability of the members of this committee to ask the departments questions, and certainly didn't agree to any changes in the rules. What we've agreed to is yes, let's take a look at the mandate and maybe the rules of the committee, but we've made no agreement to changing rules. You, with your heavy hand of the government, don't look for any consensus in changing rules anyway, and that's obvious over the past few days. You just change what's convenient to you. If you don't like the messenger, you shoot him.

When you do look closer at the rules and the mandate of the committee, you members aren't even talking about the actual rules. You're talking about the interpretation of the rules and the mandate of this committee, and as long as the five of you are on this committee interpreting the rules, we just won't get anything accomplished, and that's obvious again over the past few days within this committee.

I think it may be worth the time to go through what the rules are of the committee, as agreed to Tuesday, November 23, 1982. And this should be read into the record so that those who wish to follow will know that on that date I mentioned, your government and the opposition and the Public Accounts Committee agreed to a basic set of rules that governed this committee. And I read:

Mr. Shillington, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, presented the First Report of the said Committee which is as follows:

Your Committee met for organization and elected Mr. Shillington as Chairman and Mr. Glauser as Vice-Chairman.

In order to provide orientation and background information on the working of a Public Accounts Committee, a two-day seminar was held on September 16 and 17, 1982 for all Members. With the aid of guest speakers and witnesses, the Committee studied government financial processes . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Point of order, Mr. Anguish, point of order.

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Chairman, I was just wondering . . . We're discussing the intent of getting into whether there should be a review or not. We're not getting into a discussion of reviewing right now, are we?

Mr. Chairman: — Mr. Hopfner, we're talking about a motion which is intended to have this committee review the mandate. The amendment right now is that those hearings be concluded by a certain time. It's talking about a review of the mandate. Mr. Anguish is talking about the mandate. I mean, if he's reading the rules that are in effect now, I don't think it's inappropriate, so I would say the point of order is not well taken.

Mr. Hopfner: — Just further to my point of order then, Mr. Chairman: like, this is the debate on the motion as to . . .

Mr. Chairman: — This is debate on the amendment to the motion.

Mr. Hopfner: — Okay, on the amendment to the motion. They're getting into the review, and the question is whether there is no question of interpretation on that amendment right now, is there, of rules or anything like this? It's very confusing. I can understand the member arguing about dates and time and other things, but should we get into the specifics of the rules now and their interpretations of the rules and stuff like this, or should we not? Because I have to go and get some information if we're going to do this.

Mr. Martin: — Mr. Chairman, is it really necessary? Can't he just give us the pages and the book, and we could look it up ourselves?

Mr. Chairman: — No, Mr. Martin, if . . . Order, please, order. I gather from Mr. Hopfner's point he's concerned that Mr. Anguish may not be speaking right to the amendment. The amendment simply says that certain hearings be concluded by April 10, 1989, and we continue the review after the new mandate is established.

A Member: — Should we or shouldn't we?

Mr. Chairman: — That's the amendment. If Mr. Anguish can tie his remarks in to the amendment, and so far he's been able to do that, and if he continues to do that then his remarks are appropriate. But you know, I give him warning, as well as any other member, that remarks should be appropriate to the amendment. And having said that . . .

Mr. Hopfner: — Okay, just for clarification then: upon his rambling into the book there that he's reading from, you will not call any of us out of order if we go and get our

information in regards to the interpretation of . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Of course not, if you quote from some document that's entirely legitimate if it's appropriate to the discussion at hand.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll continue from where I left off.

. . . the role of the Provincial Auditor and the purpose and operation of Public Accounts Committees. Guests included Mr. Kenneth Dye, Auditor General of Canada; Mr. Bill Clarke, M.P., Chairman of the Canadian Public Accounts Committee; Dr. Graham White, Clerk Assistant, Ontario Legislative Assembly; Hon. Bob Andrew, Minister of Finance; Mr. Willard Lutz, Provincial Auditor; Mr. Gerry Kraus, Comptroller; and Mr. Robert Douglas, Deputy Minister of Finance. The committee wishes to thank the out-of-province guests and representatives from the Office of the Provincial Auditor and the Department of Finance for their contributions.

At follow-up meetings on October 13 and 14, 1982, the Committee evaluated the seminar and discussed the recommendations contained in the report entitled *Improving Accountability: Canadian Public Accounts Committees and Legislative Auditors*, prepared by John Kelly and Hugh Hanson for the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation in 1981. Some of the recommendations in the Kelly-Hanson report have been part of the Committees' practices for many years. Other recommendations were considered and your Committee agreed to recommend the following changes to the procedures of the Saskatchewan Public Accounts Committee:

1. Public Accounts Committee prepare and adopt a formal, written statement that describes the Committee's role and responsibilities.

Recommendation

2. The written statement of role and responsibilities comprise a general statement of purpose and a list of issues that the committee is to examine, access, report on to the legislature, and follow up with the administration, including:

- (a) the reliability and appropriateness of information in the Public Accounts to provide a full and fair accounting of operations and financial transactions;
- (b) the collection of, and proper accounting for, all taxes and other revenues due;
- (c) the maintenance of expenditures with the limits and for the purposes authorized by the legislature;

- | | |
|--|---|
| (d) the adequacy of safeguards to protect assets from loss, waste and misappropriation; | 12. Legislation make specific provision for the confidentiality of the Auditor's working papers. |
| (e) the regard for economy in the acquisition of goods and services; | Recommendation 41 |
| (f) the regard for efficiency in operations; and | 13. The Auditor be given legislative authority to obtain any information or documents required from Crown organizations or their auditors, and to conduct any further examinations that he deems necessary. |
| (g) the effectiveness of programs in achieving their stated objectives. | Recommendation 42 |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| 3. Provision be made to allow the Public Accounts Committee to meet whether the House is in Session, recessed or prorogued. | 14. Given a sufficient improvement in the timeliness of completing government accounts, the Auditor work toward the goal of completing his annual reports within six months after the end of the fiscal year end, and have his opinions and comments on the financial statements incorporated in the Public Accounts. |
| Recommendation 7 | Recommendation 43 |
| 4. All Public Accounts Committee meetings for hearing testimony be open to the press and public, except when evidence of a particularly sensitive nature is to be given. | 15. Wherever possible and appropriate, audit reports incorporate responses by the audited organizations to the Auditor's comments and recommendations. |
| Recommendation 20 | Recommendation 46 |
| 5. Meetings for planning future work, briefings, reviewing progress and drafting reports be held in camera. | 16. Legislation provide that the Auditor need not report matters that, in his opinion, are inconsequential. |
| Recommendation 21 | Recommendation 47 |
| 6. The Public Accounts Committee concentrate its attention on significant issues of management and financial administration rather than on isolated, unimportant, individual transactions. | 17. The Auditor follow up the recommendations made in his reports and ensure that the responses are made known to the Public Accounts Committees. |
| Recommendation 30 | Recommendation 48 |
| 7. The Public Accounts Committee prepare substantive reports at least annually containing a summary of findings, a statement of conclusions, and recommendations for action to be taken by the government. | 18. An objective, rigorous search process be used in filling a vacancy in the Auditor's position. |
| Recommendation 31 | Recommendation 51 |
| 8. The Auditor be required by legislation to express an opinion on the financial statements. | 19. Mechanisms be devised to ensure that the individual appointed to the position of Auditor is acceptable to both government and opposition members of the legislature. |
| Recommendation 35 as amended | Recommendation 52 |
| 9. Legislation provide that the Auditor accept specific assignments from the legislature, provided these do not take precedence over other duties assigned by statute. | 20. Statutory provisions be made for filling a temporary vacancy in the office of Auditor, and such provisions include safeguards to prevent interim appointments for unduly extended periods of time. |
| Recommendation 38 | Recommendation 53 |
| 10. That the Committee review the question of comprehensive auditing two audits hence. | 21. The Auditor's salary be tied by statute to that of top public servants. |
| Recommendation 37 as amended | Recommendation 55 |
| 11. Legislation provide that the Auditor accept direction by the government to perform audits only if in their opinion such work would not interfere unduly with the performance of their regular duties. | 22. Legislative provision be made for an audit of the audit office, conducted by a qualified auditor who is not an employee of the Crown, with the results made available to the legislature. |
| Recommendation 39 | Recommendation 59 |
| | 23. Separate legislation be enacted dealing with |

the Auditor and the audit office.

Recommendation 60

24. The Public Accounts Committee make use of an Auditor as adviser while preparing its agendas and reports and in briefings prior to its hearings.

Recommendation 64 as amended

25. The Auditor discuss the general subject of the format and style of his reports with Public Accounts Committees.

Recommendation 65

26. The Auditor prepare his reports with the needs of Public Accounts Committees in mind.

Recommendation 66

27. The Auditor consider issuing separate reports on special studies or comprehensive audits as they are completed.

Recommendation 67

28. The Public Accounts Committee be given the power to instruct the Auditor, by resolution, to conduct specific examinations, provided that such assignments do not unduly interfere with the regular duties of the audit offices.

Recommendation 68

29. The Public Accounts Committee discuss with the Auditor the most appropriate manner of using the services of the audit offices to follow up committee recommendations.

Recommendation 69

30. The Provincial Auditor strive to do an annual audit as in the past with the necessary resources being made available.

31. Your Committee recommends that the Minutes and Verbatim Report of the Public Accounts Committee of the Fourth Session of the Nineteenth legislature be Tabled as a Sessional Paper; and

Your Committee advises that the Minutes and Verbatim Report of Proceedings of the Public Accounts Committee of the current Session will be Tabled as a Sessional Paper.

(This is) On motion of Mr. Shillington, seconded by Mr. Glauser:

Ordered, That the First Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be taken into consideration after Orders of the Day.

Moved by Mr. Shillington, seconded by Mr. Glauser:

That the First Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

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

Now for those members, Mr. Chairman, who wish to say they don't know what the mandate is and they don't know what the rules are of this committee, they need only read, and this is in 1982 by their government, our opposition, unanimously agreed to. This committee agreed to it. It was formulated after consultation with a very prestigious group of people who are knowledgeable of the public accounts process in the Canadian perspective, and specifically with Saskatchewan in mind.

And when the motion comes from government members that they want to review these, that's fine. Mr. Lingenfelter has stated already, and I will state again, that we can accept a review of the mandate of this committee. We're not necessarily saying that we're agreeing with any specific changes. We'd be foolhardy to so do because we don't know what those changes are in fact going to be, and I don't know anyone who would agree to something when they don't know what the end product is going to be.

So the only thing that we can conclude, Mr. Chairman, is that the members, some members of this committee are doing everything they can to stop this committee from functioning. I cannot for the life of me understand why we would set aside our agenda which was done in agreement with the Deputy Premier and is pointed out in the letter that Mr. Lingenfelter has already tabled in this committee.

Departments and Crowns and agencies were contacted, the agenda was locked in, the agenda was agreed to by all members of this committee, and since that time some members of this committee have done everything they can to obstruct that agenda. In fact, the motion that is on the floor right now, with the amendment to that motion, if it passes, the entire agenda is wiped out from the point of that motion being placed before this committee by Mr. Neudorf.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I think that I would want to conclude my remarks for the moment on the amendment and the main motion, but I wanted to just put very clearly on the record that we do have a mandate and we do have a set of rules. If the members, or some members on the committee don't like those rules, that's just too bad. Those are the rules. If the members on the committee who are concerned about this want to have their interpretation of the rules be paramount and set judgement over all future Public Accounts Committee, that's wrong.

It was Mr. Hopfner pointed out you are individuals to some extent, but if we can't work together as a group, then this committee cannot function. You've done everything you can to drive a wedge between opposition members and government members in this committee, just like you do in the public when you try and drive the wedge between the rural community and the urban community in Saskatchewan for your own political gain.

What are you trying to cover up in the *Public Accounts*? Is it the blatant political expenditures that you made in the '86-87 fiscal year, where you projected a budget deficit of \$389 million and when the books were tallied up in the *Public Accounts* it shows a deficit in that year of \$1.2 billion? Is that what you don't want the public of

Saskatchewan getting at, is your blatant political expenditures? You should be ashamed to even sit on the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: — Thank you, Mr. Anguish. I suggest we take a 10-minute break at this point. Mr. Martin, you're up next.

Mr. Martin: — Could we do it after I make my comments, which are very brief, because I have to leave and . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Sure we can do that, Beattie.

Mr. Martin: — Well with a desire for efficiency, I have written them out so I can get this done quickly.

I wanted to say that the member from Rosthern, Mr. Neudorf, has made an amendment to the original motion which I believe is fair and answers the concerns of the members opposite that we too want to continue with the 1986-87 public accounts, although I remind you that those questions that were prepared by the researchers were probably asked in estimates last year. I'd like to see us proceed with the vote so we can get on with this review that we all agree must be done.

And in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I want to say that your performance on television last night was purely political, and in my opinion, unbecoming a chairman of this committee, a committee of the legislature. You have allowed political bias to completely dominate this committee to the embarrassment of all those who are forced to sit here, and at great expense to the public.

I believe in the role of the media, and I believe in open discussion with the media, but it is my opinion that if the media had not been present at these meetings that it would not have been allowed to get out of hand to the extent to which it has. And I hold you responsible for that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: — All I can say, Mr. Martin, just in response, that if I see a government moving in what I consider to be a heavy-handed, antidemocratic fashion as this government has done in the past, I would submit, then I will speak out. And I did that when I was on Regina City Council, and I will do that now. And there's nothing that you can do or your government can do that will prevent me from my right and my obligation as a member of the Legislative Assembly, as a representative of the people in my area, to speak out.

Mr. Martin: — As long as I have an opportunity to say what I want.

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I was listening to remarks from the member from Battlefords. On my point of order to you I accepted your ruling basically because there is that confusion as to how wide range the amendment and the motion is. And your interpretation of it was that he had tied it into the amendment.

I want to say to the members of this committee and especially to the member of The Battlefords that I'm prepared to accept his comments as to how he expressed

how the running of the public accounts have been and had taken place at the national level. But I'd like to hear that for myself, and I would like to be able to ask questions in regard to the workings of it. Because I basically feel it's an independent right as a member of this committee to know that everything's factual and runs according to those guide-lines that the member from Battlefords said it does run to. And if it does, it must be working.

I've got no complaints with the fact that if it's workable and we have all a consensus of those interpretations of rules or however members opposite want to put that, then that consensus is to be adhered to by this committee.

I will definitely cite that members opposite do have a problem with dates and times, or something of that nature. But I am in a position wanting to move on with the amendment and the motion so that we can get into the workings of deliberating the review process so that we can come to that consensus and come to a mature running of this committee.

When I hear a statement made by the member from Battlefords that an individual has some rights or some extent to those . . . he's an individual to some extent, I would like to think that we are a complete individual, complete type of individual; that our explanation into the word as an individual is that we can operate as a complete and independent member of this committee and not just as a partial individual.

And these are the things that lead to the partisism and innuendoes and the various accusations that we've been hearing throughout . . . In the fast few days. I think these are ways that we'll be able to do away with those kinds of statements in this committee, and if some members wish, they could take it back as I had indicated earlier into the real arena for that kind of, maybe, process . . . although to me it's probably in some extent a way some of the mannerism is carried on is in some way childish.

But those kinds of arguments that I'm referring to is of a political nature, and that should be dealt with in the arena of the legislature and not here. And I'm just thinking that, and would like to state that if we could vote on the amendment and the motion it would show that we both are willing to go to work and come to this consensus and an understanding where we can get right back into the various departments and question it.

But I don't just rest . . . I put the blame and would allow the blame to just lie on the members of the committee without correcting the chair. I don't think for one moment, and I agree with the member from Wascana when he brought to your attention that the problem also lies in the chair — that you don't have, and you're not willing to bring any impartial type of ruling to this committee and it shows in many aspects in this room. And I think that you have a much larger role to play in wanting to see this committee work. You should be proud to be able to be the chairman of this committee and to submit a report of this committee to the legislature. You should be proud of that fact.

I think that if you yourself could lay the political bias aside and allow even your colleagues on your side of the House

in opposition to carry that flag for you, or that partisanship for you in a light manner, and we give you the neutral respect for this committee and be able to make some hard, fast rulings and say okay look, I interpret this rule to be this way or that way. But it's got to a point where I, as a member, when we speak on this side of this committee, you call us to order, and when your members are speaking when we bring a point of order to your attention, you just definitely don't even want to listen to the point of order. And it's very apparent in this room that that bias is in here.

I think if you look at other special committees that have been set up by the Legislative Assembly — and I happened to sit on one of them — we operated with the opposition member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and Ralph Katzman had chaired this committee and we got along wonderfully. We travelled the province, we put the information together, we got recommendations, we've set them forth into the legislature. There was no political bias. There was an understanding that when we went out we would come back with kind of a consensus in the report and table it. And that's what we did.

Mr. Chairman: — Can I just ask you, Mr. Hopfner, you're charging me with political bias and I wasn't . . . I must confess I wasn't listening closely because I was just looking at something else, but are you saying that . . . are you charging political bias in the way that I run the meeting; that is to say, favour some members as opposed to others, giving people the floor as opposed to others, or is this political bias in terms of statements that I'm making outside the committee?

Mr. Hopfner: — I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, that it is my impression. I'm not saying it's the impression of other members or anything else. I'll let them speak for themselves.

Mr. Chairman: — Yes, you're speaking for yourself, yes.

Mr. Hopfner: — It's my impression, and that's what I've said.

Mr. Chairman: — No, what did you say?

Mr. Hopfner: — I said that it's my impression.

Mr. Chairman: — What is your impression, is what I'm asking?

Mr. Hopfner: — Will you listen instead of writing down?

Mr. Chairman: — Well I'm sorry. Sometimes that happens. I'm just asking you to clarify a remark.

Mr. Hopfner: — I'll be clarifying it as the day goes on.

Mr. Chairman: — Can I ask you again? You used the words "political bias", and I want it and I'll get it very clear as to exactly what it is that you're saying. Because if you're charging bias in one sense, then I guess there's a question of privilege there.

Mr. Hopfner: — I think you're out of order, Mr. Chairman. Are you not out of order? Well we're talking

about the motion on the table, we're not talking about you, yourself personally.

Mr. Chairman: — No, you were, you were, you were.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well yes, I was talking in a general way to that motion.

Mr. Chairman: — No, Mr. Hopfner, I want you . . .

Mr. Hopfner: — You can come back and ask me at any time and I'll tell you. But will you let me finish and then you can ask me?

Mr. Chairman: — You used the words "chairman" and "political bias". Now I'm asking you when you said this, did you mean . . .

Mr. Hopfner: — My impression is that you are politically biased as a chairman, yes.

Mr. Chairman: — Acting as a chairman . . .

Mr. Hopfner: — Acting as a chairman, yes.

Mr. Chairman: — . . . that I'm politically biased. Well I would say that we have a question of privilege here that the committee should decide.

Mr. Hopfner: — Put the question.

Mr. Chairman: — If you're saying that I show political bias outside this room, yes, I make no secret of that. If you're suggesting by your remarks that in running the chair that, you know, in terms of recognizing members when they speak, in terms of the rulings that I make, that somehow this shows a political bias, is that what you're suggesting — the latter, Mr. Hopfner?

Mr. Hopfner: — I am saying, generally I have that impression. Yes.

Mr. Chairman: — That in terms of the rulings that I make, that they are politically biased rulings.

Mr. Hopfner: — I just said . . .

Mr. Chairman: — I want to get that clear now. I want to get that clear.

Mr. Hopfner: — You want to spar off on me . . .

Mr. Chairman: — No, I don't want to spar off . . .

Mr. Hopfner: — . . . on the actual way of my . . . I am suggesting that the chair is confused. I am suggesting that the chair doesn't know how to make a decision. I am concerned that the chairman doesn't know how to interpret the workings of this committee. And that is what I am saying to you, and that is what I said in my remarks. And if you go back in the verbatim you will understand that without interrupting. And if you would listen . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Mr. Hopfner . . .

Mr. Hopfner: — If you would listen, Mr. Chairman, then I

would suggest you don't try to put words in my mouth; you listen to what the discussion is instead of reading and writing if you're so concerned. I was addressing the chair. I'm addressing through you to this committee, and if you have a point of order, then bring the point of order. That's the proper procedure.

Mr. Chairman: — Mr. Hopfner, all I can say is that I'm going to let this one pass because I wasn't as attentive as perhaps I should be and could be, but you have my undivided attention for your remarks.

Mr. Hopfner, you have the floor.

Mr. Hopfner: — I'm just recollecting where I was here.

Mr. Chairman, that is a general concern of mine, is what I have, I guess, just got finished explaining to you in kind of a louder fashion than I really wanted to speak in. And I think probably the statement is clear there that of the way I feel the chairman should be more, and definitely more, in a non-confused manner and more of a neutral to hold the committee together in more a neutral sort of way.

And I think that's what's got to be looked at in part of this review as to how we can give the chairman those kinds of empowerments or authorities to be able to control that, the committee. I want to know that . . . I want members opposite, and as well you, Mr. Chairman, to know that this side of the House, or this side of the committee, the government side of the committee, want to co-operate in a very professional manner. They want the answers as well, as the people are entitled to the answers. They want to know that the spending of the government is legitimate. They want to know that there's an independent legislative body that can control that.

I believe in those freedoms. I believe strongly that an auditor has a responsibility. I believe that we have a responsibility. I believe that Crown Corporations Committee has a responsibility, as well as the Legislative Assembly has a responsibility. I believe in the different forums and I believe that each forum have their own workings.

I don't believe in duplicating at the cost of the people. I don't believe in duplicating forums for the reasons of politics and just politics. I believe that that if we are genuinely here to do the job of this committee, it should be done, as the member from the Battlefords has indicated on several occasions, with a non-partisan view. But he can't have it both ways. He says non-partisan, then he goes on and on and on to say, but I am a politician.

Well I'm a politician too, but I'm prepared to sit in this committee, Mr. Chairman, without this partisanship because I would like to ask questions of the departments as well. And if I've got to sit here and listen to the preambles and the innuendos, accusations, that flow forth that the government, the ministers, the departments are guilty before there's any guilt established — well, there's a problem with the process. There's a definite problem with the process, because even in the courts of our land you're not guilty until proven guilty.

And we're not here to establish that there has been guilt.

We're here to establish whether there is the correct spending, the legitimate spending in a department. If there isn't, then we should question that. And I'm sure that if there was not legal spending within a department, I'm sure that it's going to come out. One way or another through this forum it's going to come out.

I don't believe for one moment that there should be a withholding of any kind of information that is subject to this committee. I want to determine what that information to this committee is supposed to be. I believe that all of us, not only the auditor and not only the department officials, but us, as independent politicians to this committee, should have a professional standard and a professional ethic.

We can sit here and debate this, and debate it and debate it and debate it some more, but unless we are prepared to show the public that, okay, we've come to the consensus that a review is going to be done, let's get on with it and get done with it as quickly as possible so that we can get into the '86-87. Forget about the political haggling of whether there's going to be an election or not, or there's some stonewalling on the part of the government.

I will say this much: if we don't vote on these amendments, or this amendment and this motion, for the simple fact that the opposition members now that have been opposing it are not prepared to get into the workings and the meat of the rules and the regulations that govern this committee and want to come to that consensus so that we can get on with it in an expediency, then I say to you that I say the opposition members are stonewalling. Because I'm prepared to go to work this afternoon on this. I'm prepared to go to work right now, to begin it, to get it finished, and to get on with the workings and on to the questions of the departments.

I'm prepared, and I'm sure the colleagues on this side of this committee are prepared to get on with the workings. But if members of the opposition want to carry on with coming back with more and more and more and more debate that really doesn't what in my mind didn't pertain, but I guess I was overruled. It didn't pertain to the amendment. Well, so be it; I was overruled. But I charge them with stonewalling because they are not willing to get on because they are saying, they are admitting, that this side of the committee that carries the majority have the power to pass that motion.

Well I concede this committee decided the government side of the committee does have more power because we have more members, and it does have that power to pass that motion. I concede that. And I also concede to the fact that I am serious enough to want to come up with some professional standards and ethics in this committee. And I'm going to sit here until that motion is passed, so that we can get on with the workings and with the review and get into the workings of this committee again.

So I charge the opposition members, as long as they want — they can talk on it as long as they want, and I'll rebut to some of the things that they say because they're highly political. But I will rebut to some of those things. I will promise them that I will stay here until we have that resolve. And I also say once more, I personally charge the

opposition members of this committee with stonewalling if they don't vote and don't want to bring the motion to a vote.

I'll close my remarks with that and let someone else get in, Mr. Chairman, and come in at a later date.

Mr. Chairman: — Thank you, Mr. Hopfner. I have Mr. Neudorf next on the order.

Mr. Neudorf: — Oh, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd forgotten that I was on there.

I began this day, I thought, in a spirit of good will, in a spirit of co-operation and hopefully conciliation. But now, after observing the member opposite, the pure unadulterated hate flashing in his eyes and venom dripping from his lips, I have concurred that perhaps this process of reconciliation is going to be more difficult than I had at least at first assumed.

But I would certainly urge the members opposite to . . . we're almost at a break here . . . to seriously consider the option that I've given, because from what I've been hearing so far from you, I'm not quite sure whether there's any real point in us pushing this motion, because I don't think that that spirit of co-operation is there . . . or not this motion, the amendment, I mean. Yesterday you led us to believe that this is something that you would be looking forward to, and I thought by doing this and giving you this open door, by doing it, that this would accomplish the objective. It's obviously not going to do it. But I would still encourage you to reconsider and to ask more questions or debate further — whatever is in your mind to do with it, and hopefully we can resolve this impasse that we seem to be at.

I have a number of other things I could say, but I do want to just make reference to one point that a few other members have been talking about and seems to be a point of very, very large concern on their part, and that is the role of the chairman. You, Mr. Chairman, and I have a great deal of empathy in terms of the delicacy of the position that you find yourself in, and under different circumstances I find myself in, and Mr. Muller as well. So I can certainly appreciate the delicacy of what you're finding yourself in.

I happen to believe that you're an extremely biased individual, and you have every right to be so, and I congratulate you on that simply because your statements and so on to this committee are your personal viewpoints, and I have no problem with that whatsoever because you offered originally to step down and let someone else take over so you could express your opinion. So as far as I'm concerned, when you want to express your opinion in debate, go ahead; no problem. But some of the rulings and so on, I'm not quite sure whether I would have made them that way. But I'm not creating an issue here; all I'm saying is that, as chairman, you have one function to perform, and that is to conduct a meeting in its most appropriate form. I do not think — it is my own personal opinion — I do not think that there's anything that you have specifically done that has contributed to our position that we find ourselves in. I think rather it goes back to that same basic problem again where, although

the member opposite tried for half an hour to read into the record all the various minutes indicating what our mandate was and so on, I think what we're facing here is the problem of interpretation.

It may have worked at one time if that . . . I believe it was in 1982 that was being read to us. This is seven years later. There are a different set of circumstances, different people, different mentalities. So I think a review, in that case, which is going to resolve some of these uncertainties under which we're operating, would only lead to a much, much more productive meeting henceforth. So I don't know. It's pretty well our closing time, so . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Can I just get some clarification myself then? like, the first day I said that I wanted to make some comments on a debate . . .

Mr. Neudorf: — That's what I was referring to.

Mr. Chairman: — Yes. I asked Mr. Muller if he would take the chair so I could do that, but the committee said no, just make them from the chair.

Mr. Neudorf: — There's no problem with that.

Mr. Chairman: — Okay. Now the other thing is that if members don't quite agree with rulings that I make, or I think used the words "made rulings that way", that you wouldn't have made rulings that way, they certainly have the option at any time of saying that, you know, I want to challenge the ruling of the chair.

We did that in terms of getting into this particular issue when I said that we needed a motion to set aside the agenda, and you said we didn't, and the committee prevailed and that's fine. I mean, the committee can do that.

So I . . . again if you're not satisfied with any of the rulings that . . . you know, when I make a ruling based on the procedures that we have, which are the procedures of the Legislative Assembly, based on the mandate we have, and the latest mandate of that is in the 1982 report, then you can certainly overrule the chairman at any time.

Having said that . . .

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Chairman, point of order.

Mr. Chairman: — Point of order.

Mr. Anguish: — Just in the spirit of reconciliation and co-operation, I was wondering if the government members would consider, over the lunch time break, a sub-amendment to the amendment that Mr. Neudorf brought in, in a spirit of co-operation. And that is that . . . I believe the final line reads something like:

Continue its work on the 1986-87 *Public Accounts* after that time.

If they would consider deleting the words following *Public Accounts*, instead of reading "after that time" to read that, in the final line:

Continue its work on 1986-87 *Public Accounts* concurrently.

Mr. Chairman: — If you're proposing that as an amendment, you can do that, although I have Mr. Lingenfelter has the floor ... (inaudible interjection) ... No, he was ahead of you, Mr. Muller.

Mr. Anguish: — I just raised it as a point of order in terms of maybe finding some room for co-operation ... (inaudible interjection) ... Well, we can move it formally when it comes my turn on the speaking order, Mr. Muller, but I just raised it as a point of order to attempt to get this committee back in a co-operative mode.

I'm suggesting to the committee that the government members consider the option of bringing in or accepting a sub-amendment to Mr. Neudorf's amendment that instead of considering the *Public Accounts* after the mandate has been studied, to consider the *Public Accounts* for '86-87 concurrently.

Mr. Chairman: — Mr. Anguish, you can't move an amendment on a point of order.

Mr. Anguish: — I did not move an amendment.

Mr. Chairman: — You are on the speaking list. You can move an amendment at that time.

Mr. Anguish: — I did not move an amendment.

Mr. Chairman: — If you can get leave from other people that are on speaking order before you, Mr. Lingenfelter, Mr. Muller, that we should proceed to you and to any further amendments, you can make such arrangements with them. But at this point let's leave it until 1:30 and we'll reconvene and we have Mr. Lingenfelter, then Mr. Muller, and then Mr. Anguish.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make a few brief points on the amendment that has been put forward by the member from Rosthern to a motion that he moved yesterday, and basically to say that the process we're going through is, I think, unnecessary at this time — not the idea of the review because, as we have said over and over again, we're not opposed to reviewing the rules of this committee or any committee in the Assembly. I think that from time to time, just as in your own personal business or, for example, the member from Rosthern may from time to time review his personal rules that apply to his household or whatever, that that can be done.

And it may be that we review the rules of this committee and come up and say that the rules that you people put in place in 1982, that my colleague from The Battlefords went over in some detail this morning, are perfectly adequate, but we're not opposed to that exercise being carried out at some point.

Our opposition to this motion and to the amendment is that it effectively kills the working of this committee until new rules are set in place, because you've said over and over again that you're unwilling to work in this committee

with the rules that presently exist.

I guess I find that hard to believe when in fact they are the rules that you and many of your cabinet ministers put in place in 1982; have been reviewed from time to time; small amendments have been offered and accepted between 1982 and now. It would be very easy if you would point to the rules that you had trouble with, even now, today, to say look, this rule we have trouble with; this rule we have trouble with. Maybe there's a chance that we could make a motion today and refer it to the House, and that rule would then change. But there's no sense stopping the working of the committee.

I want to refer again to the letter that was sent by Mr. Berntson to our House Leader, that set out our task and goals of this week, that we would very much like to be carrying out right now; that is, asking questions about the spending priorities and the spending habits of your government in the year 1986-87.

It seems to me what you people are unwilling to accept is the democratic process that has been developed over many, many years; in fact, over 100 years of British tradition, the House being controlled by the people who get the majority of the votes in the election. Now that wasn't exactly true in 1986 because the Conservative Party actually got fewer votes than the New Democratic Party, but you won the majority of the seats, therefore you control the Assembly. Everyone accepts that.

This committee is set up to review the spending of the government. There's a mechanism here that gives some balance to the opposition in that the chairperson of this committee is from the opposition party, whoever might be in opposition. But the control of the committee still remains in the hands of the government.

You can change rules. If you have some changes you want to make, bring them and we'll look at them and either change them or not, but obviously you can make those changes because you control the committee. If you had a couple of rules you wanted changed, all you have to do today in this committee is move that they be changed. You can vote them in because you have the majority. That recommendation would then go to the House and then we would keep on with our work.

We, already, two days ago, passed a motion asking the Clerk to review the mandate of the committee. That is now in process. That is going on. We don't have to stop the work of this committee to get that report from the Clerk. The staff at the Clerk's office is in the process of getting the information that you asked for, that we asked for, in terms of the mandate of the committee. My colleague from the Battlefords has gone over the rules, which are extensive and built on a tradition that goes back since the beginning of the province in 1906.

I want to say as well that there are many documents around that would refer to the mandate and the history of this committee. And I'm not going to go into any detail, but in 1987 there was an orientation that many of you attended that gave a background of what this committee was involved in: the role of the government members, the role of the chairperson, the role of the opposition, the fact

that there may, from time to time, be politics involved in the committee. Everyone knows that, just as there's politics involved in the Assembly. You can't remove it. It wouldn't matter how many rules you passed, you're not going to be able to remove politics in total from this committee. It's not possible.

The level of politics, of course, doesn't come from the rules but comes from the members on the committee. If you're not satisfied with how the committee is functioning, it's not the rules because you've already accepted the rules when the game started. If you're not satisfied the way it's working, why don't you resign your positions and get new people on the committee? We're satisfied with the rules of the committee. You were satisfied with them when the game started. It's only two and a half days into the game, if I may call it that, or into the workings of the committee, that you finally decide that we're going to quit playing, we're not going to carry on this work any more because the rules aren't set in our favour, or the rules don't deal directly enough the way we want them to to protect the Conservative Party, therefore we're not going to continue on.

I say this is a historic committee. I want to refer you to Erskine May on Public Accounts, which refers to the committee as it exists in the British parliamentary experience. And to quote from it, to give you some idea of the longevity of the committee and the role that it is supposed to play, on page 675 under select committees it says:

The Committee of Public Accounts is appointed under S. O. No. 86 "for the examination of the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure, and of such other accounts laid before Parliament as the committee may think fit." The number of members of the committee is fixed by the same standing order at not more than fifteen. In 1974-75 the committee was nominated for the whole of a parliament. The main function of this committee is to make sure that the parliamentary grants for each financial year, including supplementary grants, have been applied to the object which Parliament prescribed, and to consider the matters brought to the notice of Parliament in the reports made by the Comptroller and Auditor General as a result of his audit. For this purpose it has the assistance of the Comptroller and Auditor General. The committee also scrutinizes the causes which have led to any excesses over parliamentary grants. The researches made by the committee, and the publication of its reports, ensure, on behalf of the House of Commons, an effectual examination of the public accounts. From establishing accounting regularity the committee's field of interest has extended over the years to the elimination of waste and extravagance and the encouragement of sound practices in estimating, contracting and financial administration generally. The committee do not examine policy, but how policy is carried out.

The committee was appointed for the first time in

1861 . . .

I want to say to you that what you're doing here today, if this motion were to pass, would be to suspend the committee that has its roots, that go back to 1861 in the British parliamentary system.

Your cover story is that the rules don't work. Obviously, we believe something quite different; that the reason you want to suspend the workings of this committee is to avoid a detailed scrutinizing of the spendings that went on in the year of the election.

I want to quote from the *Leader-Post* of March 5, 1987 that deals with the very issue that we want to talk about, and that is the spending in the year under review and the year of the election. And in that paper in an article that was carried in the paper, it's talking about the government's dealing with the people of the province in leading them to believe an untruth when it came to the spending and estimates of this government leading up to the election. And I want to talk about what was said at that time. And I would quote, it says in here that:

. . . what has happened to this government is that all its problems have finally converged. No longer can the Tories camouflage reality, hide it behind shallow enthusiasm or distort it with deceptive political rhetoric. The sudden, abrupt change has been function of politics itself. Last fall when the Tories were campaigning for re-election, reality was set aside for the sake of political expediency. The provincial government may have been on the brink of financial crisis, but it was best left unsaid until after the business of winning a second term was completed.

This is talking about the spending that we're now to be reviewing. It goes on to say:

Even now Finance Minister Gary Lane unashamedly admits the electorate was perhaps deceived in the last election.

That refers to my comments yesterday that the public was deceived going into the last election.

He talks now about the monstrous provincial deficit and the dwindling revenues from resources, but not a negative word was breathed during the campaign. "What do you expect; we're politicians," . . .

This is in quotations. This is what Gary lane said about his deception.

"What do you expect; we're politicians" . . .

This is in talking about his misrepresentation of the facts to the public during the campaign:

. . . says lane, in what has to be a telling admission.

And it goes on to say in conclusion:

All of these issues have created a crisis the Tory

cabinet ministers now face. They can no longer run away from the situation that to a significant degree was a dilemma of their own making. For at least the last two years the Devine government has dodged what it knew was the truth. Now that the election has been won and the Tories are safe for the next four years, the time has come to face the truth.

This is what we all believed, that we would have a mechanism to ask questions about the deception that went on.

It isn't a pretty situation, and what makes it worse is that we are all going to have to pay for the mess that has been created.

Now I say to you that today, this week, we were to deal with that mess and ask some questions of the officials about, not Gary Lane, the politician's view of the economy, but as has been established through Public Accounts (Committee) over the last century, not the politician's view but the bureaucrat's view of when did it become obvious that the deficit was not going to be 300 million but 1.2 billion.

This is what Public Accounts (Committee) is about. We don't need new rules to find that out. And the public is interested and they want us to ask those questions. And the member from Rosthern knows they want us to ask those questions. The difference is, the government doesn't want to give the answers. It's not here that the bureaucrats don't want to give the answers.

I say that this is the Deputy Premier giving instructions, Mr. Berntson, for this committee to stall and so that we can't get at the problem that exists.

Now I want to refer you to an article that appeared in the *Leader-Post* yesterday or this morning that refers to this continued cover-up; not only a cover-up during the election, a cover-up in the House with literally hundreds of unanswered questions in motions for return that we can't get answers to. Now the Committee of Public Accounts — and I quote in here:

While a review of the committee's rules is not unusual, the move by Neudorf and the Tories is still bizarre. They want the committee to suspend indefinitely until the review is completed.

Now this is what it's all about, a massive cover-up that goes back to the last election where a government won an election as much on deceiving the public as telling them the truth. And I would put it in much stronger words, and I will outside the House as I have many times before, because the rules don't allow me to say what I really think of a minister who would deceive the public like that. Outside of the House I will say what I think of that minister and a Premier who would do that.

But even worse than that, having won the election on deception, refusing the public now to ask those pertinent questions in the guise of saying the rules of this committee aren't good enough, rules that you put in place — it's ludicrous.

And I say to you that we don't intend to let this motion pass, because if we did we would effectively abolish the committee which has been in place since 1906. And I don't know if you people are aware of what you're doing. We have a responsibility to the public of the province not to let this pass. If we let this pass we would be saying to the public, you no longer have the right to find out in Public Accounts (Committee) how the spending of this government takes place. And I don't think we can allow that to happen. I don't think the press can allow that to happen.

Therefore we're going to continue to discuss and debate this issue until we get you people to see the light and withdraw the motion. And I was pleased to see that, contrary to the member from Cut Knife-Lloyd who says we're filibustering, the member from Rosthern in his comments after the member from Cut Knife, countered his argument and said that he encouraged the debate because it's a good debate. And I think we should be debating this long and hard, because eliminating the Public Accounts Committee is a major move. This is no small, little motion we're dealing with. We're talking about ending Public Accounts (Committee).

You people will control the review that takes place. You control the House. What if you come back with a recommendation that looks at the option of ending the committee without the process of reviewing this spending that we're now involved in?

What we say is the review, if it's legitimate, let's do it concurrently. And my colleague from The Battlefords will be moving such an amendment to your motion later on. Because I very much want to see the proof of whether you're legitimate in saying you want a review or whether you want to end the committee. Because in voting in favour of our amendment will prove that you want to review. Voting against our amendment will prove once and for all that what you want to do is end the committee.

Mr. Chairman: — Thank you, Mr. Lingenfelter.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: — Mr. Anguish, I notice that you've spoken before on this, and I wouldn't mind making a few comments myself if that's appropriate. But no, go ahead. I'll do it after your . . .

Mr. Anguish: — No, make your comments.

Mr. Chairman: — This morning, I asked my staff to survey the public accounts committees in other provinces in Canada to determine their progress as consideration of their 1986-87 public accounts. I'd report the following:

In every other province except Quebec, the review of the 19 . . .

Mr. Neudorf: — Point of order, Mr. Chairman. You referred to your staff. Which staff are you talking about?

Mr. Chairman: — The staff in the caucus office.

Mr. Neudorf: — I just wanted that clarified. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: — In every other province except Quebec, the review of the 1986-87 public accounts has been completed. Even in Quebec, the government has already tabled the 1987-88 *Public Accounts*. In several other provinces also, the 1987-88 *Public Accounts* have already been released.

And here is a run-down by the provinces. British Columbia — the review is completed. Alberta — the review was completed in the summer of '88, and the auditor's report for '87-88 is being issued today. In Ontario — the review is completed. The 1987-88 *Public Accounts* have already been released.

Manitoba — the review is completed. The 1987-88 *Public Accounts* have already been released. Quebec — the review is under way but is not yet completed, but the 1987-88 *Public Accounts* were released in December of 1988.

Newfoundland — the review is completed. New Brunswick — the review is completed, and the 1987-88 *Public Accounts* have already been released. And Prince Edward Island — the review is completed.

And I say that, and I want to make that clear so that the message is not lost, that this is some unimportant little squabble, but I want to make it quite clear that, in the context of other provinces in this country, what is happening here is quite unique.

We have barely commenced consideration of the '86-87 public accounts before progress was halted, before that consideration was stopped, unlike every other province in this country, and though I haven't checked in Ottawa, I would suspect, unlike the federal government.

It's now being suggested by the motion and the amendment that we put off consideration to an even later day. And one can go into definitions or into details in terms of the amendment as to how far we might stave this off, but speaking strictly to the amendment, the amendment would have us conclude hearings by April 10 and continue a review of the *Public Accounts* after the new mandate is established.

Now it doesn't say in here when the new mandate would be established, recognizing that the new mandate has to go to the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly may be opined to disagree strongly with the new suggested mandate and may never pass judgement on those things. And therefore it is still conceivable, notwithstanding the amendment, that consideration Of the *Public Accounts* may be held up until after the next provincial election. It is not inconceivable.

The rights of an opposition to hold a government accountable are limited, limited in our system of democracy, and are part of a delicate balance between the right of government to carry out its agenda and the need for accountability on the other hand.

The traditions of parliamentary democracy and parliamentary government have attempted over the years

to ensure that balance and any rights that we have as an opposition are hard-fought, and are rights that have taken us a long time to acquire.

The executive government, duly elected by the majority of the people, needs to have the opportunity to make decisions, to set its policy, and to give effect to that policy by raising and spending money. No one here would deny that, but it must also be held accountable for its financial administration since it is spending huge sums of taxpayers' money. And the opposition has reserved the right to be able to ask questions in estimates of what the government's spending plans might be for the coming year to see whether those are appropriate. The opposition has had the right to ask questions in question period about financial expenditures to see whether expenditures have been appropriate. Opposition has had the right to submit written questions to the government and expect answers, and the opposition has had the opportunity, through Crown Corporations Committee in Saskatchewan and through the Public Accounts Committee, to hold the government accountable for previous past expenditures.

The balance that I talked about has been built into the Public Accounts Committee. The executive government carries out its program for the year. After the year is over, the auditor, responsible to the legislature and not to the government, audits the books. Also the Public Accounts Committee examines that record. The chairman of the committee is a member of the opposition. A majority of the committee is composed of government MLAs, and that helps respect and maintain the balance.

And I just might, as an aside dwell on that, the matter of the role of the chairman, because that has been the subject of some comment by many members of the committee in the last day or so. And I want to refer members to a publication called *Improving Accountability* concerning Canadian public accounts committees and legislative auditors. This is a report prepared by John J. Kelly and U.R. Hanson. And these gentlemen prepared a report which was the subject of some active consideration in 1981 and '82 by the Public Accounts Committee in Saskatchewan. And I just want to make it clear what they have to say about the chairman of a committee, and I quote them:

The argument for having an opposition chairman is straightforward. With a committee examining the administration's performance there could be, or appear to be, some conflict of interest if a government supporter were in the chair. Members of the opposition can generally be expected to be more assiduous in their scrutiny, of the administration and less restrained in leading the committee into areas potentially embarrassing for the government.

An opposition chairman, in a committee with a government majority, symbolizes the non-partisan nature of the committee's work. This reasoning is generally accepted and we think it's sound.

The role played by the chairman during meetings of Canadian public accounts committees varies

widely. In some jurisdictions, such as Alberta, the chairman plays a role similar to the Speaker in the full House, recognizing questioners and ruling on any points of order, but not himself participating in the discussions. In other jurisdictions, such as Saskatchewan, the chairman takes a very active part, being essentially the lead questioner. Indeed, we were told that not long ago the chairman was virtually the only person who asked questions.

If a speaker-like chairman is a member of the opposition, one opposition voice on the committee has been effectively silenced — an unfortunate outcome at best.

Now I can certainly appreciate the fact that some members of the committee may wish to redefine the role of the chair to be that, no more than a speaker, and to effectively silence a member of the opposition in this committee. I can appreciate their attempt to do that, but I would tell them that they will attempt to do that without any support on my part, and they will do so with the downright opposition, I would suggest, of other members of this committee.

Again, the opposition has limited, limited rights to hold a government accountable, limited opportunity, and the opposition will fight hard, fight very hard if the opposition sees any attempt to reduce those rights, those responsibilities, and those obligations.

When the government majority wishes to shift the balance and reduce accountability, I don't think that anyone should be surprised — the government members should not be surprised, the media should not be surprised, and especially the public should not be surprised — that the opposition minority will express serious strong reservations about their attempts to do so, to shift that balance, to reduce that accountability.

And I would suggest that no less should be expected from opposition members, or for that matter from any member. No less should be expected from all those that love democracy if they see any attempt that would reduce accountability of the government to the taxpayers as to how their funds are spent. Democracy is a delicate institution no matter how strong we may think it is, and we all need to be vigilant and to work hard to make sure that democracy continues to be a strong institution, even if it is delicate at times.

Some members have now asked for a review of the mandate of this committee. Others resist, although I am coming to the conclusion, listening to the remarks from members, that even those who resist a review now concede that they may be willing to participate in such a review. And I think in all fairness it must be pointed out that the last review of the mandate of this committee was in 1982, and that's some seven years ago. And it may not be inappropriate; in fact it may be very appropriate to have a review of the mandate of this committee and as to how it works.

Having said that, I have obvious reservations, reservations about what might come or result from such a review and how it might affect the ability of members to

be able to ask questions and to do the job that they have been able to do since 1982 — some serious concerns about that. But having said that, it may be appropriate, it may be appropriate to have a review.

Having said that, I think that there needs to be some agreement as to what is the purpose of the review. What is it that we're trying to do? Are we trying to expand the role of the committee? Are we trying to restrict the role of members in the committee? I think those kinds of questions deserve some discussion before there can be agreement as to what kind of review should take place, if indeed there should be any review.

But having said that, again I want to emphasize now that I hear some agreement from all members that a review of the committee's mandate, a review as to how the committee works, may not be inappropriate. The sticking point, the log-jam, the problem that we seem to have is that some members insist, insist that a review take place before any more consideration of the *Public Accounts* for the year 1986-87. Other members are taking the position that a review such as that should take place after the *Public Accounts* are considered, or they have even made the suggestion that such a review can take place concurrently with any consideration of the *Public Accounts* for those years.

But that seems to be the main point of disagreement, and again, the amendment — although I suppose well-intentioned and intended, I would think, to offer some assurances about when we might be able to deal with the *Public Accounts* — I find that upon close scrutiny the amendment fails to do that, and fails to give those kinds of assurances to the opposition.

In my opinion we should complete the current *Public Accounts* before we undertake any review. And I say that for two reasons.

One, in every other jurisdiction, every other jurisdiction in Canada, that review has been completed or, in the case of Quebec, is well under way. I think the public of Saskatchewan deserves no less than what the people of other provinces and indeed the people of Canada have a right to expect, and that is that there be questions as to how their taxpayers' dollars have been spent, taxpayers' dollars that now were spent two years ago. I think they have a right to have questions asked.

They have a right to know the answers before there is any attempt to review the role of the committee, and a review that might conceivably result in a far more restrictive role for the committee, because I am by no means assured, based on the comments that I've heard, that it's the intention of the government members in this matter to expand the role of the committee to make it possible for the opposition members or for all members to ask questions that are even more exploratory. I don't sense that. I sense that the government members wish to restrict the role of the committee.

The other reason I suggest that the current *Public Accounts* be considered before a review is that the 1986-87 *Public Accounts* are the source, and have been the source, of immense controversy. A number of items in

that report need further explanation.

We must remember that in the year 1986-87, at the beginning of the year, the government projected a deficit of \$389 million. At the conclusion of the year the government said that the deficit was \$1.2 billion, although if we take into account the comments of the auditor in his report we would say that the deficit was \$1.4 billion. That is totally unprecedented; that is totally unthinkable; that is an issue that demands explanation.

I think the opposition should be given the opportunity to ask questions on that topic and on other issues that we think need explanation, explanation of that particular fiscal year, because it was an election year and because of the immense controversy that surrounds that particular fiscal year.

And other members have gone on in some detail on that, and I must agree with them that it's appropriate that we are allowed to ask questions, given the rules we have now, before any attempt is made to shut us down and to restrict the kinds of questions that we might be able to ask. And again, if the tenor of the remarks by some members is any guide, a review of our mandate will result in a serious impairment of the ability of members to ask questions, and that is simply not acceptable to me. You're saying that we should put off consideration of the '86-87 *Public Accounts* until such a time as all opposition members can have a hand tied behind their back, and to make it more difficult for them to do their job.

As an example of that, I want to refer — and other members have done this — to the mandate of the committee. And the most recent written statement of the roles and responsibility is that which is contained in the report of the committee of 1982 and which was adopted by the House.

And if we look back for a second to yesterday and the kinds of questions that Mr. Anguish was putting to the Department of Parks and . . . I think, Renewable Resources. Mr. Anguish asked some questions about . . . I believe it was contracts, tenders, bids with respect to golf carts, I believe. Now if we take the written role and responsibilities, there's no doubt about it that Mr. Anguish has the right to ask certain questions based on that.

He would be able to ask about the reliability and appropriateness of information in the *Public Accounts* to provide a full and fair accounting of operation and financial transactions. He might say: was that in fact the party that was given the bid; was that in fact the price; is that an accurate report of the costs involved? And we would get the answer that yes it is.

He might ask about the collection of and proper accounting for all taxes and other revenues. He might ask: was the revenue from that particular tender or bid, was that a property properly accounted for? Has it been received? Was there any problem with that? And once again he'd be told no, we got the revenue.

He might ask about: was this expenditure within the limits and within the purposes authorized by the

legislature? And again he would be told that yes, the Acts that govern the Department of Parks and the golf courses permit this kind of contracting out and permit this kind of tender, and therefore it's an appropriate expenditure. And it's also within such limits as the legislature has set for that kind of expenditure.

He might ask: well, what about the adequacy of safeguards to protect assets from loss and waste and misappropriation? Do we have assets of our own tied up in this, and are they protected? And he'll be told, well, there are no assets in this case, but well, there might be a small one such as a washroom there and, yes, it's well protected and we have people that look after that.

Mr. Anguish, though, also started to ask questions about the regard for economy in the acquisition of goods and services. He started to ask about who else was given an opportunity to bid on contracts. What consideration was there? What planning was there by the department to see about other contracts in this matter? Who else submitted bids? And because the answer to that will not be found until next year's *Public Accounts*, he'll have that opportunity to ask that question again next year.

But there may be other matters where he'll want to ask such a question and he'll want to determine whether or not the taxpayers of Saskatchewan got the best deal possible when it comes to golf carts.

But as I read the remarks of the government members and their concern about his line of questioning, you would shut down that line of questioning. You would make it impossible for opposition members to determine whether or not the taxpayers got the best deal possible for the money that was spent. And frankly, I have very grave reservations about such a restriction.

I want to ask members if they cannot find some resolution to the impasse that we have arrived at. And I want to ask if it might not be possible to again have some joint consideration both of the mandate of this committee while we conduct a review of the public accounts for the fiscal year in question.

I might also ask, are you prepared — are members of the committee prepared — to offer some guarantees as to what the minimum mandate of this committee will be after a review? Because it might well be that members of the committee will say, well, you've given some assurances and you've put those in writing as to what a minimum mandate of this committee might be, and therefore we interpret your want for a review as being one of wanting to expand the mandate beyond what is proposed or what we have now.

I suppose if there were such a guarantee as to what the mandate were to continue to be until a review is completed, . . . or notwithstanding any review, the other members of the committee might take the point, well, we're prepared then to review the mandate before any consideration of the *Public Accounts*. And they may have some questions as to the timing and so on, but I think at the very least they might want some minimum guarantee as to what that mandate might be, subsequent to any review.

And I ask the members who are proposing a review: are you prepared to offer some minimum guarantee as to what the mandate might be before we undertake a review? Some minimum guarantee that the rights and privileges that the opposition has enjoyed in our parliamentary democracy will not be impaired as a result of such a review, because then we might agree to undertake such a review.

The motion does not offer any of these types of guarantees. The motion would put consideration of the *Public Accounts* into a state of suspended animation, into a state of limbo. That is not acceptable to me. That is not acceptable to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

The taxpayers of Saskatchewan want to know about the expenditures of the last election year. They have a right to know about the expenditures of that election year. And I think that they would be sorely, sorely disappointed in the opposition members if the opposition members were to agree to a review of the rights they now have to hold the government accountable, which might result, very likely will result in a serious curtailment of their rights, before we ask any questions about how their taxpayers' dollars would be spent.

And those are my comments at this point.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First off, I'd like to say that at the end of my remarks, I would be placing before the committee a sub-amendment to Mr. Neudorf's amendment. I would then want to go to something . . .

Mr. Neudorf: — Could I perhaps make a point of order at this time, Mr. Chairman, please?

Mr. Chairman: — Point of order.

Mr. Neudorf: — It was brought to my attention some time this, just before noon . . . laxity on my part perhaps, if I did not bring that up sooner, but I think we'll have to make a change in the amendment and the mover of the amendment . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Yes. Yes, I know. That's okay, Bill.

Mr. Neudorf: — . . . because apparently since I made the major motion, I can't make the amendment so I will . . . we should perhaps from here on refer to it as one of my colleagues who will be making that amendment.

Mr. Chairman: — Yes. I wasn't going to worry about it until we actually put it and then we would ask one of your members, but if there's one now that would in fact move . . .

Mr. Neudorf: — Oh there's probably three or four would be willing to . . .

Mr. Chairman: — I only need one for the record. And if one of the members would signify? Mr. Hopfner has indicated that it's his amendment and I think that's acceptable to all sides, and we'll consider it Mr. Hopfner's amendment. Mr. Anguish, you're speaking to Mr. Hopfner's amendment.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As I stated before Mr. Neudorf's intervention, that at the end of my remarks I'll be making a sub-amendment to Mr. Hopfner's amendment to the main motion.

I'd now like to turn to a reflection on a conversation that I had during our morning break with Mr. Martens, the member from Morse. And we were speaking about the value-for-money auditing or sometimes referred to as comprehensive auditing. And I had stated that the members did not want to look at value-for-money auditing even though we acknowledged that the auditor has a mandate to look at the legislative authority for spending in government departments, Crowns, and agencies.

But there's no question in my mind and I don't think in Mr. Martens' mind that we do have the mandate to look at economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. And, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Martens' comment to me was that value-for-money auditing is more than that. Well it may in fact encompass more than that, but the very basics for value-for-money or comprehensive auditing are the three pillars of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. By far the most important part of value-for-money auditing are those three pillars.

And I would like to quote for the committee from chapter 29 of a publication called *The External Audit*, 2nd edition, by R.J. Anderson. And in here there is a description on page 1006. That description is of value-for-money or comprehensive auditing. And I would read to all the members of the committee who are paying attention:

Value-for-money auditing is defined as the independent and systematic examination of an organization for the purpose of providing objective information to indicate where improvements can be made in the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of its operations and resources.

I think that states very clearly, Mr. Chairman, that the very basics for value-for-money auditing are those three pillars of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. And I quote from that to the record of the committee.

I would then like to turn to another publication called *Internal Audit in the Public Sector*, and it's chapter 9, page 69. There's a chapter called "The Auditor and Value for Money." On page 69 of that publication, Mr. Chairman, it talks about the three E's, and I quote:

Any serious student of audit will know that the three E's — economy, efficiency and effectiveness — are the three pillars of value for money.

Again, from another publication, Mr. Chairman, we see that value-for-money auditing and those three pillars are pretty well interchangeable.

I looked this morning at the public accounts record from 1982, and I read into the record the rules that were adopted by this committee and by the legislature. And in

those rules, that were passed by both bodies, it talked about the right of this committee to examine economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Now I think the members from the government side seem to be denying that; that this committee has the right to do that. Yet it's very well documented that we do have that right in this, the Public Accounts Committee.

And it seems to me what the members of the government side are trying to do is take away the ability of the committee to give a full examination of government expenditures, and if it can't happen here in this committee, where, in fact, can it happen? I submit to you, Mr. Chairman, it cannot happen anywhere else in a non-partisan form.

I referred earlier to the quotations I made to the record from the public accounts proceedings in 1982, and I mentioned at that time, this morning, that there had been a meeting with very prestigious individuals in terms of public accounts and auditing in the Canadian public accounts community. And I'd asked, during our break, that there be a copy made of a presentation by Mr. Bill Clarke who was then the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons in Canada. And the document that I had circulated was presented on September 16, 1982 to the Saskatchewan Public Accounts Committee. And I would ask now that the Clerk take a copy of this presentation by Mr. Clarke and have it printed in the minutes of this meeting, and I would go on to point out a few very important items.

And I speak this afternoon trying to find some remedy to our impasse and to find some co-operation on the Public Accounts Committee so we can in fact proceed with the work that is being laid before us. And I think it is important that we find that co-operation, because I would ask members of this committee to reflect on where they could find any other organization that would set aside their agendas and go immediately into revising their rules, finding new rules, examining the rules, or maybe trying to find interpretations of those rules.

All organizations that are serious about their functions would in fact have some kind of an ongoing review process, and I think it's important to have that ongoing review process. But it should not take away from the task at hand, and I can't think of any other organization that would do that, any committee that would do that, other than a committee of this legislature.

Mr. Chairman, I'd first like to look at page 33 of Mr. Clarke's presentation back in 1982, and at the bottom of the page, and I quote:

The importance of this may have been a little overstated, but at my annual meeting in my riding two years ago, just after I was appointed chairman of this committee, my predecessor in Vancouver Quadra, Howard Green, who was the minister of external affairs for Mr. Diefenbaker, told my riding association that the position of chairman of the public accounts committee was second in importance in Ottawa only to that of the Prime Minister. Well now, you can take that for it's worth, but I thought it was nice to hear and he said

it sincerely — so it depends on what you want to do with it.

Now these are not my words. They're not the words of anyone in this legislature. They're the words of Bill Clarke, a very honourable member of the House of Commons, a Conservative member from Vancouver Quadra at that time, the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee.

He was an excellent member, and I would point out that he made an excellent observation in terms of the importance of the Public Accounts Committee and the importance that the chair plays in that role. Although the bouquet was thrown to him in somewhat a political forum, nevertheless it was serious and sincere. And I think that we have to take on that serious air in this committee as well.

Going on on page 34, one of the things that Mr. Clarke points to that we do not have in Saskatchewan that may be advisable, he says, and I quote:

We have a steering committee which meets to consider the important areas of the auditor (general's) report.

And I recall sitting on the steering committee in Ottawa when I had the honour of serving there. And that steering committee had a member from the New Democratic Party, it had a member from the Progressive Conservative Party, and it had a member of the liberal Party, as well as the chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

And they were able to quite adequately work out the agenda with a totally non-partisan nature, while recognizing that partisanship and some exhibitionists as Mr. Neudorf would call them — would appear in the committee itself. But because of the agreement in the steering committee, members and the Public Accounts Committee in total functioned quite well in the House of Commons. And I think that's something that we would want to take under advisement.

Mr. Clarke goes on to say on page 35, and I quote:

We even have our research people prepare questions to (be) put to deputy ministers who come before our committee.

And part of the reason for that is because all members of parliament, as members of this legislature, are very busy individuals. They have their constituency roles to play, they have their political roles to play, they have their legislative roles to play. And those questions are prepared so that members do not miss something that's important, and all members, regardless of their political affiliation in the House, view an importance to have the Public Accounts Committee function in an adequate and meaningful way.

Mr. Clarke also goes on to point out, and I quote on page 35:

We meet regularly twice a week after these briefing meetings.

So in Ottawa they are much better prepared at the resources they have. They have steering committee meetings, they have briefing meetings with researchers, and in addition to that they have two meetings per week to deal with the public accounts of the Government of Canada.

Here we can't even adequately function with one meeting per year when we have a week to look at the public accounts of the province of Saskatchewan. I maintain that if we would try and get that work done at the same time as looking at our rules and the interpretation of those rules, then fine. But we cannot bog down this committee for as short a time as we meet and ever expect to have public accountability in the province of Saskatchewan when we're looking at two years and more to review the public accounts.

At the bottom of page 35, Mr. Clarke says, and I quote:

We also have a good follow-up procedure in place. There is no good in making reports to the House if we're going to sit there and do nothing.

So it's a meaningful process. And I feel that by the motion that's before us, we make it a less meaningful process because it's not timely. And if it's not timely, it's not meaningful, because the press doesn't want to report on something that's two and three years old — it's old news — unless it's very dramatic.

And by your blocking the activities of this committee with your actions over the past few days, maybe there is something there that would get serious press attention, even though it's two years old.

On page 36, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Clarke says, and I quote:

As far as the partisanship is concerned, I suppose all members of the Public Accounts Committee are interested in better administration of the taxpayers' dollars. We have had virtually no evidence of partisanship in our committee, with one exception, and that was when the steering committee unanimously agreed that we should request the Auditor General to do a special study into the oil import compensation program.

So only in that one special circumstance can Mr. Clarke think of such partisanship on the Public Accounts Committee. And that partisanship (I was on that committee at that time) came nowhere close to the partisanship that we're now portraying in this committee. And that absolutely has to stop. I don't know if a review of the rules and the mandate, and the interpretation of those rules and mandate, will in fact even accomplish that. Maybe our House Leaders have to replace us all on this committee so that this committee can function again.

There will be correspondence, I would want to tell you, going between our House Leader and your House Leader in terms of your House Leader allowing you individuals on this committee to break the agreement that had been entered into and the agenda that had been adopted for this Public Accounts meeting during the week of February

6th. And it's a very serious infraction of an agreement between the House Leader of the governing party and the House Leader of the official opposition in the province of Saskatchewan.

On page 38, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Clarke goes on to say, and I quote:

As you know we have generally accepted accounting principles for business accepted by the accounting profession and therefore by the business community. The problem is that governments don't account for things in the same way. Here is one place where it's easy to see the differences.

And if I would reflect back on the first day, Mr. Chairman, there was lengthy discussions as to the need for two auditors; as to why our Provincial Auditor would be required to do auditing where a private sector firm had already done the audit. And I think that Mr. Clarke here documents the very essence that the two accounting procedures are different.

Those private sector accountants do the accounting of the financial expenditures and revenues and state a fair financial position of that particular Crown or agency to their boss, the board of directors. The auditor in the province of Saskatchewan has a very different role in that he has to also make sure that that is a true financial picture of that particular Crown or agency, but also must determine whether or not the money had the legislative authority to be spent by that particular Crown or agency.

And so, as you can see, the two roles are very different and the two roles are very necessary when you're dealing with taxpayers' dollars. You can't have taxation without representation. Taxation without representation is a violation of democracy as far back as we can trace our parliamentary system, and it seems to me that that's what's happening in this particular committee and within this particular government.

At the end of page 38, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Clarke goes on to say, and I quote:

Just to summarize, to be an effective Public Accounts Committee you have to have access to the reports of the Auditor General and to the public accounts. If you have that it's a good start. You also need access to research. You must have that because busy legislators haven't time to do the groundwork that's necessary to produce good meetings and therefore good questions and answers and good reports.

And we don't have researchers. Our political caucuses do the research and that may be a problem in this committee. But he also points out in the quote that I just put forward to you, that the auditor must have access to all government reports, all reports, not selective reports, but all reports.

Now on page 39 Mr. Clarke says, and I quote:

You also must have a good number of dedicated members. I think your presence here indicates that you have a good start, Mr. Chairman. You have to keep that up. Public relations is important too. You have to open your doors before you get any kind of public relations. You must have good relations with your Auditor General. We work very closely with the Auditor General, sometimes too closely in some people's opinion and sometimes not closely enough. But we work well together. That makes for a stronger team when we are all trying to achieve the same end.

And I think what Mr. Clarke points out there is something very important. If we could in fact remove all partisan nature of this committee — and I don't think we can but we can have the end result being non-partisan in terms of a common cause to make sure that there is efficiency effectiveness and economy in government, and there is the legal authority there for departments and Crowns and agencies to spend taxpayers' dollars.

And I repeat again as I did yesterday, that when you members sit in opposition, whether it's us as government or someone else as government, you will want that right to make sure that taxpayers' dollars are spent in the proper way with due regard for those taxpayers' dollars, because they are hard-earned dollars.

And I think that in this committee we should be working on things that are common to us because they are far greater than our differences. We all have many more things in common than we have different about us. The major difference is that you're Progressive Conservatives and we're New Democrats, but that is the major difference. And if we worked on a common cause, this committee would be much better served, and therefore the taxpayers much better served, in the province of Saskatchewan.

Again, and finally to quote from this article on page 39, because I don't want to go through the entire article. I've tabled it and it will be in the minutes of this committee meeting. But Mr. Clarke says, and I quote:

The final thing I want to mention is the so-called Kelly-Hanson report, the report on accountability. You should have this and read through it. It's a very interesting study. It's a comparison of all public accounts committees in Canada except Quebec, where I think the public accounts committee hasn't met for about 10 years.

We found that we were in accord with most of the 69 recommendations in here. We had a little trouble with numbers one and two which ask that the committee adopt a formal written statement describing the committee's role and responsibilities. We aren't sure that we want to take the time that would be necessary to come up with a statement that would be adequate.

Now it seems to me that you're asking to do something that's almost impossible, according to a very prestigious member of the Public Accounts Committee in Ottawa, a former chairperson. I don't believe he's there any longer,

but the former chairperson for Public Accounts (Committee), a very prestigious individual as Mr. Neudorf pointed out, a lot of experience on the Public Accounts Committee.

Other prestigious people in the accounting community for public accounting were there and concurred with what Mr. Clarke had to say, and so I think that members who want to impede the work of this committee want to look very seriously at what is happening here today, because I think it's to the detriment of all of us as individuals, it's to the detriment of the Public Accounts Committee, the legislature, and the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan.

Before I close off, Mr. Chairman, I would like to put forward an amendment, or a sub amendment to the amendment by Mr. Neudorf — pardon me, Mr. Neudorf — by the amendment of Mr. Hopfner to the main motion by Mr. Neudorf. I would like to put forward a sub amendment and, Mr. Chairman, would like to move:

That after the words "Public Accounts" delete the amendment, and insert the words "concurrently."

Well we don't have copies of the sub amendment, or the motion, or the amendment, so it's very hard. Like, I'm doing this from memory and jotting down notes, so if it doesn't fit just right . . . If I could have a look in a moment, Mr. Chairman, I think I could work this out with great haste.

If I can just read into the record, Mr. Chairman, if the sub amendment was to be accepted, the amendment would read as follows:

That the hearings on the mandate of the Public Accounts Committee to be concluded by April 10, 1989 and that the Public Accounts Committee continue it's 1986-87 review concurrently.

Mr. Chairman, I think that already with some of the information we've brought before us that we have a good basis for starting on the motion, the amendment with the sub amendment, because we have a sincere effort to make this committee work responsibly and effectively.

If you look at the 1982 recommendations that were approved by this committee in the legislature; if you look at the presentation by Mr. Clarke; if we take a look at the, I believe it's called the Kelly-Hanson report, which was studied at that time as well; if you look at the descriptions for value-for-money auditing; if you look at efficiency, economy and effectiveness; the Act of the Provincial Auditor, we do have a good basis for starting to review the function of this committee and how it operates. But I think that it is negligent of all of us if we allow that review to take precedence over the review of the 1986-87 Public Accounts.

In speaking to my amendment . . . or my sub amendment, I would ask you to please consider the possibility of the review of the mandate of this committee, but at the same time let us continue in the very near future the study of the 1986-87 *Public Accounts*. In the long term it's no good to you to delay the examination of a public accounts report

that's two years old. And when you make accusations on members from this political party that we're drawing out and delaying the process, there's no motivation to do that. What could be the possible motivation? That's our job. We want to get into the 1986-87 *Public Accounts* report. We want to examine. We want to question. We want to determine whether or not there's economy efficiency and effectiveness, the value for the dollars that were spent, and you should want that to happen as well.

I ask you to support the sub amendment that we have put forward and continue and try and find co-operation and respect for each other's common ground, and try and overlook the differences that we have in partisanship once in a while and get on with the work of this committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Mr. Chairman, obviously the intent of the sub amendment is to ensure that we will have an opportunity to immediately begin an examination on a department by department basis of the 1986-87 estimates.

And I've had the opportunity to have a break for a few hours from this committee by virtue of some business I needed to attend to in Saskatoon. And in some ways a break is helpful from the point of view of getting some perspective on this. Feeling a little less heated than I was yesterday in the midst of my discussion with Mr. Neudorf, but just as angry as I was yesterday in the sense that I really think that the public expects that a review of the 1986-87 accounts, or of any other spending of government, will in practical terms take place within a year to 18 months of the time that the money has been spent. And I think that's just a reasonable public expectation.

And I suspect that the large majority of people in Saskatchewan don't realize that the review has not occurred and will be surprised to learn, through the media coverage that these discussions have now received, that in fact that review has not taken place. It should just be a matter of course.

And I think that maybe one of the shortcomings of the process has been that we have depended too much on tradition in terms of ensuring that these things would happen. And tradition served us well for a very long time. But tradition has broken down with the election of the current government, Mr. Chairman, and tradition no longer served us well.

I wonder if we not only don't need this amendment, which unfortunately government members will probably reject, but in light of the position that they've consistently taken over the last few days, I'm wondering if we don't need legislation on the books in this province that will ensure, Mr. Chairman, that the Public Accounts Committee will have the opportunity to meet on annual basis, and will, when it meets, have an opportunity to consider the expenditures of the government on a department by department basis.

Because at this point in time, the only opportunity that we've had, 22 and a half months after the end of the '87 fiscal year, is an opportunity to examine the estimates of one department, that being Parks and Renewable

Resources. And it was my judgement, Mr. Chairman, that the examination of those estimates was done in an efficient manner. The opposition didn't drag out the examination of that department. We finished it in the morning, and we were set to move on to other departments and deal with those equally promptly in the afternoon.

I reflected on the comments that Mr. Neudorf made yesterday, Mr. Chairman, that the opposition was dragging its feet with respect to the review of these public accounts. That can hardly be said to be the case. I think any review of the record will show that, in fact, the majority of talking that was done on Monday and Tuesday was done by government members with constant points of order, their attack on the auditor, savage questioning of the auditor. I don't know any other way, really, of describing it.

And I think, given the rather substantive concerns that the Provincial Auditor raised in his report, that there was nothing unusual or inappropriate at all taking Monday and Tuesday to examine that report before moving on to department by department examinations. In fact, had the opposition not spent some time asking significant questions about the Provincial Auditor's report, Mr. Chairman, we would have been remiss. So there's been nothing, in my judgement, that has in any way represented foot-dragging on the opposition side of this committee, Mr. Chairman.

I really feel quite honestly that the only thing that can explain the main motion that we have before us right now is the government's desperate desire to avoid, at least at this time, an examination of the 1986-87 estimates. And I suspect that one of the reasons that the members of the government, Mr. Chairman, want to ensure that such an examination doesn't take place is that 1986-87 was an election year and may well have seen some quite unusual expenditures, the implications of which we've not fully had an opportunity to uncover yet. In other words, Mr. Chairman, there must be some potentially explosive material in these expenditures that members of the government do not want us to have access to.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the members of the government, the government members of this committee, as I understand it, have passed a sub amendment, have proposed a sub amendment assuring that the work of this committee with respect to its review of the rules will be completed by April. Well, Mr. Chairman, that in itself does not ensure that this committee will, in the near future, have an opportunity to examine the 1986-87 expenditures of government on a department by department basis.

There have been rumours of an early election. If an early election were to be called, Mr. Chairman — and I must say that the members' desire to block our examination of the '86-87 *Estimates* simply lends more credibility to the notion that the government is at least examining the option of an early election.

But were an early election to occur, Mr. Chairman, we would then be in the unusual position of having sat a term in government and during that term not had an opportunity to examine any of the expenditures of

government during that term, nor during the previous election campaign, nor during the six-month period immediately preceding that election. And I think that would truly be unprecedented in Canadian history, Mr. Chairman, that we would go a whole term of government without having an opportunity to examine any of the expenditures during that term. And I'm sure there's nothing better than this set of government members would like to see that achieved.

And therefore, Mr. Chairman, our objective is to ensure, or at least attempt to ensure, that that doesn't happen. And therefore the motion that government members have put forward is unacceptable. I think it should be clear to all government members, to the media, and to the public at this point, that members on this side of the committee don't have any problem with the notion of the role of this committee being re-examined.

We're puzzled by the sudden urgency that is being attached to this by government members. There has been no indication prior to this week's sitting that government members were deeply dissatisfied with the rules — rules which, as my colleagues have pointed out earlier, have been put in place by your government in the review that took place in 1982 after you were elected.

So this notion that the rules and the workings of this committee have become unworkable is a notion that's only been introduced this week for the convenience, or shall we say for the purpose, for the façade under the guise of this excuse, the deliberations of this committee are being stonewalled by members of the government.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to support the amendment because I want to see us be able to get on with asking some of the critical questions that need to be asked. I'd like to start asking these questions this afternoon, Mr. Chairman, or tomorrow at the latest.

In the case of Advanced Education, for instance, I'd like to see some explanations of why it is that over the years we've been depending on more and more money from the federal government to finance the operations of our universities and our technical institutes and less money from the provincial treasury.

When it comes to the operations of SaskPen, I would like to go back to the auditor's report and have an explanation, Mr. Chairman, about why it is that SaskPen had no budget process in place in the fiscal year 1986-87. I'd like to know, Mr. Chairman, why there were no board minutes kept for the operations of SaskPen. SaskPen is a government-formed business corporation that's wholly owned by several of the pension plans, and it was set up, Mr. Chairman, to use pension plan money to invest in Saskatchewan real estate.

And I want to have an explanation, on behalf of the many pension plan members that have a stake in the operations of SaskPen, why there's no evidence at all that the board of directors of SaskPen ever reviewed the financial statements on a periodic basis during the year, or authorized financial transactions, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to have some answers to that. Unless this amendment passes, Mr. Chairman, we're not going to get any answers

to that in the next few months.

I'd like to be able to ask some questions in Executive Council, Mr. Chairman, which I'll only be able to do if this amendment is adopted.

I want to know, for instance, how specifically expenditures for Dome Advertising and Dome Media advertising were spent, what production and placement took place with respect to those expenditures, Mr. Chairman. That would be a very interesting question to know, in light of the lack of answers we've been getting on the role of Dome Advertising in the legislature, Mr. Chairman.

We've yet to uncover, I think, the real truth about the way this government uses Dome Advertising — I suspect, Mr. Chairperson, using taxpayers' money to help finance the operations of Tory election campaigns during campaigns. But whether or not that's the case, we perhaps would be able to get at whether or not that's the case if we just had a chance to ask some questions about Executive Council, Mr. Chairman.

I want to have an opportunity to get an explanation of whether the Department of Finance monitored, on a monthly basis, the state of the deficit in this province, Mr. Chairman. And I'll only be able to get an explanation to that question if this amendment is adopted. I'm sure it's a question that government members don't want us to ask. It'll be very embarrassing if we are able to determine from the officials from the Department of Finance, Mr. Chairman, that in fact monitoring of the deficit was done on a monthly basis, because if we do, Mr. Chairman, it'll mean that the Premier misled the House when he said that he didn't realize that the deficit was going to be \$1.2 billion by the end of March, during the election campaign, Mr. Chairperson.

So these are some of the questions that we're anxious to ask. We'll only be able to ask them if this amendment is adopted. And if the amendment fails, it'll be clear that it's only because members on the government side of this committee, Mr. Chairman, don't want us to be asking those questions.

A Member: — I agree.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: — Question on the sub amendment?

Mr. Neudorf: — I certainly don't want to spend as much time as the members opposite have used over the last little while, but I want to bring up a few points.

The suggestion that Mr. Anguish had and the information that he gave us — it was in reference to Mr. Clarke — has been one of the bright spots over the last few days. I think that it was an excellent example of the possibility of what I had been talking about, and quite frankly I was kind of impressed with some of the points that you were bringing up in terms of Mr. Clarke's viewpoint.

And I think that underscores my point. The point that I've been trying to put across is that if we can bring expertise

like this in, not just to review what was written in a hard copy but to bring the gentleman in, that's what I would like to see, and gentlemen of that quality and of that type and professionals along that line, and to get them in here so that we can set this up so . . . And I still go back to my original premise, and that is that when I hear you gentlemen talking now, on numerous occasions I have had those rays of hope that I sense a more conciliatory approach. And I hope I am too, and I think that's one only way that we can resolve this ultimately.

But then every time I get to that point where I say, hey, maybe we are running in the right direction, then I go back to the same thing that caused me to finally say, enough is enough, let's review this thing, when I heard Mr. Anguish say that if it waits too long then the press doesn't pick it up. Those were his words. I was following very carefully what Mr. Prebble was saying, and then what does Mr. Prebble say? Well, 18 months, it's an awful long time, and then he used the terminology of media coverage not being there.

Gentlemen, this committee . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . the words "media coverage." Gentlemen, this committee is not supposed to be a sounding board to the degree where the media will be picking things . . . I don't think that's the purpose what we are here for.

Now the way I operate, and the way I work in my constituency, and I can't speak for you of course, but what I do is I run a weekly column; I send out newsletters; I go all over. And I am there for the people to respond to me and I'm there to give the people information. Now I'm sure you do the same thing, and we don't have to necessarily rely on the media to pick up some grandiose statement that we make, because with all due reference to them, we know that the only ones who get on the tube and the only ones who get their picture in the paper are the ones that can make the most noise, the ones that say something dramatic, the ones that come up with the motion. And gentlemen, that's not the way to operate, and that's my whole point. I don't think that we are . . . right now, the mood is not too bad in here, but I know, I know that as soon as we revert back to our original, we're going to be exactly where we were.

Mr. Anguish: — Are you suggesting we go *in camera*? Ask the press to leave.

Mr. Neudorf: — Hey that might not even be a bad idea, but I'm not suggesting that, no.

In a nutshell, Mr. Chairman, I guess what I'm saying is that I have not heard quite enough to convince me otherwise at this point.

Mr. Chairman: — In a nutshell, Mr. Neudorf, thank you. Mr. Hopfner, on the sub amendment.

Mr. Hopfner: — I'll just be short. There were some accusations made by the fact that members of the opposition don't have any method in which to obtain the information such as . . . and examples were used such as Dome Advertising and various different other departments. But I want to refer the member to motions of return, and I can just use this as an example that there has

been asked by Mr. Anguish motions of return for Department of Highways and Transportation, and it's been agreed to and the information was agreed to be sent to you.

Mr. Anguish: — But we haven't got it.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well it's been agreed to be sent to you. If you haven't got it, I don't know why you haven't got it, and that's a different debate. That's another . . .

Mr. Anguish: — Because you didn't send it.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well I'm not responsible for sending it, but that's another debate then. Why isn't it being sent? Question it, because it's agreed to here.

You've asked for the names of bidders and total amounts bid by each and names of successful bidders on projects, where applicable, and reasons why the low bidder was not awarded contract. Question being put, it was agreed to. And if you go to the same as Mr. Brockelbank, who had asked on Roberts and Poole Advertising Corporation; he's asked on Dome Advertising. It's all been agreed to, and there's that forum in which you can ask those questions, get the agreement, and get the information. And therefore, Mr. Chairman, these are the things that were pointed out, and we seem to be going around and around and around on it, and members are refusing to admit that the information is available.

Mr. Chairman: — Can I just ask, Mr. Hopfner for my own enlightenment: I recognize that that opportunity is there for members of the Legislative Assembly to ask for information through written questions, and the government agrees to provide the answers, although we may not get that until after . . . well virtually before the next election and won't be able to debate it. Are you saying that because that opportunity is there, so therefore we shouldn't concern ourselves in asking these kinds of questions here, or that so therefore we should restrict the kind of questions we ask here; that we should somehow impair our ability to ask questions? If we don't get the answers in one place, we should content ourselves with that? I'm not quite clear.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well I'm not quite clear to your question. All I was kind of indicating, Mr. Chairman, is that you could put it in record whether you received the information or you haven't received the information. That's another debate and another argument. I would like to know that, being it's been agreed to and it's been passed by the Legislative Assembly for orders to return, have you received the information or have you not?

A Member: — We haven't, Mike. Not one of the orders to return have been filled. Not one.

Mr. Hopfner: — It's been agreed to here, through this method in the Legislative Assembly, that this information had been agreed to be given to you.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — But it hasn't been given since the election.

Mr. Anguish: — So what's our recourse?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Then we come here and get nothing here.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well, I would have to investigate that myself as to whether that information is given or it is not given.

Mr. Chairman: — Let's revert back to the speaking order. You're done, Mr. Hopfner? Can I suggest that we take a break at this point. It's 3:12 . . .

A Member: — Let's vote on the motion first, the sub amendment.

Mr. Chairman: — I have both Mr. Prebble and Mr. Lingenfelter on the sub amendment.

A Member: — I'll pass.

Mr. Chairman: — Pass? Motion on the sub amendment, and I want . . . this is the sub amendment of Mr. Anguish which basically would change the amendment so that we would be meeting . . . that we would continue consideration of the public accounts concurrently while this review is going on. And I hope that's . . . Is that clear to everyone? All those in favour of the sub amendment? All those opposed?

Negatived

Mr. Chairman: — The sub amendment is lost and we're back to discussion on the main amendment, and the only speaker I have on that one is Mr. Prebble, and I'm wondering maybe at this point we take a break. It's the middle of the afternoon. Is that agreeable? 20 minutes or so? Say 25? I've got 3:15. At 3:35, 20 minutes? Okay.

We're back to discussion on the amendment by Mr. Hopfner.

Mr. Prebble: — Well thank you, Mr. Chairman. I take it we're back to the main motion.

Mr. Chairman: — No, we're on the amendment to the main motion.

Mr. Prebble: — Could you review for us what that amendment is?

Mr. Chairman: — I certainly will. The motion itself is moved:

That this committee immediately proceed to hearings on the mandate of the Public Accounts Committee, and further, that during the next session of the Legislative Assembly, recommendations on the mandate and operation of the Public Accounts Committee be presented to the Assembly.

The amendment to the motion would add the following:

That the hearings on the mandate of the Public Accounts Committee to be concluded by April 10, and that the Public Accounts Committee continue

its 1986-87 review thereafter under its new mandate.

Mr. Prebble: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think what we saw before the break is that any attempts by opposition members to be conciliatory with respect to this matter are virtually of no use and ineffective. The government has decided on what their course of action is, and any attempts by us to compromise in any way are simply not met with any willingness to compromise on the other side.

We have put forward motions, Mr. Chairman, that we are willing to discuss the role of the Public Accounts Committee in the evenings while the Public Accounts Committee reviews departmental estimates during the day. And that proposal has been rejected by members of the government of this committee, Mr. Chairman. We have put forward proposals that we work concurrently, spending some of our time on reviewing the role of the committee and some of our time during the day reviewing departmental estimates, and that has been rejected, Mr. Chairman. We've put forward a number of other motions in an attempt to compromise, and they have all been rejected too, Mr. Chairman.

So we get to the point where the government basically are insisting, like spoiled brats, that they have their way.

Mr. Neudorf: — Objection, Mr. Chairman. I resent a term like that.

Mr. Chairman: — You have a point of order, Mr. Neudorf? What is your point of order?

Mr. Neudorf: — I think that's highly unparliamentary and a slander upon all members of this committee, and therefore of the House, to use terminology such as that. It's undemeaning.

Mr. Prebble: — Well Mr. Neudorf, I . . .

Mr. Neudorf: — Are you telling me, Mr. Prebble, that I've been acting like a brat?

Mr. Chairman: — Let me give Mr. Prebble an opportunity to . . .

Mr. Prebble: — No, Mr. Chairman, I think the point of order is well taken. I'll withdraw my remarks. Despite my feelings, that's not parliamentary language.

Mr. Chairman: — Please proceed, Mr. Prebble.

Mr. Prebble: — Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I guess what I'm saying is that I just feel frustrated because every attempt by members of the opposition to compromise and to reach some sense of co-operation with members of the government on their desire to review the role of the Public Accounts Committee has, in effect, failed.

And what government members are saying is that regardless of the fact that it's been two years since the end of the fiscal year that we are supposed to be reviewing, despite the fact that we're now more than half way

through this government's term without a review of a single day of spending by this government during its term, they are insisting, Mr. Chairman, that the review of the spending on a department-by-department basis be further delayed, providing no sound justification for that, and simply unable to defend their reasons for why the review should be further delayed. Unable to defend their reasons for why it should be further delayed, they come up with this excuse, Mr. Chairman, that there's suddenly an urgent need to review the rules.

That excuse now, given the rejection of every one of our amendments, is being seen for what it is, which is a cheap political ploy to deny the people of Saskatchewan access to information on government spending. That's what's happening here, Mr. Chairman. This is nothing less than a cover-up, nothing less. It's a blatant cover-up by members of the government to deny, not so much members of the opposition access to this information but, more importantly, members of the public access to this information, members of the press access to this information.

This is what this exercise is about. There is little doubt, Mr. Chairman, that if we spend in excess of two months reviewing the role of this committee, that in terms of a review of departmental spending for 1986-87 it's unlikely that any of that review will take place until well into the next sitting of the Legislative Assembly. That is very unlikely; it'll be well into the sitting.

The legislature itself, Mr. Chairman, is due, as I understand it, to be recalled on March 8. If I understand the motion correctly, it will be well into April before the review is to be completed. That will mean that the House will sit for more than a month, dealing with the question of the review.

Mr. Neudorf: — April 10th was flexible, Peter.

Mr. Prebble: — Well I think, Mr. Neudorf, the point is that basically the legislature will sit for a month dealing with the question of the role of the committee and will be sitting in 1989 debating estimates for the year 1989-90 while we have still to review the spending for the fiscal year 1986-87. I mean, that is just unbelievable. No other legislature in the country does that.

Mr. Chairman, no other legislature in the country would allow that to happen. I mean really, Mr. Chairman, you know — this is just my personal feelings; I'm going to be reviewing the matter and seeking legal advice on it — this is really such an outrageous matter that I'd be interested to hear the comments of the Lieutenant Governor on this. I mean, really, democracy and the right of the public to be informed about how their money is being spent is being blatantly denied and basically is being ground to a halt.

The democratic workings of the Assembly are being ground to a halt. And, Mr. Chairman, for that reason I cannot support the amendment, and I certainly cannot support more strongly the motion itself.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I just have a few short comments to address to the committee, and through you to the committee, Mr. Chairman. Basically I guess that I have to

say that, and express a great deal of disappointment in the members of the government, because I think we have spent most of the day attempting to come to some compromise, both in the committee, in our breaks. We, I think, have all made attempts from this side to go to the government members and say, look, there are compromises that could achieve your goal of having a review and our goal of doing the work of the committee. That has been rejected, not once but now twice.

We first moved a motion that would have seen the committee continuing its work and the review going on in the evenings during this week. Today we offer the option, which is even more lenient for your purposes, that we agree with both your motion and your amendment, but our sub amendment would have seen the committee sitting concurrently with the review. That has been rejected as well.

So now we come full face with what is really happening here. I think you've proven finally what you're doing here and that is blocking the democratic process of us being able to look at the spending of this government.

I want to say that I firmly believe that this didn't happen in the middle of this committee in the second or third day, I think it happened in a caucus meeting prior to us ever coming here.

I want you to look at page 42 of the first day of debate and look at Mr. Neudorf's comments on the first day when we came in here. He said:

I'm going to reject the vote against this at this time, but I think as we go along in the next couple of days I'm probably going to come forward with a proposal that might be a little bit more encompassing than what you're mentioning just now and hopefully set the parameters under which this committee will be able to operate more effectively and much more efficiently.

Now I agree it will work much more efficiently for the Tory party if it's not working. This is on the first day. This was your view when you came in here. On the first day you had no intention of this committee working. You had the motions and your plan in place.

I don't think this came out of the committee at all. This came out of the Tory caucus meeting as a way to protect the Premier and the Minister of Finance from their election deceptions. I used terms yesterday that were too strong for this committee, but I still would use them in other places because it's not proper to use them here, but the mistruths that were used by the Premier and the Minister of Finance before the last election.

And you, Mr. Neudorf, in your role came here, I believe, because you basically told us you were going to do this on the first day, on the first day.

Mr. Neudorf: — Check my record.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — It's right here. I'm checking the record. I read your record ... (inaudible interjection) ... No, I'm checking it right here that you said that you were

going to bring forward this kind of mechanism. You didn't explain you were going to be blocking the work of the committee, but that's exactly what you intended to do, exactly what you intended to do.

And why did you do it? Because you had at that point completed your attack on the auditor. That's what you came here for — two points. One, to do damage repair on things that the auditor had said about this Conservative government and its mismanagement of the economy. Having completed that in two or three hours, you then turn to blocking the work of the committee. And at every point since then, Mr. Neudorf, your group has stymied the work of this committee. You did your dirty work for Mr. Lane, you did that, and for Devine, and then you said, now we're finished; now we're not going to do any more.

Mr. Chairman: — Point of order. I think that when members refer to other members of the House outside of here, I think it would be a matter of common courtesy to refer to them by either their constituency or their title as opposed to their names. I think as a matter of courtesy that's how we should deal with that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I appreciate your ruling, Mr. Chairman, but I want to say that the member from Rosthern has obviously got a plan here that is reflected in this committee and is a plan of the Minister of Finance, the Premier, and the Deputy Premier to come here and stop the questioning which would be done in terms of the spending of the Premier's office and the planning of the budget by the Minister of Finance, which was completely false when the budget finally came out, the spending finally came out in 1986-87. That's what this is all about.

And very, very important that we realize what we're doing in ending the life of this committee, that you're stopping a process that is essential to the democratic process. We're two years behind, almost two years behind, and we're now saying that we're going to take another five or six months, or maybe a year. Because here again the member from Rosthern had indicated in committee that he thought it was possible that it may not come back in before the next election. He indicated that yesterday, and I say to you that that is the plan.

And the problem is here that you can't face criticism because you think it might affect your election results. You've attacked the Ombudsman. You've attacked the Law Clerk. You've attacked the auditor. You attack opposition members who ask questions. And I say to you that is against every principle of the democratic process, and I just can't believe that you would take this nonchalantly in the committee, that you'd end the process without even considering the ramifications of what you're doing. So I don't know. You have to wonder why the urgency to do the cover-up at this point. You really have to wonder.

And I just say to you that yes, we refer to the press having a role in the democratic process. I think that anyone who denies that the press plays an important role in our democracy today in the western world would be foolish. I mean, look at in the Estimates and the spending of the Premier in his office alone, how much was spent on the press. These are the kinds of questions we want to ask.

If you believe there's no role for the press in our political system, why did you spend \$12 million or however many millions you spent with Dome Advertising to send out your message? Obviously the press is very powerful and a very important instrument and tool not to be used by, but to report what's going on in a committee like this; that's why it's open. And I think that's why your motion is here, because you don't want the opposition to ask the questions, the press to report it, and the public to know about it. That is the definition of a cover-up. That's the definition of a cover-up. And I just say to you that it's not going to go unnoticed by the public because this will become the focus of a major debate between now and the session starting and during the session. It's our job to do that and we intend to do it.

Mr. Chairman: — Thank you, Mr. Lingenfelter. Question on the amendment. Question on the amendment. All those in favour of the amendment? All those in favour of the amendment? Opposed? Opposed? The amendment . . .

Mr. Anguish: — I think it would be appropriate . . . What's the problem?

Mr. Chairman: — All those in favour of the amendment?

Mr. Anguish: — You already voted.

Mr. Chairman: — It's opposed.

Mr. Anguish: — It's voted.

Mr. Chairman: — The amendment is lost.

Mr. Anguish: — Nobody voted for it.

A Member: — What was the count?

Mr. Chairman: — Well he voted for it and you voted for it and that makes one vote each and that's a tie vote and that means the motion is lost.

If you want, I would normally . . . In putting a motion, my understanding is — and I stand to be corrected on this that if you've got a tie vote on something like this, then it's lost.

Well I would then have broken the tie . . . (inaudible) . . . declare the motion lost. I'm reaching back to some experience in city council that if you didn't have a majority for, the motion is defeated, but in this case the motion is lost and we're back to debate on the motion. Please then, Mr. Muller.

Mr. Muller: — Maybe we can come to some resolve here and . . . (inaudible) . . . I'm one of the members that would certainly like to see that, as would all my colleagues would, so I just want to pose a question to the opposition members. There are a couple of questions: what would you suggest as a date to start the review of the mandate? And while you're digesting that one, I'll ask the second one and you can confer amongst yourselves: what would you suggest as a date to start the review of the '86-87 Public Accounts?

So this gives you an open . . . and I think that we should take some time and . . .

A Member: — Are these trick questions?

Mr. Muller: — No, they aren't. I'm not known to be very tricky. I'm not very good at tricks, or whatever . . . certainly not very good with words, but I thought that, you know, to try and move this off the stalemate where we are and that's where we are. I mean, you fellows defeated our amendment so now we pose these two questions to you.

Mr. Chairman: — Do the committee members want to take a break to consider this matter? This question? Is that agreeable?

Mr. Anguish: — . . . (inaudible) . . . this question, as I understand, was what date that you think would be acceptable from us to start the review, and what is the other date to start review of the Estimates?

Mr. Chairman: — We're back to discussion . . . (inaudible) . . . the committee back to its business here and . . .

Mr. Lingenfelter: — All I want to do is just to respond to the two questions that were put by the member from Shellbrook, and the first one: what would you suggest as a date to start the review of '86-87 *Public Accounts*, and we would suggest February 10 at 9 a.m. and continue until complete. And your second question was: what would you suggest as a date to start the review of the mandate of the committee? We would suggest the first working day of the session, namely March 8 of '89, and that to run as long as necessary to review the rules and mandate of the committee.

Mr. Prebble: — So what's your reaction to that?

Mr. Hopfner: — That's having clearly the rules of this committee there for the chairman to make a rule on and everything that . . .

A Member: — Could you repeat that?

Mr. Hopfner: — That is so that when we do reconvene on March 8 then in the committee, that the chair is thoroughly convinced . . .

Mr. Lingenfelter: — And the members of the committee.

Mr. Hopfner: — . . . and the members of the committee have that consensus of knowing what the parameters they're operating in. So you're saying from this point now until March 8 we will be in total review, we will have that review complete, we'll be back under the . . .

Mr. Lingenfelter: — It's just the reverse of that, Mike. What we're suggesting here is that we continue on, starting tomorrow, with public accounts, and the review to start on the 10th of March and to go on until we had completed our review, even if it meant tonight sitting down as a group with no one else around and figuring out what we thought to be a better way to make this thing work, given the rules that we implemented in 1982.

Mr. Hopfner: — All right. Tomorrow we go into *Public Accounts*, '86-87, and then on March 8 upon coming back we start the review.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — And that could be as broad or as narrow as you want. We've got no problem if we want to look at some other jurisdictions. We've done this before. Many times committees are set up to review the mandate of various working groups of the legislature. And I've got absolutely no problem with that — anything that would make this thing work better. It could be a number of things changing.

Mr. Neudorf: — What you say then, Mr. Lingenfelter, is that you are prepared to accept a review of 1986-87 for one day, because you are the one that tabled the agreement between the two House Leaders.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — No, no.

Mr. Neudorf: — It runs for this week.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — But we're saying we can amend that.

Mr. Neudorf: — I am in no position to amend anything that a House Leader has done. If your two House Leaders obviously agreed to have an agreement . . .

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The member from Cut Knife-Lloyd certainly can because he was telling us he's an independent.

Mr. Hopfner: — Yes, I'll speak for myself. Basically, I'd have to . . . but I have to indicate to you that my commitment to this committee was on my schedule, and my schedule is no good to be able to sit next week. So we'd have to make some arrangements as to when we can get enough committee members around to have a quorum. And that's the particular problem.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — But we can even leave that. The only thing that we obviously can't accept is a motion that ties a review to the working of the committee, if you know what I mean, because it basically ends the committee's functioning. And then it's at the discretion of the review committee, which will obviously be controlled by the government, and the House, which is controlled by the government, as when we could possibly get back.

Right now the calling of meetings is controlled by the opposition through the chair. That's a fundamental . . . (inaudible) . . .

Mr. Neudorf: — But we're trying to allay that fear by saying that we're going to put a date on there, a commitment on our part that we're going to get into those '86-87 as quickly as possible. If you think the review will take three weeks, then let's knock off whatever is going to be taken.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — But the review is only part of the problem. The review has nothing to do with when our mandate starts again because that isn't controlled by the committee or the review, it's done by the House.

Mr. Chairman: — Can I just hold you up here. We're operating as a committee, and although the back and forth discussion may be very helpful, it's kind of awkward for me as chairman to know how to deal with it. I'm wondering, do you want to recess again for a few minutes and continue this discussion?

Mr. Chairman: — 0900.

The committee adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Mr. Martin: — I just want to throw something in if you want to have a recess, that we could discuss during a recess if you'd like.

Mr. Chairman: — Well, you can discuss whatever during a recess. I just suggest that we recess again for a few moments.

The committee recessed briefly.

Mr. Muller: — I would like to move a motion that we adjourn until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock, and then we'll have a little reprieve. We'll come back here tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock. I would prefer an *in camera* session that we discuss some of these points. We've made some offers; we have some things to digest.

Mr. Chairman: — That's a long adjournment motion, but all those in favour of the motion to adjourn till 9 o'clock tomorrow morning?

Agreed

Mr. Chairman: — And it's understood that it will be an *in camera* meeting.

Ms. Ronyk: — The committee will have to move a motion at the beginning of the session.

Mr. Kraus: — Mr. Chairman, do you want the officials at that meeting? I'll be happy to be there.

Mr. Lutz: — Mr. Chairman, I have a notice on my desk that said this meeting will convene at a date. No one told me to stay away. Unless you tell me to stay away I will be here. I don't know what the wish of the committee is, but.

Mr. Chairman: — May I just ask, Gwenn, but it seems to me like at least the auditor is normally present, even when we do meet *in camera* because he's not here as a witness. But if you don't think that we're going to need the auditor or comptroller we can ask them to . . .

Mr. Kraus: — If you're looking for advice, I'd be happy to be here although I'll be careful about what advice I give you.

Mr. Martin: — I think that both the auditor and the comptroller have something to contribute, and I think maybe we should be using their wisdom because sure as hell we can't come to any decisions.

Mr. Chairman: — Quick show of hands here — who wants the auditor and comptroller here tomorrow morning for our discussion? Okay, well there you go guys.

A Member: — 0900?