



Special Committee on Rules and Procedures

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**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RULES AND PROCEDURES
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The committee met at 10 a.m.

The Chair: — Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call this meeting to order at this point in time, and at the outset welcome each and every one of you here to the meeting and wish each and every one of you a very healthy, happy, and prosperous first year in this new century and beyond. So welcome.

You've each received a report of the subcommittee on our agenda and procedures for the Rules and Regulations Committee. I trust you've had an opportunity to glean through it. Basically let me just highlight. We were told on April 27 to look into . . . a subcommittee was asked to look into — and the subcommittee made up of Mr. D'Autremont, Mr. Kowalsky, and myself — to look into the role of committees and then to come back and report to the entire committee.

Through the capable, very capable help of Mr. Putz and Viktor — our Clerks for the Assembly — we have gathered a considerable amount of information. The recommendations that have been made are before you. And the surveys that were completed throughout various jurisdictions that would have perhaps been applicable to our situation here — those have been discussed. Details from each of those jurisdictions have been obtained.

And we also had the pleasure of having a visit from the Hon. Graham Gunn, who's a Member of Parliament for Stuart in the Legislative Assembly of South Australia, that gave the subcommittee a greater insight into their role. And I might say it's quite significant.

And what we are deliberating and what we're bringing back to the committee for consideration will no doubt have a very serious impact with respect to changes and responsibilities for the role of committees, particularly as we've known them here.

The bottom line I guess is our report back to the committee with our recommendation that if the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures considers the reform of the committee system as a priority on the agenda of the many items that were brought forward from both caucuses, then the committee should then consider the planning for visiting those jurisdictions which may best reflect the type of a system that we would like to perhaps implement, or at least offer us some suggestions as to the direction we might take.

It is a major undertaking, and once again I'm appreciative to both Greg and Viktor for all the work they've done to assist us in bringing this to you.

If there are any comments . . . Mr. D'Autremont, if you have anything that you'd like to add to our deliberations in the subcommittee — to the rest of committee — please do so.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I too would like to wish everyone a happy New Year, first in the new millennium. I'm one of those that believe the millennium started on January 1, 2001, and not 2000.

The initial subcommittee meeting we held in July brought forward priorities that we felt should be the direction that the

committee would go, and those priorities were that we look at the areas of committee reform and private members' business as one group in providing for a more meaningful role of all members in the House.

Right now some members have more participation than other members in the operation and the role of the legislature and what we need to look at is bringing more meaningful roles for all of the members in the Assembly, and that is why we need to take a very serious look at committee reform structure and at private members' business.

Currently we have quite a number of committees in this legislature but unfortunately a good number of those are inactive and I think that we can provide good service to the people of Saskatchewan and to the legislature by utilizing our committee structure in a more appropriate manner. And that's why I believe it's important that we take a very serious look at what other jurisdictions are doing and how we can implement some of the things they're doing to make our role as members of the legislature more meaningful and more empowering and provide better service to the people of Saskatchewan.

The second part of our recommendations, coming from the steering committee, was that we hold in abeyance all of the other issues that we had discussed looking at until such time as recommendations were made on committee reform and private members' business — look at what happened there and then look at what changes may need to be implemented to facilitate changes to the committee and private members' business.

Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. D'Autremont. I know Mr. Thomson is here in the absence of Mr. Kowalsky. But again, as Mr. D'Autremont pointed out, that these significant changes to private members' business and roles of committees would impact on the administration and the way that the House is presently doing its business. So it is a major consideration and highlight, as Mr. D'Autremont pointed out, as a priority that we've brought back to the committee.

Mr. Thomson, I don't know if you may wish to make any comments?

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Chairman, colleagues, it's a pleasure to be back in this committee in particular. I know we've had a bit of a break since the initial meeting of the committee when we had some discussion about what direction to pursue.

Having reviewed what the steering committee is recommending and the work that has been done, I have to say I'm impressed. When we had started out by drafting what was the NDP (New Democratic Party) view on how we should pursue rule changes, I have to admit we were really in the business of coming up with good ideas. Now seeing more and more of this flushed out, I think we're starting to understand how complex many of these changes that we were initially envisioning could end up being.

As such I think it's certainly a wise set of recommendations that the steering committee has come up with in terms of both

setting other issues aside for the time being and also pursuing greater investigation of how these potential changes might work at a provincial level or a state level in other jurisdictions.

I don't have much else to offer on that except to say that I think it is good work on the part of the Clerk's office and certainly on the part of the steering committee.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Perhaps it might be an opportunity for us now to have Greg or Viktor review those jurisdictions that would perhaps be more appropriate for our attention and some of the implications . . .

There would be some urgency to make a decision fairly quickly whether or not we would be travelling or someone would be travelling to those jurisdictions to visit. So perhaps, Greg, could I ask you to expand on this.

Mr. Putz: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've distributed to the committee the comparative table of committee operations in other jurisdictions, and this was in response to a survey that the subcommittee asked me to do initially in July. The subcommittee had certain jurisdictions in mind they wanted surveyed. We surveyed . . . basically those were Canadian jurisdictions and a few from outside the country.

That information came back and the subcommittee became more interested in the Australian jurisdictions. They seemed to fit better the direction that members were thinking they'd want to go, particularly in the areas of setting up a limited number of committees but giving them jurisdiction to review matters that fall under policy fields.

Policy field committees are not uncommon in other parliaments around the Commonwealth. As you're aware — this jurisdiction has more subject area committees — that's standing committees — and many of those are inactive.

So we were asked to . . . I was asked to survey those jurisdictions that utilized the policy field or sector-type committees. And we found, as I said, that in Australia — most of the states in Australia and in New Zealand utilized that type of committee system and we then sent surveys to each of the states there.

Having said that, in Canada there are a few jurisdictions that do utilize the policy field-type committees and those are on your table there, on the first page — principally British Columbia, Ontario, and the House of Commons in Ottawa.

The subcommittee found that Ontario and BC were probably the most relevant of those committee systems in Canada that looked at the policy field system. They found that these policy sector committees . . . that they reviewed legislation. One of the other ideas was to have estimates go to these policy field committees, and found that the ones in Canada, that that really isn't the case, that they still have Standing Committee on Estimates where they farm these things out or still do them in the House, as we do here.

Of the Australian committee systems, one of the things that the subcommittee took into consideration when we got the information back is that all but three of the eight states or

jurisdictions there are bicameral. Their federal House of course is bicameral, and that led to some peculiarities that we, like I said, have to take into consideration. They have joint committees and they have joint memberships.

But nonetheless with the exception of the northern territory in Australia, all the states have very well-developed committee systems. And the committees are considered by each of . . . by members or the Clerks that respond to these surveys as being important in fundamental part of parliamentary affairs.

Most of the functions and the purposes in these committees are defined either in their standing orders or by an Act of parliament. And to me that showed the significance of it, that they actually put the order of reference and the areas of operations in writing. And they were either standing orders or in an Act.

Most of the committees in these jurisdictions were what the Australians term as self-referencing. They have their roles, which are defined in either the standing orders or Act. And then the committees can decide within those parameters how they want to go about either investigating or reviewing issues that fall within that policy field.

Another thing that we found through the survey is that for the most part in Australian jurisdictions members are not compensated for committee work. And the main reason for that is that committee work is thought to be an intrinsic and important part of a member's duty. It's built right into their salaries.

They do get . . . Chairs and Vice-Chairs for the most part get salaries, and members get to claim their expenses, but there's no extra salary. So again some of them said very directly to us that this was taken into consideration. They have . . . in their system of determining remuneration, that's determined; that's built right into the member's base salary.

Another thing that we found in Australia is that the committees are very active, and there is a lot of public participation and public hearings are common.

Another thing that we found that the policy field committees do is they review regulations, and regulations if not by a policy field committee — there is a statutory instruments or a regulations committee — and that's an important part of their committee system there. And that's a regular part of committee review in Australia.

The jurisdictions that the subcommittee found more applicable to the direction at least that they talked about — and the direction I think that the government members had in their position paper tabled the committee on April 27 — the policy field committee, is a limited number of committees and giving them the power to carry out review of legislation or estimates or whatever within those field areas.

The jurisdictions that the subcommittee thought were most applicable were South Australia. Western Australia was interesting because they're right now in the midst of converting over to the policy field system from a system that used to be somewhat like ours. So their new rules come into force January

1, 2001. So if the committee did do further investigation there, that would be a good place to have a point of view of what they've just come from and what they're going into and ask them why they decided to take that route and to adopt that type of system.

New South Wales, the federal Australian parliament, and New Zealand all operate similar systems of committees.

And I think that's in a nutshell basically what I wanted to say about this table. There's a lot more detail in the table.

One of the other things that we wanted to survey is that when there is a more involved committee system we also wanted to know what kind of support systems parliaments have put into place to make sure that committees have the resources they need to carry out their functions. So we did ask questions along the lines of: do you have a research service? If you do, what type of researchers do you use? What kind of administrative and procedural support do you have, and what is the budget of your committee?

Now budget again was a difficult thing to determine. A lot of them really couldn't tell us how much they spend in their committees because, as I noted, they're self-referencing. An average amount is built into the overall Assembly budget and they don't distinguish it again for committees. Their committees draw on those funds and they couldn't tell me exactly in any given year how much committees cost because some committees are more active in some years than in others.

One of the things that they don't seem to do in Australia is have the estimates go to their policy field committees. The estimates are still done in what they call House committees. It doesn't necessarily mean that it's done in their Legislative Chamber but as in the case of Ontario and some other Canadian jurisdictions, they have a committee on estimates that meets a couple weeks a year. And that's where all the departmental estimates are reviewed, and it seems that ministers come there with officials and the review is very similar to what we have here in our Committee of Finance.

In Australia, oddly enough, they don't seem to review a lot of legislation in the policy field committees as well. Now that's something more common here in Canada, particularly Ontario, and Victor can tell you more about Ontario, having come from there. Legislation being referred to committees in Ontario is fairly common.

But in Australia some do, some don't. And I'm not sure what the reason for that is; that's something that may need some further investigation.

The ratio of membership in Australia, it's the same as here. It's based on the standing in the House. That's usually built right into their committee systems — it's a ratio based on the standing in the House. But like I said there is a little complication there, is that they have a lot of joint committees. So of the committee membership, so many are from one House and so many from the other House.

Another thing to note is that besides the policy field committees that most Australian jurisdictions seem to have, they still have a

number of they term House committees, those to do estimates or those that review their own procedures like this committee, or rules committee; they have a member services committee in most cases where they look at issues that have to do with members' offices and their legislative precincts and the operation of the Legislative Assembly per se. And all these committees, it seems, other than their estimates committee, the Speaker is the Chair just as the case here.

All these jurisdictions, these policy field committees, I think, have allowed them to get away from the use of select committees. In the case of Western Australia that was one of the things that I noted from the information they sent us, they had all sort of select committees; in other words, ad hoc committees to look at issues that come up from time to time, just as is the case here — we have select committees looking at driving safety or child abuse or tobacco control.

The policy field committees have allowed them to get away from the heavy use of select committees. That these subjects would fall into one of those policy fields and those committees would decide to either have hearings or to question officials of government or make recommendations to the House.

That doesn't mean that select committees still don't exist. I found that in most Australian jurisdictions they still have a need from time to time to have select committees, and they've kept that power for themselves to appoint select committees in those cases.

Another type of committee that is a type of House committee that's fairly common in Australia is a committee to hear public grievances of people who feel they've been slighted by what members may have said about them in parliament. Members are protected by parliamentary privilege. Most of the Australian jurisdictions have set up a committee to give somebody who feels they've got an unfair commentary made about them or their activity to make application — usually through the Speaker — to come and say their piece to one of these committees as a sort of a rebuttal to what somebody may have said in the House or in a committee.

The last thing, I guess, I want to say is that in most cases in Australia the Chairs are government members. That was . . . in Saskatchewan we have a number of committees where the Chairs are opposition. But in almost all the Australian jurisdictions, with the exception of their Public Accounts Committee and even there it's a mixed bag, the government member is the Chair.

I guess another thing I could say is how often do these committees travel about in their states. They don't get a big budget to travel and a lot of these jurisdictions, when they do travel, members have to pay for that out of their own expenses. For the most part these committees seem to have public hearings, but they bring people to them rather than travel around.

That doesn't mean that they won't each year pick one or two issues to travel around, have hearings. But the normal run-of-the-mill type issues that these committees look at, they do have hearings but they call people to the seat of government to conduct these and that way they keep the costs down a bit, I

suppose.

So that's my report on the survey. If there are any questions I'd be happy to take note, or if you'd like to know more about what they do in Ontario, since Viktor is here and having been a committee Clerk there for eight years he's well equipped to answer your questions.

The Chair: — Thank you very much, Greg. What are the wishes of the committee? Would you like to hear a little more about the Ontario . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — I think it would be of value to us.

The Chair: — There's a quite a bit of information here to digest, that the more hands on or personal experience in the past . . . So please, Viktor, if you wouldn't mind?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Viktor, since you're out of the Ontario jurisdiction you can comment on also how you thought it worked as well as how it was supposed to work.

Mr. Kaczowski: — I wouldn't want to suggest that any aspects of one is better than the other, so I'll try and avoid doing that.

I've a couple of handouts for you which may illustrate a couple of the points I'll make. I'll distribute those first.

All right. Last week Greg indicated to me that I may be asked to make a few comments about my experiences in Ontario with committees there, so I sat down and started thinking about the differences that come to mind when it comes to the committee process here and the committee there. As I said, I won't suggest that one . . . the aspect of one's operations is better or worse than the others, but there are some differences which have certainly struck me since I arrived here.

In Ontario there are currently eight standing committees of the legislature. Two are what are defined as policy field committees. Now I should let you know that there used to be four policy field committees up until November of last year. They were broadly defined as social development, resources development, general government, and administration of justice. Right now there's two — Justice and Social Policy and General Government.

In addition to that, there are six other committees which have fairly specific terms of reference set out in Ontario's standing orders. Before I get too far, I should indicate that standing orders is the term I may still continue to use. I gather you don't use that here; you refer to the standing orders as rules. So you'll excuse me if I use the term standing orders.

Ontario does have a finance committee. A Government Agencies Committee which looks at government appointments to different agencies, boards, and commissions, and has the ability to review specific agencies, boards, and commissions. There's a Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly which deals with, amongst other things, points of privilege if they are raised, has also dealt with Bills and issues relating to the Legislative Assembly Act, that kind of thing. Public Accounts Committee which is self-explanatory, very similar to

the one here. Regulations and Private Bills which does examine annually regulations and also deals with any private Bills which people apply for. There is an Estimates Committee.

As I recall, I think that's only been in existence for the last 12 years. Previously the estimates used to be done in the policy field committees. They were finding that there just wasn't enough time to get through all the business, all the policy field committees, so a separate estimates committee was established to handle the estimates of the various ministries.

As I indicated, there are two policy field committees in Ontario at this point in time. I would suggest that they . . . the amount of . . . the volume of business that those committees generate may be a little too much for them to handle at this point. Just checking their web site today, currently there's eight Bills before the General Government Committee and nine Bills before the Justice and Social Policy Committee. That's a very heavy workload for any committee, and I'm really not quite sure how far they will get with all those Bills.

I will make some observations about some of the differences, in terms of just the way the committees operate, the organization, the logistics of the committee process, some of the things the committees do, and some of the procedural differences. I will try not to be too lengthy, but I apologize if I do become long-winded.

In Ontario the committees are authorized to meet while the House is in session. At the beginning of each parliament, the House, by motion, sets a weekly meeting schedule for all committees. That's in one of the handouts, just so you can see what it looks like; on the first handout I gave you, which is the *Votes and Proceedings* for November 1, 1999.

Two things that they did that day was by motion. The membership is set as opposed to the use of a nominating committee. It's my understanding that the House leaders will meet behind the scenes to determine who sits on which committee. Then it's a simple move of a motion in the House by the Government House Leader as to who is on what committee.

Likewise, on the same day, the House Leader also set a schedule. What they will allow committees to do is meet in the mornings, usually from 10 until 12, and in the afternoons, upon completion of routine proceedings. That time is set aside in the House. Committees are not permitted to meet until routine proceedings have been completed. So once the House is into orders of the day, members may leave the Chamber to sit and do their committee work.

Committees are also authorized to meet during the intersession. Once the House rises for its recess, the House leaders will consult behind the scenes, once again, decide, negotiate which committees will meet. They will then, by motion in the House — and that's in the second handout I gave you — indicate which committees will meet over the recess, usually how many days the committee will be authorized to meet, and also on what issue those committees can meet.

I've seen motions which have been a little more detailed where they specify what dates the committee may meet. That

sometimes gets a little unwieldy because conflicts invariably do arise. But at least the committees do have a set agenda that sets a meeting schedule. Members know where they're supposed to be, when. And it may allow the committees to get to work a little more efficiently if they know when they're meeting.

Ontario has five committee meeting rooms, not very different from the meeting room that we're sitting in here today but they are set up specifically for committees. Committees do get priority to use those rooms. They all have desks; the microphones are set up permanently. They all have TV cameras.

Now four of the five TV cameras are in-house, closed-circuit cameras so that Clerks, members can watch proceedings in their offices. One is broadcast on the parliamentary channel. So there is one committee meeting room where the populace can watch the proceedings.

Subcommittees are used fairly extensively in Ontario. There'll be one member from each recognized party on the subcommittee plus the Chair. They will meet at the call of the Chair. They are in camera meetings and that allows a lot of candid discussion on any given issue and also allows a lot of the organizational aspects of the committee's work to be dealt with instead of using committee time — which can be used for public hearings, which can be used for clause-by-clause examination of the Bill — decisions such as where the committee will travel to, whether they will hear from witnesses, how much time will be given to witnesses. Those kinds of issues can be dealt with very quickly, as I say, relatively informally in closed session.

A report of the subcommittee is then prepared, presented to the committee at its first meeting. After the subcommittee meeting presumably adopted by the committee, sometimes amendments are made to that report. And as I say, it does allow the committee, the full committee to focus more on the public hearings and clause-by-clause aspects of its activities.

Committees in Ontario — because there are a number of committees — do have a fairly large staff attached to them. There are currently, as I say, eight committees. There are currently six committee Clerks, so some committee Clerks do hold . . . are Clerks of two committees. Not all committees are as busy as the others.

Each committee has a legislative researcher assigned to it. The Legislative Library does have a separate legislative research branch with approximately, I think at last count there were about 15 researchers there. So you have one researcher assigned to each committee.

That person is responsible for such things as preparing background briefings on any issues that are before the committee. They will summarize the public hearings. They will take witness presentations, package it all together into presumably one neat and tidy draft of what the committee heard which helps the committee prepare its amendments during clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill. And the researcher is there to undertake any other research that the committee members themselves request.

In addition to that — it's probably not applicable here — but translation services are available. Especially if the committee travels to communities which are designated as having French language services, translators will travel with the committees to permit presenters to appear to make presentations in either official language.

A number of years ago the committees . . . up until a number of years ago, the committees used to prepare individual budgets which meant that the Clerk had to sit down with the Chair. They would have to discuss potential spending for the upcoming fiscal year. Invariably what that led to was planning for the worst possible worst-case scenario.

About five years ago they decided to create one budgetary pool. Instead of each committee submitting its own budget to the Board of Internal Economy, there'd be one global budget submitted to the Board of Internal Economy and each committee would take its monetary resources from that pool.

What they found was that they could be a lot more accurate in their budgetary estimates, and in fact I think there's a significant decrease in the amount of money allocated each year to committees because some committees of course would be busier than others, some would rarely meet. It tended to . . . One balanced out from the other. It was much easier to . . . It was easier for the committees. They didn't have as much . . . they didn't have to go to the board for additional sums of money if they needed to. It just simplified the entire process.

Now I notice that this committee is particularly interested in policy field committees. Certainly in Ontario the policy field committees are very, very busy. Bills can be referred to those committees, as I indicated, usually for public hearings and that can vary from an afternoon to a number of days to even a number of weeks. Input may be in the form of written submissions or oral presentations or both.

The committee will usually advertise its hearings in most of the Ontario daily papers. Witnesses will call in indicating that they wish to appear before the committee and, in most cases, the committee will try and schedule everyone that wishes to appear. That's not always possible given the amount of time allocated to public hearings, but for the most part it's been my experience that anyone who wants to appear usually does.

The committee also . . . a major part of the committee's work is what is known as clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill. Once the public hearings have been completed, the committee will usually recess for a week or two. This will allow each caucus to prepare amendments to the Bill where each caucus sees either changes need to be made or improvements. They can be fairly wide, broad in scope, although the scope of the Bill cannot be changed, or they may be minor ones where a word here and there is changed.

But it does allow the committee to examine the Bill in that kind of detail. These amendments would be moved in the form of a motion; those motions are debatable and then they would be passed or not. The committee would then report the Bill back to the House with the changes to the Bill included in that.

A couple of new things that have been going on in Ontario.

Legislation can now be sent to committee after first reading. Traditionally Bills could only be sent to legislative committee after second reading. What this has allowed is after first reading the intent of the Bill is not set. There's a lot more leeway for changing the scope of the Bill, for changing what the Bill attempts to do.

I can't think of too many instances at this point where that has been done. I think there's only three or four Bills. But people — the comments I did here — people did find that they have a lot more leeway. If there is major public concerns about certain aspects of the Bill, those could be addressed at the committee level and the Bill amended accordingly before being reported back to the House. Another . . .

A Member: — Can I interject here?

A Member: — Sure.

Mr. D'Autremont: — This would happen before a second reading?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — That is correct.

Something else that has been started, something called standing order 124. What that does is it gives the ability to initiate studies or initiate draft legislation. The committee I had before I left was the first committee to go through this process so it was a learning experience for all of us.

In a nutshell, any member of the committee once each calendar year may make a proposal to the committee, either to undertake a study or to draft legislation on any particular issue.

Now the first issue that they dealt with was to discuss a Bill to establish a committee of former parliamentarians in Ontario. So that one went fairly smoothly since all caucuses were fairly interested in doing that.

The process . . . what happened was the member proposing the item of business has to provide notice of motion at least 24 hours prior to the meeting notice. That is distributed to the committee members. The members then have 30 minutes to debate that motion and vote on it.

It was specified in the standing orders that two-thirds of the committee must adopt that motion for the committee to proceed with that item of business. The implication there being is that no matter which member from each party was proposing it, that member had to make sure he or she had the support of at least one other party for that motion to pass.

So generally, the two occasions that we experienced, that we use the standing order, things went fairly smoothly because when you have that much support right from the start you know things are going to go . . . chances of the committee getting somewhere, reporting something substantive are fairly likely.

At the end of it all, the committee can either present a written substantive report to the House or what they can do is the committee . . . the Chair can stand up and introduce a Bill. So instead of actually saying this is the draft that we'd like to see the House . . . be introduced in the House, the Chair would

actually have the authority to introduce a Bill to which the committee has already agreed to the text of.

So, for example, the association of former parliamentarians, instead of the Chair standing up and saying, I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee, the Chair would just stand up and say, I beg leave to introduce a Bill entitled such and such. So it was a very neat and tidy process.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Can I interject?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Sure.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Would that committee then be able to introduce a money Bill though, of some kind that would be some expense to the government?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — No, they would not. You'd have to have the minister do that. The types of Bills . . . One was the association of former parliamentarians. The other one was a Bill to create an association of foresters so they aren't . . . they wouldn't be in the area of public policy, but they would be certain Bills which perhaps didn't fit into a private Bill scenario or something a member was specifically interested in and wasn't getting any response from the minister or the cabinet and wanted at least to get some sort of Bill tabled.

A few odd procedural notes. In Ontario, any member may substitute for any other committee member at any time. That's something that can be handy at times, can be annoying at others. As long as notice is provided within 30 minutes of the meeting's commencement, a member can substitute for another one.

One thing that — and this is a personal observation — it does, I think, limit the effectiveness of some of the committees. If you've got a long set of public hearings and you have a lot of members substituting for one another over the course of those hearings, you lose continuity. You get members who come in on the last day or members who haven't sit in on the public hearings but are there for clause by clause, haven't been part of the entire discussions, and I think some of the important issues that are raised may be overlooked in that case.

However, obviously members have conflicts; scheduling conflicts do occur. It does give the members a certain amount of flexibility.

Since committees may sit at the same time as the House is sitting, the standing orders do make provision for committees to suspend their proceedings if there is a division called in the House. So the Chair will . . . The bells will ring for the division. The Chair will say we'll recess for 10, 15 minutes. The members can go and vote. They will then come back to the committee and continue with their business.

That may have been a concern that some of you may have had in your heads when the idea of committees sitting while the House is sitting is considered.

Committees do travel fairly extensively in Ontario. The standing orders do provide that committees may "travel from place to place in the province." Now practice has been that

committees will not travel while the House is sitting. Obviously the members need to be in the House as well and perform their House duties, so it would be fairly difficult to have a large number of the members out on the road. But certainly during the intersessions, committees will be out on the road holding hearings in various communities around the province.

And I just realized my last note was about the nominating committee. I've already covered that, and that is it for now.

Does anyone have any questions about some of the things I've said or wants to investigate areas where I haven't commented on?

The Chair: — Thank you, Viktor. Any questions? Ms. Higgins or Mr. Thomson? Mr. Kwiatkowski? Mr. D'Autremont? Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — On the committee that would hear legislation prior to second reading, what kind of comment did you hear from the members? Did they think it was effective? Was it doing something more than what the House could have done under the normal procedures? Some indication from the members of what they thought its value was.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Right. I only experienced that scenario once. It was a new change to the standing orders made a year ago last November.

At the end of the summer there was a Bill dealing with snowmobiling that was referred to committee after first reading. The Bill dealt with control of snowmobile trails. The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs was suggesting to the government that they wanted authority over the trails to maintain standard, a set standard of trail maintenance — that kind of thing — and also needed the opportunity for funding to be given to them to do that.

I gather, behind the scenes, there was a fair bit of controversy on that Bill. The snowmobile clubs wanted one thing. It got the backs up of the hunters and trappers who felt — in many cases they'd cut some of the trails themselves, donated the trail used to the snowmobile clubs — it was infringing on their ability to undertake their business. So the Bill was sent to committee after first reading.

There was a lot of input. We had four . . . three days of public hearings up north. We went to places such as Kenora, Thunder Bay, Timmons. And the committee heard a wide range of arguments for and against and also heard some things which they hadn't considered.

Unfortunately, the committee hasn't undertaken clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill as yet so I wasn't able to actually see the final result of that, how the amendments reflected some of the things they'd heard. But the comments I heard from the members, including the parliamentary system to the committee, was it did allow them to incorporate major changes into the Bill to take things into consideration which it hadn't considered.

Obviously an issue like that, where you've got your ministry in Toronto, you've got policy people in Toronto, and a Bill that really affected parts of the province which a lot of members

perhaps hadn't even travelled to, let alone snowmobiled as a hobby. So it did allow a certain flexibility which wasn't formerly available to them. So I think the consensus was that certainly in that case it was effective.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. So if they had the public hearings, they made recommendations for changes on a clause-by-clause basis, it would then go back to the House, amended by the Committee?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — That is correct.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Would those amendments then have to be approved as it went back to the House, or how would that procedure happen? How would those amendments . . . recommendations made by the committee make their way to the House?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — That would be done in the form of the report the committee makes. The committee actually returns the Bill to the House with those changes incorporated into it.

Now if the House was to make further changes, it could do so in Committee of the Whole House. It's rare, but sometimes a Bill can be recommitted to a committee for further examination, for further changes. But once the committee does make those changes to a Bill, they are there.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So then they would go through a normal second reading procedure, go to the normal Committee of the Whole, third reading. Would they have a second Committee of the Whole?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Not necessarily. The Bill may go to Committee of the Whole, but there's nothing forcing it to go to Committee of the Whole.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes. See, our committee's right. Our Bills now automatically go to the Committee of the Whole. They may not do anything there, but they do go to the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Right.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So they would still . . . that procedure would still take place?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Right. I think the idea with committees undertaking clause by clause, it does avoid the necessity for Bills to go to Committee of the Whole. I can't recall Committee of the Whole being used much in the last couple of years. Usually most of the amendments are made in committee.

The Chair: — Thank you. Greg, did you have a follow-up comment to that?

Mr. Putz: — I just wanted to point out that in the survey — we did a survey for a referable Bill committee after first reading and the House of Commons also does it but it's only by a minister — found that in Australia that they don't do that.

But the main point I want to make is that in New Zealand their standing order 280, it says: all Bills except appropriation Bills

are referred to a select committee after first reading. And the mover designates which of their policy field committees it goes to.

Mr. D'Autremont: — In the Ontario situation who makes the determination that it's going to go to the committee after first reading? Does the House make the determination, does the government make the determination, does the opposition ask for it? How is that determination made?

Mr. Kaczowski: — I knew you would ask me that question. And I'm trying to remember exactly what happened because it's not happened that often. It would be a decision of the House. I honestly can't recall whether it was done by the Government House Leader by motion, or whether it was a minister that asked that it be referred. I honestly don't recall.

I can follow up.

Mr. D'Autremont: — We have to find out.

Mr. Kaczowski: — I can make a note of it and I can follow up on that.

Mr. Thomson: — I had a question concerning Ontario's committee system as it pertains to the ability to initiate study of other issues. We have been relatively strict in our . . . the role that we've allowed committees to play here in that they only deal in issues referred to it by the Assembly.

How does this work in Ontario? Do they simply have free rein? Can members simply bring in and say, my pet peeve is issue X and get committee instruction to pursue it? Or do they need to get that item of business referred from the Assembly as a whole?

Mr. Kaczowski: — Okay. I probably made it sound a little broader than it actually is. If a member does wish to initiate committee business under that standing order it still has to be within the purview of that policy field committee.

Mr. Thomson: — But it needn't be referred by the Assembly as a whole?

Mr. Kaczowski: — No, it can be an idea submitted by the member themselves. But as I say, it does have to relate to the mandate or issues relating to the ministries. I'll use the words assigned to that committee; that's not quite the case.

With policy field committees you will find, certainly in Ontario, the Legislative Assembly Committee will actually sit down, look at what ministries were in existence and basically assign them to the appropriate . . . what they saw as the appropriate policy field committee. So, for example, resources development would have issues relating to the transportation ministry, natural resources ministry, labour, as I recall. So as long as it's within the purview of those ministries, those are the kinds of issues that might be raised within that policy field committees . . . committee.

Mr. Thomson: — Well I would assume the priority of business set by the committees, that items referred to it by the Assembly would take precedence.

Mr. Kaczowski: — Government Bills would take precedence over these matters, but private members' public Bills wouldn't necessarily do so. And really it was up to the subcommittee. If there were a number of items of business before the committee, the subcommittee would then decide which order it would consider things in. But government Bills would always take priority.

Mr. D'Autremont: — If a member brought an item before a policy committee for review, the committee would have to approve the idea of going out and investigating that particular issue . . .

Mr. Kaczowski: — That is correct. And as I . . . and it wasn't a simple majority. The standing orders actually specified a two-thirds majority. There were eight committee members on the . . . (inaudible) . . . committee. So not including the Chair, it would mean that five members would have to vote for it.

Mr. Thomson: — Do any of the . . . (inaudible) . . . that we've looked at or any of the jurisdictions you've looked at allow for citizen-initiated business to be considered? Petitions, for instance, if they petition a committee or the Assembly to have a set of hearings on issues, do any of the jurisdictions pursue this?

I don't know that there's been much call for that here in Saskatchewan, but . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — You can call for legislation through committee . . . I mean through petition, but . . .

Mr. Thomson: — Not much call . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Not call to go to a committee because our committee structure isn't set up to allow that.

Mr. Putz: — That's correct. We found no — at least in the answers we got back from the Australian jurisdictions — could find no example of any such thing.

Mr. D'Autremont: — In talking with Mr. Gunn, when he was here from South Australia, the one committee that — I think it was finance; I'm not positive on this — it seemed that people would come before them, though, and ask them to review certain things and then the committee would take it on themselves, whether they felt it was important and deal with it. I know the one case he was talking about was some water issues that people came forward and asked the committee to review it, and they did and made recommendations to government.

Mr. Thomson: — May I also ask then, in terms of this survey that you've undertaken, did you question any of the jurisdictions about how they deal with procedures to ensure timeliness of debate and conclusion of the Bills, conclusion of study?

Mr. Putz: — Not directly. With respect to the estimates, most of them do give their Estimates Committee a certain amount of time. Like I said generally it seemed it was about two weeks and that they had to report back within that two weeks. So they had to organize their business to accommodate that. Plus the Houses' calendars were organized in such a way as to permit this. Sometimes they had two Standing Committee on Estimates

looking at the budget.

But as far as the allocation of the House time or committee time, you know, I did find that but that may be something that we could follow up.

Mr. Thomson: — If I can just ask one other more general question in terms of the scope of the survey. I take it one of the reasons it was that Australia and New Zealand were looked at in particular — Australia in particular, I guess — is because it is the nearest to our constitutional model. Is that correct? The states would be relatively similar to our provincial system?

Mr. Putz: — Yes. But more so in looking at the committee systems both in Canada and other places in the Commonwealth, their committee systems, as far as I could tell, by far are the most advanced and most independent. And that seemed to get more at the nub of what you had in your report to the committee and some of the things that the steering committee discussed at its initial meeting in July. So that was the main basis for reviewing those jurisdictions.

Unfortunately, like I said, one of the things that isn't directly related to us is that most of them are bicameral; and as I said they have joint committees. But nonetheless, still they have the policy field and some of the parliaments were of similar size to ours as well.

Mr. D'Autremont: — The steering committee looked at a greater number than those that we have listed on here. These are the ones we felt were most relevant to us.

The Chair: — Any other . . . Yes, Mr. Kwiatkowski.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just out of curiosity, of all of the jurisdictions — including Ontario — is there a mechanism in place whereby there is ongoing review of the process? Or does reform or change only come about on an ad hoc basis? Or is there any kind of ongoing process developed in any of those jurisdictions to accommodate that?

Mr. Putz: — I think that there is ongoing process. Nearly all the Australian states have a legislative operations committee, and that's where these types of issues are raised, I would suppose, that have to do with their standing orders. But as I said, some of their committee operations are entrenched in statute. There is in law the committees do this and some of the parameters are set out. And those would require a legislative change of course, but I think it's monitored by those committees plus members self-monitor them.

And if they aren't working . . . As in the case of Western Australia, they found that their committee system wasn't doing it for them, but as well they're very close to the other Australian jurisdictions that were a little more advanced. They made the change, and as I said, they come into effect this month in Western Australia.

The Chair: — Any other questions or comments with respect to what we've just talked about? If not, I'd be prepared to entertain a motion from the committee accepting the report and recommendations of the subcommittee.

Mr. Kwiatkowski? Thank you. Secunder? Mr. Thomson. Oh, we don't need one. That's fine. But we have that assurance. Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I would like to make a friendly amendment to the first recommendation, if I could.

Part of the recommendations from the first subcommittee meeting that we held was that it be committee system and private members' business. And I would like to include the words "and private members' business" in that amendment.

The Chair: — Any comments or discussion? All those in favour of that amendment? Unanimous. Carried.

Now on the motion dealing with the acceptance of the report and recommendations by the subcommittee. Unless there is some discussion, all those in favour, please signify. Carried unanimously. I thank you for that. We'll need those forms filled out.

Now the next order of business then will be the deliberation by the committee and discussion with respect to which jurisdictions and number of committee members to attend at the selected jurisdictions.

And again, as you're aware and obviously by the questions and discussions that have gone on, that any significant changes that are made will have sweeping and operational consequences for the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

So it would be important, again, to consider the opinion of those members, ministers, presiding officers, and staff at whichever jurisdiction the committee sees fit to visit to ensure that when the changes are made it is something that will be again a progressive move for our House and our legislature.

So I thank you for that and would ask you for discussion and consideration on those recommendations that have been made, the comments by our Clerk's office with respect to the jurisdictions to be considered, the South Australia state, the west Australia state, New Zealand, New South Wales, the federal Australian province, or British Columbia or Ontario.

So I leave that up to the committee for your deliberation and consideration and recommendations, motions. Mr. D'Autremont?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I think what we are discussing here will have a very long-term impact on the operation of the Saskatchewan legislature and its relationship . . . the relationship of all members and the public with each other, how there's interaction between . . . within the legislature itself, within the Assembly, interaction between government and opposition, interaction between cabinet and the other members of the House and interaction between committees and the legislature and government and opposition and cabinet.

I think we're looking at some very fundamental changes here if we recommend any changes. And I think it's incumbent on us to find the best possible committee structure for ourselves, and to do that we need to understand how that interaction plays out in other jurisdictions, what relationship, what changes from our

current operations, how that will impact us. And the only way we can really do that is by talking to the people who are already doing it.

We've already looked at the information we can find in written form, but I look at our own legislative operations. We have a number of committees, but as I said earlier, they don't sit. But somebody looking at us from the outside would say, my, do they ever have a good committee structure. The only problem is it doesn't work.

So you have to talk to the people involved in it to understand is the system working. Where it is working, how is it working? Is it good, is it bad, is it indifferent? What is the relationship between the various interests involved? And the only way to do that is to be there and talk to the people and see it operating.

So I think we do need to visit the various jurisdictions that we have identified as being of interest to ourselves. I would think that we need to visit those jurisdictions also, both in Canada and offshore, in Australia and New Zealand, to make the kind of determinations and the investigations that we need.

I think we should visit the Ontario legislature, the British Columbia legislature, and those that we have identified in Australia — the federal parliament, South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales — as well as the New Zealand parliament so they all relate to the items that we're interested in. And I think it's incumbent on us to find out from them directly how that relationship is working for them.

Mr. Thomson: — I would agree with Mr. D'Autremont that if we are going to undertake legislative reform, we need to do so on the best possible advice, look at applicable models, understand the nuances of how they affect the decision making and the interaction, both among legislators — between the legislature and executive — and with the citizenship. And I guess the only way to do that is to undertake a direct visit by a delegation to these various other jurisdictions.

Certainly this is an ambitious proposal, both in terms of the scope of the reforms we're looking at and in terms of the way it would change the way that we do business. I think, if we are going to undertake it, we need to make sure we do it right. And as such, I would support the steering committee's recommendation that we undertake visitation of these jurisdictions for a direct personal examination of how these work.

The Chair: — There are a number of them. Are there any suggestions by the committee whether one committee travel to each of these jurisdictions or would the committee be split up, considering as well the need to go to the Board and the costs that will be involved as well? So these numbers of committee members to participate, and do we participate as a group, or should there be committee members go to some jurisdictions and some to others?

Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I would suggest it would make some sense that the same group of people take a look at how this works, both within the current Canadian systems — current Canadian jurisdictions we're looking at — and the others within New Zealand and Australia. I'm not sure how else we'd

undertake a comparative analysis of how this works.

That being said, obviously in the interests of restraint, we will not be . . . I don't think it will be wise for us to send the entire committee. Now whether we look at a committee of one representative from each of the parties or two from each of the parties, plus certainly the Speaker, I think is something that . . . I guess my preference would be that we look at probably two members from the NDP caucus, two from the Sask Party caucus represented within this committee, plus the Speaker, and ask the Board of Internal Economy for funds to do that.

The Chair: — Any other comments on that?

Mr. D'Autremont: — I would agree with Mr. Thomson that I think it's important that those people that do the investigation should do the entire investigation too, so that within their own minds they can make that determination and comparison. If you have various groups investigating certain jurisdictions and not others, then you don't have the complete picture. You get report back from the individuals involved, but you still within . . . you still don't have the complete picture to determine whether or not A is more appropriate than B.

So I would agree with Mr. Thomson that it should be the same committee members that do the entire investigation and report back to the committee. And I think that Mr. Thomson is right in the suggestion that we should likely have two members from either party, plus the Speaker and the staff to do this determination.

The Chair: — Thank you for that. Everybody agreed? Are there any other comments?

Mr. Thomson: — I've got one additional suggestion. That if we are required to curtail the scope of the visits, that we would still put priority at the state and provincial level. So if that we needed to pull back at all in terms of the scope of the visit, I would prefer that we not examine some of the federal institutions, but concentrate more on the provincial and state ones.

With any luck we won't need to do that but we'll be able to accommodate both. But I would think it's at the state level and the provincial level that's of greatest interest to us.

The Chair: — Thank you for that. And I appreciate the committee coming to that agreement.

The one suggestion I might make for your consideration as well, and again considering the costs that will be involved and we would have to take to the Board of Internal Economy — and we may have Viktor who's done some research and background on these costs — I would just like to suggest perhaps for your consideration that for the Canadian jurisdictions that we've identified, perhaps we could include all committee members on those. The further afield would be the fewer number.

I throw that out only for your consideration.

Mr. D'Autremont: — If I may go? Looking at the jurisdictions that we're looking at, I would propose that we visit Ontario first, travel from Ontario to British Columbia, and then travel

onwards from there to visit Australia and New Zealand. Now I'm not sure whether you'd do New Zealand first or Australia or how the airlines work, but whatever the case may be.

That being the case, I suppose it's not impossible for the other members of the committee to return from British Columbia while the second group goes on. I know in talking — and again depending on time frames — talking to my own committee members at the time frame that we have discussed, Mr. Thomson and I, that our second . . . our third committee member would not be available. So there may be others that are in a similar situation.

Mr. Thomson: — The only other concern I would have is that obviously we don't want to overwhelm the jurisdictions that we will be visiting. And as I think we all know, there is a fair amount of work that goes into accommodating any delegation — and the larger the delegation, the more work involved. That being said, certainly if other members wanted to participate, at least in the Canadian portion, I would think we should try and facilitate that.

The Chair: — Then perhaps I'll ask for a motion then. While we're considering and we're writing out some motions here, perhaps I'll ask Viktor to give us what he's found with respect to the costs that we have to take forward to the board.

Well we'll need your approval to go ahead to the board with a budget.

Mr. D'Autremont: — . . . it will cost per person.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — The way I've set this up is you get different numbers depending on how many people actually travel. There's a set amount for each person, and then as you see, it's cumulative if seven people travel or if ten people — whatever. These are certainly estimates. They are not written in stone. This is assuming travel from here to New Zealand, Australia, and back. It does not take into consideration travel to British Columbia or Ontario.

The committee is somewhat limited in its choices as far as how to get there. What it comes down to is you either fly Qantas, the Australian airline, or Air New Zealand. Air New Zealand did quote me a better rate. That rate does allow travel to and from Sydney plus travel within Australia and between New Zealand.

As the airline emphasized to me and I will emphasize to you, the rate that's documented there is not guaranteed until the time the booking is actually made, until the time the tickets are actually purchased. So there can be some variation there. Depending on when the committee wishes to go, there may be some variation also.

So you've got your basic airfare to Wellington, the capital of New Zealand. The additional airfare is between points in Australia. So you're looking at approximately \$3,500 per person.

Given that, the assumptions I made was that you wanted to travel to five jurisdictions, an average of two days at each of them — one day basically for travel, one day or a day and a half

to meet with officials there. It works out that you would be away for a total of 13 days. That requires 11 days hotel. I've assumed an average cost of \$200 per day per person for a hotel room. I think that's fairly generous. I think there's probably a definite chance that you would actually not spend quite that much.

Meals are based on a schedule I got from the Finance branch who provided me with a fairly lengthy document indicating that different cities . . . there are different allowances for different cities. What it works out to be is \$769 per person. Then I've got . . . then of course I've included your own per diems for sitting on the committee.

So it does work out to approximately \$7,500 per person. If given the proposal you've made of two members from each caucus, plus the Speaker and presumably the Clerk of the committee — so that would be six people — you're looking at approximately \$45,000 in total. I would probably suggest you might need a leeway of about \$5,000 if there's variation in airfare, but I would imagine it will come fairly close to that.

I've also included sample itineraries. These are purely proposals. They are certainly not written in stone. They're just for your consideration to get an idea of what's actually involved in travelling there, the amounts of times involved in getting from point A to point B, and what's a workable schedule. I assumed late February, early March. I would certainly suggest travelling . . . departing here on a Friday. That way, because it takes two calendar days to get there given the International Date Line, the Houses . . . the legislatures aren't going to be open on the weekend for you anyway, so you may as well use that time for travel.

So this is just for your consideration. As I say, it just gives you an idea of what's involved.

Does anyone have any questions at this point about the document in front of you?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Pretty well self-explanatory.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Yes.

The Chair: — Okay. Unless there are any other questions or comments, we're prepared to entertain the motion with respect to jurisdictions to be visited by the committee members.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Based on the paper before us, it looks like what we would be doing is travel one day, visit the jurisdiction one day, travel, visit, travel, visit.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Most of the flights are quite short — some are an hour, couple of hours — so you could still schedule meetings on the travel day.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Right.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — But you are going to be pretty exhausted just from the travel there.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes. It's the other side of the world. We'll be wanting to sleep when they want to wake up.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — That's another reason for leaving on a Friday; that way, if you get to New Zealand on a Sunday, you do have Sunday to recuperate and then start your meetings on Monday.

The Chair: — So while you're considering that, as well also consider . . . committee members will have to consider dates, times. It'll take some preparation time, a lead time of at least one month to make these arrangements, so keep that in mind as well.

Mr. D'Autremont: — There would be no problem if we were to fly Regina, Toronto, Victoria . . . Vancouver, Victoria — wherever you would do it there — and then fly from Victoria or Vancouver onwards from that point?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Obviously it would change the airfare somewhat, but that's quite logistically possible. Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes. The departure from Vancouver would be relatively the same as Calgary, slightly different times.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Yes. It should probably shorten your travel time by a couple of hours.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you. Okay. That's . . .

Mr. Thomson: — Can I just add to Dan's comment in terms of the scheduling? I think, given the other demands on members' time, particularly as we are ready for legislative session, that it would probably be useful if we could add on the British Columbia and Ontario visits into this mix rather than do that as a separate trip. It's just I know scheduling is so difficult, at least on the government side at this point as we try and deal with budget and legislation, the more that we can pack in the better.

So I would simply leave that for your consideration as you do the pricing and the scheduling.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — So you want us to stick to the same formula then — basically two days for each additional city. A day of travel to Toronto, one day in Toronto, a day of travel to Victoria, a day in Victoria, so you're looking at approximately a total of 17 days on the road.

Mr. Thomson: — Let's talk about this after. I don't know how else we would do it unless we looked at going during the session and simply taking a couple of days and doing the Canadian segment.

But I think we'll have to look at this. It's just hard to get much time.

The Chair: — That's perhaps something to consider; you know, thinking about there'd be a lot of pressures and stresses of travelling and . . . pretty hectic. So that might be a consideration you might want to talk about.

Mr. Thomson: — Okay. Well we can consider this I guess at a later date.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I have a motion that I will make:

That the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures visit the following jurisdictions: Ontario, British Columbia, New Zealand, federal Parliament of Australia, New South Wales, Western Australia, and South Australia.

The Chair: — Hearing the motion is there any further discussion? No? All those in favour? Carried.

Mr. Thomson, I'll . . . if you are prepared to consider a motion, perhaps . . .

Mr. Thomson: — I've got one very neatly written out here, only because it's not written by me. I would move:

That the committee designate two members of the committee from the government caucus, two members of the committee from the opposition caucus, the Speaker, and the committee Clerk as its delegation to visit the jurisdictions; and that the Board of Internal Economy be asked to provide funding.

The Chair: — You've heard the motion. Any further discussion? All those in favour? Carried.

Okay, now the next thing is the time frames that we just talked about and . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well perhaps before we move to time frames, one of the things that we would need some information on is the cost to visit Ontario and British Columbia.

The thing is, if we included that as part of the trip initially, then you wouldn't be doubling up that airfare going west to Vancouver because you're already going that way. Whereas, if you were to do it separately at some other time, then you would be paying for those costs again.

The Chair: — That's a good point.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Whereas the Ontario situation, perhaps you could do at a different point in time because that is an additional cost that's not included already.

The Chair: — Okay. We'll certainly look into that, Viktor, right? But again we should start thinking about a date.

Mr. Thomson: — Well it would seem to me that we need to do this in the intersessional period.

The Chair: — Okay.

Mr. Thomson: — And that we should, assuming that the Assembly is looking at going back sometime in late March, that would leave us with roughly two months.

Now the difficulty, I can tell you from the government side, or the obvious complication, is the fact that we are anticipating a change in the leadership of our party and expecting other changes as a result in the structure of the cabinet and the work that needs to be done on the budget.

Can we free up two members to do that sometime in February or in March? Probably.

The Chair: — So we'd look at possibly the 15th of March. Or, pardon me, the 15th of February, I'm sorry.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Can I throw out a date? If we were to include the Vancouver or Victoria part of our travel in with the part to Australia and New Zealand, if we were to start maybe on the 21st of February — 22, 21, which would be Wednesday or Thursday. Go out, have the opportunity to visit the legislature in British Columbia on the Thursday or Friday — depending on how the air travel works — and then we could carry on.

And that would give us the weekend of the 24th, 25th to do the travel to New Zealand, which I think is a good suggestion that we travel on the weekends to . . . because you can't do the business with the legislatures at that time. And then return whenever the appropriate date would be when we're done.

Mr. Thomson: — The only thing I would add is I'm not sure that our side would be able to provide you with a name, with the names of the two members until after probably the 5th of February.

The Chair: — I guess the important thing now, as was pointed out, is the contact with the Clerks of the various Assemblies to ensure the availability of those people that we need to speak to. As far as the names, it shouldn't be a problem to nail down the transportation or accommodation.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — I don't anticipate any problems with accommodation. Transportation, the longer you leave it, the less chance there will be a seat available on the flight. But of course I have no way of knowing how many seats are available. The rates I'm quoting you are deep discount rates. Once they're booked, names can't be changed; you can't change itinerary. That's the only concern I would have there, because once these tickets are booked they are set.

The Chair: — We can't use a name and then a.k.a. (also known as) just in case there's . . . Oh, I guess not.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — You can try but I'm not sure the Australian authorities would go for it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — You can't book them in the name of the Saskatchewan legislature or something and then stick a name in?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — No, because visas are needed for all of you to visit Australia.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I have a Visa card.

The Chair: — Visa. No, the other visa, the passport visa.

Mr. Thomson: — The visa application . . . sorry, you're saying we would need visas as well?

Mr. Kaczkowski: — Passports. To Australia, the airlines have indicated to me that they can process them electronically when you book the ticket.

Mr. Thomson: — I see. Okay.

Mr. Kaczkowski: — So it's not as complicated as it initially sounds.

Mr. Thomson: — Okay.

The Chair: — So then we shoot for February 21 and 22 as a starting day.

Mr. Putz: — Would it be out of the question, if we can't organize things by then, if it was the week after that?

Mr. Thomson: — That would be slightly better.

Mr. Putz: — That would be better for planning. We'd have more lead-time.

The Chair: — Will the committee agree then to leave it with Greg and with Viktor within that time frame?

Mr. D'Autremont: — That three-week period?

The Chair: — Yes. Is there anything else we need to talk about?

Mr. Putz: — Will the steering committee give advice then as to . . . You'll have to take the budget to the board but as far as . . . what was I thinking here, I've lost my train of thought . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . right that's what I was thinking of, whether the Canadian segment will be separate or attached to this.

The Chair: — Well that was some consideration we talked about, we discussed about, whether we would do this all in one or use the Ontario visit later on.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I almost think maybe the Ontario visit; we could wait until we came back and early in the session perhaps do that, before the committee would make a recommendation to the legislature.

The Chair: — So do we need to make any changes to these motions? I suspect not. We've agreed. The time frame for the Ontario visit will just be delayed. Any others . . .

Mr. D'Autremont: — On the budget, does the Speaker's office prepare a document to go to the Board of Internal Economy or does the committee here make a determination on what kind of a budget we're asking for?

The Chair: — Sure by all means. Greg, give us some . . .

Mr. Putz: — If I may make a suggestion. Viktor's outlined broad strokes what it will cost and we can develop a budget for the travel based on that. I mean it won't be exact because we won't have details as to airfare or hotel rooms or whatever.

We'll do estimates for that and Mr. Speaker could ask that it be placed on the board agenda for their meetings next week, and Mr. Speaker's Chair. This committee could present it on behalf of the committee. And I know Mr. D'Autremont you are on the board, Mr. Kowalsky as well on the board, that they could also be involved in presenting the case and the budget for the plans of the Rules Committee.

The Chair: — Thank you.

Mr. Thomson: — In case the board decides that the budget is too high, I take it we would simply come back and decide to adjust our decision accordingly. Is that right?

The Chair: — I'm not sure what alternative we'd have unless you still have some money left in your MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) travel allowance.

Mr. Thomson: — Oh sure. I think it might get me to Wadena.

The Chair: — Well I thank you for that. Is there anything else that the committee might give us some advice or direction on, or want to discuss or talk about?

Mr. Thomson: — I would like to, Mr. Speaker, just thank again the Clerk's office and your office for the work that was done and the work of the steering committee on this. It's a very interesting and a very important set of issues and clearly the more information we have the better. So thank you once again.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Thomson.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'd like to echo Mr. Thomson's comment that the Clerk's office has done a very good job — and the Speaker's office — on this. And we need the information in making these kind of decisions and I'd like to thank you for that.

The Chair: — Well I appreciate those comments as I'm sure . . . And again as I said at the outset, because of the significant major impact that this would have, perhaps we don't fully appreciate at this point just the significant changes that would be required in the operation of our entire House and our Legislative Assembly. So I think this is very important.

I thank you so much for your input and appreciate your comments, your suggestions, and being here today, and look forward to seeing you at the call of the next meeting. Thank you.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Thomson. Thank you very much; this meeting is now adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 11:35 a.m.