

[Chairman: Mr. Pashak]

[8:33 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call this first meeting of -- what is it? -- the 22nd session of the Public Accounts Committee of the province of Alberta to order. This is one of the standing committees of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta.

The first item of business really would be to approve the agenda as circulated. So moved by Mr. Brassard. Any discussion on the agenda as distributed? I understand the Member for Calgary-Buffalo may have a point of order that he'd like to deal with at this time.

MR. CHUMIR: Yes. We're on this side, Frank. There's the first point of order. It's my colleague's debut, and he wants to be a witness already. He picks things up fast.

MR. MOORE: Well, he's been a little off track for a long time.

MR. CHUMIR: What are you on, Frank?

The point of order is a matter that's troubled me for some time in light of the role of leadership that this House and MLAs should play in the province: the fact that we allow smoking in this Chamber, indeed in this building but particularly in this Chamber, during committee hearings. I think it's a bad thing, I think it sends out the wrong message, I think it's hypocritical, and I think it demeans this Legislature. I am going to make a motion at this stage that we start the wheels of progress and change in this committee at this moment, and I would like to move that the rules of this committee provide that there shall be no smoking in the Chamber during deliberations of the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think I'll accept that, if it's all right with the Member for Calgary-Buffalo, as a notice of motion. We could include it, I'd say, later on in the agenda as point (g) under Organization of Future Meetings. Is that acceptable to the member?

MR. CHUMIR: Put it under Organization of Future Meetings?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, put it as point (g). Is that acceptable to members of the committee?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Moore.

MR. MOORE: I move that we accept the agenda as amended.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As amended? Okay. Is there any discussion on the agenda, then, any other items that any members would like to add to the agenda? Hearing none, are you agreed that we adopt the agenda as amended and circulated?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Moore, if you'd care to take the Chair -- I don't think you have to leave your position over there. I'll just make some brief introductory remarks. First of all, I'd like to welcome the new members to the committee. As for older members or members who have served here on the committee in

the past, it's not my fault we're meeting at 8:30 now. The previous time for these meetings was 10 o'clock in the morning. Private Bills met from 8:30 to 10 o'clock. They often had to bring guests in from other parts of the province, and they spilled over past the 10 o'clock time slot. So we were often a little late getting started, with some inconvenience. The government side thought it would be more appropriate that we reverse times. That's why we're now meeting at 8:30.

I'd like to indicate that the Auditor General is with us today, Mr. Don Salmon, and he has with him his two assistant auditor generals. We'll call on Mr. Salmon later, and he will introduce his associates.

The authority for meetings of the Public Accounts Committee comes under Standing Order 50 in the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, and it really doesn't spell out in any great detail what our powers are. For the benefit of new members especially, I'll just indicate what it says. It just says that "Public Accounts, when tabled, shall automatically stand referred to the Public Accounts Committee." Then there are other sections that say that the workings of the committee should relate to the purpose for which they're struck. So basically the function of this committee is to review the annual report of the Auditor General and the public accounts, which consist of these two documents: the basic public accounts for 1987-'88 and supplementary information to the public accounts.

It's up to the committee itself, though, to decide on our procedures, and we'll be dealing with those issues in a few minutes. As to the powers of the chairman, technically, I suppose, I've all the powers of the Speaker of the Assembly other than that I can't name members. If it should ever come to that, which I don't think is likely, I have to refer questions of privilege and that sort of thing to the Assembly itself. With respect, as I say, to the conduct of meetings, the direction of questions, these will be determined later under the section of this meeting in which we look at organization. We'll do that by motion.

With respect to the final report, there is no final report that is provided for in the Legislative Assembly, so we do not issue a final report. Our proceedings are in *Hansard*, and they're available to the public in that form.

Also, as the chairman of this committee I'm involved with the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, and as such we spend most of our time deliberating as to how we could improve public accounts committees and their operation in Canada. We've published one book called *Guidelines for Public Accounts Committees in Canada*. We're actually going to have a session here in Edmonton in July in which we're going to update this guideline. So there are many ways in which we think we could improve the way in which public accounts committees perform and operate. These are, I suppose, matters of opinion, and I know that the co-Chair of the committee, Mr. Moore, and I are somewhat in disagreement over the nature of these reforms. But if any members would like to look at what other public accounts committees are doing or what we might do to improve what it is we're doing, I'd be pleased to spend time with members and look at issues like that.

Are there any questions or points?

MR. GESELL: When we're on the third item, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yeah, I'm just moving to it, unless there are some questions that people might want to raise with me as a result of . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Are we going to get more details on this conference in July?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's just what we're moving towards right now. We've moved on to item 3 on the agenda. I think I could arrange to have the full agenda distributed to the members. Would that be possible? We'll send this out to you.

There is an annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, and this year it's Alberta's turn to host that meeting. Because it's Alberta's turn to host it, I happen to be the president of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees for this term. We'll get together on Sunday, July 9, for a reception, and this will take place at the Hilton hotel. Then Monday we swing into a number of business meetings, and part of the agenda for those meetings will be to consider the guidelines for public accounts committees in Canada.

We have a delegation from Australia. We have auditors general as well as members of public accounts committees from Australia that will be present at these sessions. The sessions conclude on Wednesday afternoon, and then because we're bringing people in from across Canada, we've arranged a little tour for our guests. We want to show the province off. They're going to have ample opportunity to see Edmonton while we're here, but we thought it would be instructive or whatever for them to come down to Calgary. They're going to visit the Calgary Stampede, and then we've arranged to take them to Lake Louise the following day.

As part of that, we have some openings for members of the Public Accounts Committee to attend some of the sessions that are being held here. You're welcome to attend all of the business sessions, but we've also made arrangements for members to be present at some of the receptions and that sort of thing: three people for each of the events. The first event, as I mentioned earlier, is a reception to be held at the Hilton hotel. That would be on the Sunday night. Then on the Monday evening we're having a relatively formal banquet at McKay Avenue school, which is where the first Legislature of the province of Alberta sat. Then the following evening we're hosting an event at Fort Edmonton.

MR. MOORE: Does that include the wives?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Moore, that includes wives or girlfriends or guests. There are arrangements for that.

MR. GESELL: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce a motion with respect to the selection of individual members that may attend at these sessions. You've just indicated that wives would be present as well. My understanding is that you as Chair would be present and also that the vice-chairman would be present.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's correct.

MR. GESELL: I would like to move that the three additional guests, apart from yourself and the vice-chairman, to the CCPAC conference be selected on the basis of two government members and one opposition member, the selection of individuals to be made by the chairman, by yourself, and the vice-chairman in consultation. The reasoning for that motion, Mr. Chairman, is that that is better than the representation that we have in the House with respect to the parties. So two members that would attend would come from the government members,

and one additional member would come from either the Liberal or ND party. It would be a choice that they would make in that respect as to who might be selected, and they could sort that out themselves.

MR. McEACHERN: May I ask him a question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. McEachern.

MR. McEACHERN: Okay. If there are three different events, if we do that for each event -- right? -- then there are nine events or nine people that can attend the events. Is that what you're talking about?

MR. GESELL: Mr. Chairman, yes. I'm setting the ground rules of who may attend on behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

MR. McEACHERN: I was just checking if you're referring to three different meetings, in which case that would mean six government members attending and then the other three attendees would be split between the New Democrats and the Liberals. I suppose it would be two New Democrats and one Liberal.

MR. GESELL: Mr. Chairman, the motion, I believe, is straightforward: that to any of these events that we would be attending, the representation would be yourself, the vice-chairman, two members from the government members, and one from either the Liberal or the ND party.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, but I think just to rephrase Mr. McEachern's question, they wouldn't be the same three people at all three events. That could be divided up, right? Okay.

MR. MOORE: That was the point of clarification I wanted to make. It could be three different people every night. You know, there are three receptions, aren't there? That would probably include nine members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have a motion before the committee then. Is there any further discussion on the motion?

MR. McEACHERN: Could I perhaps add a rider that you ask people what they're interested in first and then, using those guidelines, choose them from there.

MR. GESELL: Mr. Chairman, I'm not prepared to accept that rider. I believe that would be the normal process that would occur in any situation, so I don't think I want to encumber a motion with that direction.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are you ready for the question? Those in favour of the motion by Mr. Gesell? Anyone opposed? Motion carried.

Now, the fourth item on the agenda is Organization of Future Meetings. I think we do need a formal motion to meet at this time. Mr. Brassard.

MR. BRASSARD: I move that the Public Accounts Committee meet each Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. in the Leg. Assembly during the session.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right. If I may just make a quick comment on Mr. Brassard's motion, we have no appropriation of funding to meet outside of the session of the Legislature. I just want to draw that fact to the members' attention. If we wanted to meet outside of session in a subsequent session, someone would have to introduce a motion that we strike a budget for that effect, and we'd have to process it through the Members' Services Committee.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, I would like to move that. It seems to me totally ridiculous . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can't. There's a motion on the floor. We have to deal with the motion that's on the floor right now.

MR. McEACHERN: It is a related subject.

MR. JONSON: Point of order. My point, Mr. Chairman, is that we do have a motion that we're supposed to be dealing with.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I agree, Mr. Jonson. The motion before us is to meet every Wednesday morning at 8:30 -- until 10 o'clock, I would assume, Mr. Brassard -- during session. Any further discussion on that particular motion?

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, if we pass this motion, then that precludes any further motion to say that we could meet after session, does it not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. McEACHERN: Okay, then. All right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're precluded already from meeting after session during this term. I was just drawing that to your attention, because there's no legislative . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Surely his party could put forward a motion asking the chairman to request that we be allowed . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Fine. You can put that motion forward. It won't go anywhere, but you can put it forward.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to second the motion that's been put forward.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I haven't been asking for seconders. I've just been assuming that when somebody -- we really don't need seconders in committee. So the motion is before us. Any further debate on the motion that we meet Wednesday mornings from 8:30 to 10 o'clock during session? Okay; are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour of the motion?
Questions by members then. Mr. Payne.

MR. PAYNE: I don't mean to interrupt your introductory comments. Once you conclude them, Mr. Chairman, then I would like to put forward a motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Mr. Payne.

MR. PAYNE: I'm sorry. I just thought I'd interrupted your opening comment there.

In any event, then, speaking to agenda item 4(b), I would like to suggest by way of a motion, Mr. Chairman, that the format we adopted, I think it was in the last session, seemed to be reasonably well accepted. Of course . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, a point of order. It seems to me that I asked already for the right to make a motion related to (a). Should we put it on now, or do you want me to put it down as 4(h) or something?

MR. CHAIRMAN: As 4(h).

MR. McEACHERN: All right.

MR. PAYNE: Until we get to 4(h), then, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to suggest that my recollection is that the format we adopted last session, and that we use during question period in the Assembly, seemed well received by the members. My recollection is that members of the Public Accounts Committee traditionally like to participate whether we are meeting with the Auditor General or ministers of the Crown, and of course by limiting the number of supplementaries to two, obviously that enables an even greater representational participation by the members of Public Accounts. I'd like to put forward now, then, the formal resolution, or motion, that each member be allowed one question and two supplementary questions upon being recognized, of course, by the Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have a motion that each member be allowed to put one question and two supplementary questions on being recognized by the Chair, and I'm assuming that -- well, that's the motion. After that, the person's name would go to the bottom of the list if he wanted to . . . Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour of the motion. Motion carried.

Scope of Questions.

MR. SEVERTSON: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move that the scope of the questions be limited to the Auditor General's and the public accounts reports for the fiscal year ended 1987-88. The reason for that is, of course, that all our documents are in that particular time period.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just to make sure that I understand that motion clearly, you're saying that our questions should be restricted to the Auditor General's report and the public accounts for the 1987-88 fiscal year.

MR. SEVERTSON: Right.

MR. GESELL: Just a comment, Mr. Chairman. With respect to that report, the introduction of the Auditor General's report indicates that "some of the observations and recommendations it contains were the result of audit work carried out up to the date

the report was signed." That really, then, occurs from March 31, 1988, to January 16, 1989. That period, then, would be excluded from examination by this Public Accounts Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: May I just call on the Auditor General to comment on that comment.

MR. SALMON: I think, Mr. Chairman, what you're talking about is the fact that we're talking about the government year-end to March 1988. The audit work primarily is done after that date, applying itself to that year. I think that's the clarification. If you can stick to that, that would be in accordance with our report. We're doing the work after the fact; it's been spent or revenue has come in or whatever. It has to be done subsequent to that year-end, a lot of it anyway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So as I understand what you're saying, we could deal with the entirety of your report within the framework of the motion.

MR. SALMON: Whatever's in this report should be subject to the discussion because that's the way we've done in past years.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All of the recommendations, then, relate up to March 31, 1989, even though they may have been formulated after that period of time.

MR. SALMON: That's right.

MR. GESELL: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does that satisfy your concern, hon. member?

MR. GESELL: Yes.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, I think that my colleague here makes a good point. I notice that the Auditor General in his preamble does say that some of the recommendations he makes about, say, tidying up accounting processes or that sort of thing -- sometimes he has been able to in the past report that in fact some progress has been made since March 1988. So I would just hope that the rule, while a general and basic one, should not be so restrictive as to not ask for further information if he has it and is willing to give it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the committee probably would exercise common sense and exercise that flexibility. It would still be in keeping with the basic motion as presented by the member.

MR. SEVERTSON: Yeah, as long as the questions are limited to the 1987-88 reports.

MR. PAYNE: Well, I don't want to unnecessarily complicate the discussion, Mr. Chairman. I think the word "flexibility" was used. I would hope that the same flexibility would extend to prior years. I could contemplate in a subsequent meeting of the committee with a minister that even though we are focusing on the 1987-88 year, it might be quite appropriate to ask for a comparative statement by the Auditor General as to how much progress has been made over prior years for some item or some de-

velopment within this year under study. I don't mean to cause that look of puzzlement on your face, Mr. Chairman, but you've just agreed to some commonsensical latitude in years ahead. I'm just suggesting similar latitude to years past.

MR. MOORE: Just speaking to the motion, it makes it very practical for the rest of the members here when somebody's asking questions. We know it relates to the documents we have, and we can relate to it too. A person can come up with a series of questions, and the rest of us sit here and say, "Where are they coming from?" So I believe the intent of that motion is a very good one. We're here to examine these reports for that given year, and we attain to it. I know there's a tendency for all of us to stray into the present because that is the thing that's there in the media and before us, the problems of the present day. But we aren't here to examine the present. That's why we have the Legislature sitting, and they'll examine all the present-day situations thoroughly, I'm sure. The hon. members sitting behind me here will have full opportunity to examine anything current. We're going to examine that given year, and I think we should all hold to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Is there any further comment on this particular motion? Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? It's carried.

The next item on the agenda has to do with the scheduling of the Auditor General's report. That may need clarification. On how many occasions do we want the Auditor General to appear before this committee? We may have time today to ask the Auditor General to make a brief statement about his report and maybe have time to put one or two questions.

MR. MOORE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I feel the Auditor General should be prepared to come to our next meeting regardless of what transpires today. In giving some thought to that, I think it may be a little premature to ask questions of the Auditor General today. He may give his report today, and then we can give thought to his report and the line of questions we'll have for next week. So I would think we would hear his report today, if there's time, and hold off questions until next week. If he's prepared to come back, then that would be excellent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe we should ask the Auditor General if that's convenient.

MR. SALMON: Mr. Chairman, based on our past experience with the committee, the first meeting had been an organizational meeting, which is today, but we're prepared to go on, if you'd like, and make some opening comments at least. In the past also we have spent the first two meetings following that organizational meeting discussing it, depending on how many questions the committee has. If I can answer them in one meeting, that's fine with me, but I will be attending meetings with other people that you have on your list as well. Of course, most of those questions are then directed to the minister or whoever's with him. But if we can do it in one or two, that's fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Moore, does your motion just provide for one more meeting with the Auditor General after today?

MR. MOORE: One more, and there may be others necessary. However, I feel today is an organizational meeting, basically, and that he should come back next week. Hopefully his report is such that it has left no questions in our minds, and his overview will clear it up so we won't have to be here too long.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. So the motion is that we do hear from the Auditor General today but that we have a full meeting with the Auditor General one week from today. Any further discussion on that motion?

MR. CHUMIR: Well, I'm just concerned to see that we do have the flexibility to have the Auditor General come the week after the next one, unless for some strange reason we deplete the stock of questions, which I can't imagine. I'm concerned in terms of scheduling, if we only have the Auditor General scheduled for next week, in giving notice to other ministers. As chairman you may wish to schedule someone the following week, and then we get ourselves into a logjam of inconveniencing somebody else. So I'd rather have the Auditor General set up for two meetings and shorten it to one if for some reason we seem to be able to get through our business more quickly than normal.

MR. MOORE: That's acceptable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's acceptable to you. So the motion is really amended that we provide for the Auditor General to meet with this committee on the next two Wednesdays. Any further discussion on that question?

I'd just like to make one point, perhaps, if that's all right with the committee. If we should exhaust our questions next Wednesday, we may have to do some scrambling to try and get another cabinet minister to come in the following Wednesday. That may not be possible because cabinet ministers are very busy, as we're all aware, and it's hard to fit them in, but we would try to do that.

All right, then. With that, are you ready for the question on the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour? Motion carried.

Now, the last item that we printed on the agenda is the scheduling of ministers to appear before the committee.

MR. MOORE: I see you have two on there: Procedure for Scheduling Cabinet Ministers, and the next one is Scheduling of Ministers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes; pardon me.

MR. MOORE: I would like to speak to the procedure at the moment if I could, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's fine.

MR. MOORE: Wednesday, as I think everybody knows, is the day the cabinet meets. For the new members, we used to meet on another day, but because one of the parties here has their caucus meeting on that day and they weren't available on other days, Wednesday was the open day. We agreed that Public Ac-

counts would meet on Wednesday, with the proviso that there may be days that a scheduled minister can't make it and we'd have to accommodate that. It's worked out very well. We haven't had too many that have had to drop down. So that procedure is there, and I would think we would allow that.

We set, on subsection (f), the rotation we'll agree on today that the ministers will appear. I feel that the procedure of them appearing is that they go by that schedule. If a minister isn't available on his given day, he exchanges places with the one below him and the procedure goes on. He just replaces the one below him, and the other guy comes up. Mrs. Quinn and the chairman can arrange with the minister who is there and look after the logistics of that, so we could follow that procedure in our following meetings.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think, Mr. Moore, when this item was placed on the agenda, it was to get a sense of what process we would use to choose cabinet ministers to appear before the committee as witnesses.

MR. MOORE: Well, I feel this is a decision of the meeting here. I'm sure in the political arena we are in, three parties here have three lists of ministers they'd like to see come. However, it's the will of this meeting that will decide that, the majority. We're a democratic system. The lists will be presented, and we will vote on them, and priorities will be set up.

But I think when you talk about ministers, there may be those that think one minister should be on top and another minister down in the rotation list; however, any minister that spends money, if it's a dollar, I think we should examine. We shouldn't look at the controversial part of a department or not. We should bring them through in an orderly fashion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think Mr. Jonson has a point or perhaps even a motion.

MR. JONSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Since we're into that, we might as well get at it. I would move that the rotation of the ministers appearing before this committee this session be as follows, and I have a copy for the secretary: number one, the minister of transportation; number two, the minister of economic development; number three, the Minister of Advanced Education; number four, the Minister of Career Development and Employment; number five, the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services; number six, the Minister of Agriculture; number seven, the Provincial Treasurer; number eight, the Minister of Energy; number nine, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs; number 10, the Minister of Labour; number 11, the Minister of the Environment; number 12, the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications; number 13, the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife; number 14, the Solicitor General; 15, the Minister of Family and Social Services; 16, the Minister of Tourism; 17, the Minister of Health; 18, the Minister of Education; 19, the Attorney General; and 20, the Minister of Recreation and Parks.

Now, Mr. Chairman, this is of course a rotation which would start, as I understand it, the fourth meeting of this committee because we're meeting today and intending to have two days with the Auditor General. So the rotation will start on the occasion of our fourth meeting and run so long as we are in session. I think that list is adequate for the present.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any further discussion on this motion by Mr. Jonson?

MR. CHUMIR: I may be missing something. I'm new to this committee, Mr. Chairman, but I can't imagine for the life of me why the Provincial Treasurer would not be after the Auditor General, our primary witness. It just makes no sense to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I suggest that you make an amendment to Mr. Jonson's motion.

MR. CHUMIR: I'll make that amendment, but I want to express some kind of quiet outrage before I do. We've got to have some compensations for these early morning meetings. Let's get the fur flying a little bit. So I'm certainly going to move an amendment that the first minister to be scheduled be the Provincial Treasurer. I don't think anybody who's doing a little bit of mental scheduling can help but note that there's a possibility that by the time we would get to the Provincial Treasurer, this session may well be over. I think that would be absolutely scandalous for this committee to be restricted to meetings, as is likely to be the case, if I can try and uncharacteristically predict the future. That's likely to happen in the event we don't schedule the Provincial Treasurer right off the top. So I'm going to amend the motion to schedule the Provincial Treasurer right . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: So the amendment is that we move the Treasurer up to number one, and I would assume that every other position, at least in terms of your motion, would otherwise retain its place on the list.

So on the amendment now.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, I think the amendment is inadequate to do the job. What we really need to do here is have each of the three caucuses submit . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, that's out of order. We're dealing with the amendment, okay? The amendment is that we move Treasurer up.

MR. PAYNE: As reluctant as I am, Mr. Chairman, to get into a discussion that has been prefaced with words like "quiet outrage" and "scandalous," I would like to speak to the amendment and suggest to the proposer of the amendment that there is some logic that can be marshaled in support of the arrangement proposed by Mr. Jonson. As a member of this committee I recall quite clearly, last year and the year before, comments or responses would be made by the minister appearing before the Public Accounts Committee, and I can recall expressing to myself quiet regret that we'd already had the Provincial Treasurer. My druthers, Mr. Chairman, would be to bring the Provincial Treasurer in, say, midstream, at which time I could personally deal with an accumulation of questions that I anticipate will come. Then toward the end of the process, if I've had a similar accumulation, perhaps he'd consider coming back a second time. So I think I'd like to speak against the amendment.

MR. McEACHERN: I wish to propose a new amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're out of order.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Calgary-

Buffalo made the statement -- and I hope he's right -- that in all likelihood, by the time we get to number seven, we won't be in the House. He must know something I don't, because we'll be around for number seven and some more. So I think the Provincial Treasurer, being in the top group, will get the exposure and the chance to be questioned by this committee in due process.

When I had my hand up, I was going to say the same as the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek did, that I would not like to see the Provincial Treasurer up first. I like to hear the examination of other departments because that raises a lot of questions that we can bring back to the Provincial Treasurer for clarification, because those ministers work under the control on their spending, if you want to say, of the Provincial Treasurer. So I think it's better to bring him in midstream so that we can utilize his services.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, there's two other people that want to be recognized. The Member for Calgary-Buffalo had his hand up first, then the Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. CHUMIR: I'll yield.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that's not the way the rules work. Do you want to yield or pass?

MR. CHUMIR: I'll yield, but I'm not closing debate. That's not my intent.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, first of all I'm going to support the amendment. I believe it makes good sense. Here we are, June 21. Next week the Auditor General comes. We're going to schedule him to come again on July 12 because, as I understand it, there's a good likelihood that we won't be sitting on July 5. I may be mistaken on that, but I think the chances are good. So he'll be back with us, presumably, on July 12. Then we have, counting seven weeks from there, July 19 and July 26. August 2 is three. August 9 is four. August 16 is five. August 23 is six. The Provincial Treasurer wouldn't be with us until August 30 if we go with the proposal in front of us, let alone all these other departments that are spending close to two-thirds of the provincial government's annual budget.

It may well be, especially if the Legislature is not sitting for any of the time around the long weekend in August -- I don't know whether we'll be sitting Wednesday the 2nd or Wednesday, August 9 -- that we're looking at far into September before the Treasurer even comes. I think the likelihood is very high that the Treasurer will not be with us at all at number seven in the lineup. So I think the fact that there's a good chance that the chief custodian of the moneys entrusted by the Legislature won't even appear before the committee is quite regrettable. We should be making every effort to ensure that he's before this committee, and placing him at number seven in the pecking order doesn't ensure that at all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I should just add a further point of information, and that is that subject, of course, to the committee's direction in this matter, it's not likely that there will be a meeting on July 12. That will be right in the middle of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees conference, and I don't think the Auditor General will be available at that time because the

auditors general have their meeting at the same time as the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees meeting is held.

MR. BRASSARD: I'd like to speak against the motion, Mr. Chairman. The Provincial Treasurer's role basically is demand driven. There is some balancing between departments of how he's going to allot his funds; that's true. But I think it would be ludicrous to get into his report when we haven't even had a chance to talk to the various departments that are making those demands on him. So I think it would be ludicrous to deal with that first.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: It's the provincial Treasury Department that's responsible for preparing the public accounts. The fact that we won't even get to question it, that the lineup doesn't even ensure that we'll get to question, doesn't make any sense whatsoever.

MR. CHUMIR: Married life, if anything, has increased the debating ability and the perspicuity of the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View. I've never heard him more pertinent and more to the point and more persuasive.

It's quite clear that on this schedule we probably won't hear the Provincial Treasurer. I can't understand why we have a motion; the original motion on the floor is so obscure. Why doesn't the member just amend the motion and say that we will not hear evidence from the Provincial Treasurer, the chief financial officer of this province, on the public accounts for which he's responsible? That would bring credit to this House. That would be a wonderful amendment.

In terms of my amendment, let me say that I'm certainly not satisfied that it's definitive. It's an essential improvement on the main motion. I think there are other ways in which to approach the list of ministers. I'm not going to make them, as a rookie in this House, but I know that some of them will be forthcoming. As Frank Sinatra used to say, I'd like to ask members of this committee to do it my way in this instance. Let's get the Provincial Treasurer on off the top. Then we can bring him back if we have all of these questions the ministers can't or won't answer, which of course is going to happen because that's what happened in the heritage savings trust fund committee, which I have had a lot of experience on.

MR. GESELL: Mr. Chairman, I'll speak against the amendment. As a new member I feel that we are to conduct business in a straightforward fashion. If we are engaging here -- and it seems to be leading up to that -- in some political posturing and speeches that prolong the process and not dealing specifically and concisely with questions that we want to put with respect to public accounts, then I can see that the process might drag out. But if all the members co-operate effectively, then I don't really have any problem. We should be getting there. Mr. Hawkesworth has given us a time frame here, and it appears that the Provincial Treasurer will actually make a presentation as long as we conduct business effectively.

MR. MOORE: I've listened with interest to the various comments, but nobody seemed to look at the six above the Provincial Treasurer. We deal with very important areas of our province: our education, our employment area, the public works and all the buildings and that, agriculture, business develop-

ment, and the roads. Now, that is all the infrastructure of this province in those first six, and it's very important to the taxpayers of Alberta that we look at those major departments that spend the money that puts the infrastructure of this province in. I think it's important they get there, and I'd like to see them examined because they are the ones that affect our daily lives.

Nobody seems to look at those six. The Provincial Treasurer, I agree, is an important one to get up there. However, these are the ones that have spent the money, and they're the ones we want to see how they did. All the Provincial Treasurer did was agree in the budget process that they got X number of dollars. We're to look, Mr. Chairman, at how they spent that money, whether they spent it responsibly and in the best interests of the citizens. When we look at the entire province, I think those first six have preference over the Provincial Treasurer. Then the Provincial Treasurer will come in, and we can ask him questions that come out from those major departments. I think it's a very responsible rotation and serves the taxpayers of Alberta very well.

MS MJOLSNES: Mr. Chairman, this is a comment in terms of what the Member for Lacombe said. What, in fact, he's saying is that the first six are the most important and the rest of them are less important. I totally disagree with that, and I would like to support the amendment because I think the Provincial Treasurer should be the first one that we question.

Thank you.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to clarify that statement if I could. The member is entirely out in left field as usual. I didn't say they were more important than anyone else; I said they were important to the taxpayer because they affect everybody's lives. The others affect them too, but transportation, employment, and education are major departments.

MR. McEACHERN: How about Family and Social Services?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. McEachern. [interjections] Look, let's not have a debate going back and forth between two members, or we'll be here forever and never get anywhere. [interjections] Order.

Is there anyone else that would like to speak on this motion?

MR. McEACHERN: Call the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will call the question when the members have had a democratic opportunity to express themselves, unless someone wants to move that we end debate, which somebody is free to do. But my sense is that everybody has had their say and they're ready to deal with the question.

We have an amendment on the floor to the motion by Mr. Jonson. The amendments says that the Treasurer be moved up to number one ranking. Are we ready for the question on the amendment? Those in favour of the amendment? Five. Those opposed? The amendment is lost. We're back to the main motion.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, I object to the process. Why are we taking a motion from him in terms of the procedure, and then we spend all this time on a tiny amendment when in fact we haven't agreed to the procedure? Why should this body agree to a procedure whereby one government member comes in

with a railroad job, announces a list, and then it's just railroaded through? Why didn't we have a discussion on what might be the approach of this committee as to how we would get ministers before this committee? You didn't accept any discussion on that or any other ideas on that. You just jumped in with one motion that is totally ridiculous, and it's a railroad job.

I would like to make an alternate motion, but because you've put him on the record and not allowed anybody else to speak and ruled them out of order every time they tried to put something else on the record, you end up with only that motion. Of course, they've got a government majority of members, and so they'll railroad it through without anybody getting a chance to speak as to some other suggestions that might make sense.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, you can always speak against . . .

MR. McEACHERN: I'd like to move an amendment at this stage then.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can speak against the motion and have it defeated.

MR. McEACHERN: But if an amendment is so contrary to the original motion that it's not acceptable, then how can we get it on the record?

MS MJOLSNES: Just make it.

AN HON. MEMBER: You can make an amendment.

MR. McEACHERN: Okay, I'll make an amendment then, but I know what'll happen with it. [interjection] Yeah, you sure will.

Anyway, I suggest that each caucus here, each of the three caucuses, submits a list of the ministers they would like to see, in their preferred order, and that the chairman take those three lists, and starting with the Conservatives' first preferred and then going to the Official Opposition next preferred and then the Liberals' first preferred -- keep going around and around those lists and negotiate with the various ministers to get them here in that order if possible. If not possible, then of course you drop down the list a little bit. It would make a lot more sense than the government doing a railroad job and passing in a list and saying this is it when they do stupid things like put Family and Social Services down at the bottom of the list. Forestry: they're bragging about how important Forestry is, and where is it on the list? It's so far down you know darned well we won't get there. What about Environment?

So, Mr. Chairman, I move this amendment, that we each put in a list in our preferred order, and then the Chair can handle it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, but unless I'm overruled by the committee, I'm not accepting that as an amendment for the reasons that the member's aware of. I'm going to take his remarks as speaking against the motion as presented by Mr. Jonson, and we'll vote on that motion when we've finished the debate.

MR. GESELL: Mr. Chairman, just on that particular point of order that you've just raised. I don't think that amendment alters the motion significantly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're not debating it. Ms Mjolsness.

MS MJOLSNES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some real problems with the lists that we were given, and I would ask the mover of this motion to explain, if that's in order, what criteria he used to come up with this list, what considerations were given.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, if the member wants to comment, I would . . .

MR. JONSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm quite prepared to conclude remarks on the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, you wouldn't be concluding them; you're just answering a question that the member has put. If you wish to do that or not, that's up to you.

MR. JONSON: Well, I think, Mr. Chairman, one thing we have to keep in mind here, although perhaps there are different viewpoints as to what people want to get out of this committee in terms of political benefit or otherwise, is that we are supposed to be looking at the expenditure of public funds during the audited year of '87-88. I think we feel sometimes that we want to question the departments which may be currently in the news today as opposed to a year and a half ago, effectively, now.

I think the departments listed there are important ones. I haven't, for instance, heard anybody complaining about the key departments that are there; it's just that everybody would like to have certain ones number one. We've got Transportation, a very important department, a great deal of expenditure all across the province. I haven't heard anybody complaining about Economic Development. Advanced Education, a multimillion dollar budget, very important; a lot of initiatives there during this particular budget year that we're going to be examining. I think there's plenty of meat there, so to speak, for people to work on.

This is the procedure we have successfully followed in previous years, and the motion follows that same procedure.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: You know, it's interesting if you look at the budgets: Education, for example, \$1.3 billion; Hospitals and Medical Care, \$2.3 billion; Social Services, \$1.2 billion. It adds up to almost half the entire provincial budget. They don't start appearing until the 15th week, which is long past the time when this Public Accounts Committee is likely to be sitting. Fifteen, 17, and 18: that's the list of priorities.

You look at the Auditor General's report, and there's virtually nothing in the Auditor General's report when it comes to Career Development and Employment, for example, as one. There are some things here in Transportation, not a great deal. Labour: there wasn't a lot in that report. But then you look at the Recreation and Parks and Social Services departments, and there are some pretty key recommendations there. But we won't be able to put those to the responsible minister. So for all the fine words of the hon. member for putting forward this list, this one is designed more to hide the public accounts from the committee than it is to reveal much of anything in the Public Accounts Committee.

MR. BRUSEKER: I would like to make an amendment to this motion, the order proposed before us. I think Mr. Hawkesworth made some good comments, as did Mr. Moore. I think one of the things we're looking at here is the infrastructure that has been spent or has been established, and I would like to see this

motion amended.

I would like to see Education come first because that's something everyone can relate to. I presume everyone here has had some education, although sometimes one starts to wonder about that. I think everyone has had exposure to the health care facilities, so I think that should be number two. They are certainly very large in terms of dollars spent, and I would like to see Family and Social Services number three. I would like to see those three come first because, as Mr. Hawkesworth pointed out, they're very large in terms of the total pie, shall we say, of dollars spent. They are important to everyone provincewide, and I think everyone can relate to them. I think because of the size of the budget, because of the exposure they have, they should get top billing.

Since we've defeated the motion about where the Provincial Treasurer can go, I would then say that the Provincial Treasurer can stay. We will replace one, two, and three, with one being Education, two being Health, and three being Family and Social Services. The ones that are presently one, two, and three can go to the bottom of the list.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm prepared to accept this amendment, one more, just to test the will of the committee. If this amendment should be defeated . . . Well, we'll decide after that, but it just would seem a somewhat wasted exercise to deal with any more amendments to the list as proposed by the government members.

So we do have an amendment before us, which would be to move Education, Health, and Family and Social Services, in that order, up to one, two, and three in terms of ranking of ministers to appear as witnesses before the committee.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Do I understand, as a point of clarification from the member making the amendment, that they would exchange places with these three that he's proposing come to the top or that the first three he's mentioned go to the top and then Transportation will be four, Economic Development, five, and Advanced Education, six?

MR. BRUSEKER: I would suggest that Transportation, Economic Development, and Advanced Education trade places, the net effect being that the Treasurer would remain in spot number seven.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: If they were to remain at four, five, and six, I'd agree, but I don't agree with just a wholesale exchange.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, I agree with my colleague here that Transportation, Economic Development, and Advanced Education are important enough that they shouldn't go down to the bottom; we should just slide down the list, except that that does, of course, create an even bigger problem in that we will probably never see Treasury. Certainly I don't see how you can not have the biggest spending department at the top of the list. Just because the government has the largest number of members in this committee, I think it's absolutely scandalous that they decide beforehand exactly what this list will be and then just come in and railroad it through.

MR. BRASSARD: You're out of order.

MR. McEACHERN: I'm not out of order. I'm speaking on the amendment.

AN HON. MEMBER: You are not.

MR. McEACHERN: I certainly am. I'm pointing out that I think this is totally ridiculous if we put some of the departments with the biggest amount of money at the bottom of the list instead of the top when we're supposed to be dealing with public accounts. And that's perfectly germane to the discussion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jonson.

MR. JONSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, speaking against the amendment, although I do have a possible suggestion, I fail to find the logic in some of the previous comments. For instance, I agree that the Department of Education is a very important department, a vehicle for exercising major policy initiatives of the government which are debated in this Legislature in budget estimates and any legislation pertaining to this area. But I would respectfully remind the committee that we are largely looking for guidance in examining department expenditures from the Auditor General's report.

If you look at the Department of Education in the report that we'll be dealing with in the next couple of meetings, it is essentially given a clean bill of health. One of the hon. members was referring to all the pages of this department or that department. If you go by that degree of logic, I cannot understand how you could possibly put the Department of Education ahead of, say, the Department of Advanced Education, which is high on our list and has a major section in the Auditor General's report for examination.

So while I totally agree that these are very important departments in terms of government planning, policy-making, and expenditure of public funds, I would submit, Mr. Chairman, that there are other times, particularly in budget estimates, to examine and to question and to comment upon the actions of the government with respect to these major, major departments. I do not accept what seems to be the purpose here of really extending the budget debate, which we're currently engaged in under estimates in the House right now, into the Public Accounts Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Are you ready for the question on the amendment?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour of the amendment as proposed by Mr. Bruseker? Those opposed? The amendment's defeated.

Back to the main motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question's been called on the main motion. Those in favour of the motion as proposed by Mr. Jonson? Those opposed? The motion is carried.

We had an extra item (g), Mr. Chumir's motion, which was the motion with respect to smoking.

MR. CHUMIR: Certainly. Those who listened to this morn-

ing's news will have noted that there is now a new report out of the United States which deals with the dangers to health of sidestream smoke: those who breathe the smoke created by smokers. So keeping that in mind and keeping in mind my earlier comments of the role of leadership that falls upon this Assembly and its members, I would move that we adopt a rule in this committee that smoking will not be allowed in the Chamber during committee hearings.

I would urge members to support it, so that if we're not able to say quite, as Winston Churchill once said, "This was their finest hour," it will be close to it.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm prepared to accept that motion. I don't know whether I have the legislative authority to do that; I'll check that out with legal counsel. But assuming that I do have that authority, let's proceed with the debate on the motion. Is there any further discussion?

Mr. Payne.

MR. PAYNE: Members, of course, will be aware I do have a motion on the Order Paper for a similar resolution that affects the entire Chamber. Unfortunately, it's still 22 down on the list, so I'm realistic enough to conclude that we probably won't get to my motion this term, or at least this year. Consequently, I would like to speak in support of the motion. But in so doing I'd like to emphasize to any smoking members that my support should not be interpreted as any condemnation of their personal habits. I wouldn't be participating in a supportive way of the motion were it not for the proximity of the lounge, which enables our smoking members to indulge at very little inconvenience. So therefore, I'd like to speak in support of the motion.

MR. GESELL: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to get an impression of how this might affect the members who are sitting in this committee. I'm not sure how many of them are smokers that this might inconvenience. I'd like to get an appreciation of what the situation is. Maybe the situation is that we don't have a problem here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With the concurrence of members of committee, I'll ask. Are there any people who would be inconvenienced by a no-smoking motion?

Mr. Jonson.

MR. JONSON: I'd like to speak about inconvenience. You know, we're all inconvenienced by various things, I guess, and no, I wouldn't be terribly inconvenienced by the passage of such a motion. But it seems to me that certainly this motion that's been proposed should come up for debate. I know it's being talked about and considered, and a decision should be made on it. But I just object a little bit — quite a bit actually, Mr. Chairman — by sort of trying to get the ball rolling in one committee, because we know then the motion's going to be made in all the committees as we go through the operations of the Legislature. I guess that's a fair tactic. It's just that I think and I would suggest that you consult with the people who have followed these procedures and rules for the Assembly for some time, as to what the appropriate committee is that should deal with it and then set the rules for the whole works. I don't know if that's Members' Services or . . .

MR. McEACHERN: The Assembly.

MR. JONSON: . . . the Assembly; right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So are you speaking against the motion then?

MR. JONSON: I'm speaking against it being dealt with here on an ad hoc basis, one committee at a time. I think the question should be put, and the decision should be made, and then we're on our way with the rules.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You're speaking against the motion then. I'll interpret your remarks in that light.

Mr. Gesell.

MR. GESELL: Mr. Chairman, in light of your comments in respect to finding out what the tradition and procedure is in the House, might I suggest to you that maybe we accept this as a notice of motion to deal with at the next meeting?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that acceptable?

MR. CHUMIR: I quite frankly consider the matter to be so simple, clear, straightforward, and incontrovertible that I would really like to deal with it here and now. I think we're entitled to set our rules and orders. I find it spectacularly interesting that there would be any resistance to it, as there obviously is.

MR. PAYNE: Well, I think there's a common or middle ground, Mr. Chairman, and I'll speak to that middle ground by way of an amendment.

I would like to amend the motion before the committee by adding the words: "subject to confirmation by the Chairman of the legislative or parliamentary appropriateness of the motion."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour of the amendment? Anyone opposed? The amendment is carried. Then, back to the main motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those in favour of the main motion? The question's been called. Those in favour? Those opposed? Motion carried.

Mr. McEachern had another point of business.

Maybe, with the indulgence of the committee, I should just take a moment out to explain to the guests up here that this is a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee of the province of Alberta. Normally we have a cabinet minister appear before us. We question the spending record of his department, in the fiscal year of 1987-88 in this case, and we deal with the Auditor General's report. We look at how money has been spent and whether it's been spent in terms of the way the Legislature itself authorized the spending of those funds. This is the first meeting of this committee this year, and we're trying to sort out some organizational matters.

So back to the committee. Mr. McEachern.

MR. McEACHERN: I would like to move that the Public Accounts Committee empower the Chairman, in consultation with the vice-chairman, to prepare a budget to be submitted to the

Members' Services Committee in order to provide sufficient funds to this committee for a maximum of 10 meeting days outside the time period that the Legislature is in session.

I'd like to speak to that motion, if it's acceptable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just one question. Are you suggesting that we go back to the Members' Services Committee to see if we can get an additional appropriation for this fiscal year that we are in right now, or are you talking about the year after this?

MR. McEACHERN: This year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For this year; for the 1989-90 fiscal year. All right. As long as everyone's clear on the motion. Okay. Speak to the motion.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, the reason I suggest that is, in looking over the list that was presented and using the procedures we've already approved, unfortunately, as to who will appear before the committee and when, not only will we not get to three or four of the major departments, as was indicated earlier in the discussion, but even the Treasurer, who is number seven at this stage. You've got to remember that we're having today as an organizational day, and the Auditor General coming for the next two Wednesdays -- at least that's the intention -- and that puts the Treasurer in 10th spot. We might not even get to him this year. The House may, indeed, break up in the middle of August -- it certainly is a possibility at this rate -- and we might, in fact, miss the Treasurer.

So it just doesn't make any sense in a government that has 25 departments that we don't get to almost all of them. All the departments are important, and when we have a short session like we seem to be headed for right now -- the fact is we're always a couple of Wednesdays late getting started. We always have an organizational meeting, we always have the Auditor General for a couple of meetings, and that means we don't even get halfway through the list of the various departments. That's just scandalous, if we're to do the job of going through the public accounts with some time and care, if we're not even going to get to talk to some of the most important ministers in the government. So, Mr. Chairman, that's why I've brought forward this motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Moore.

MR. MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway brings up some very valid points and very reasonable points...

MR. McEACHERN: But...

MR. MOORE: However, he knows I always agree with him and come in in strong support of anything he says, so I know he looks forward to my support in the next couple of minutes.

I agree that the time space to examine ministers for public accounts during the session is limited and we don't get to the number that all of us would like to have appear before us. I agree that added time would provide that. However, we are responsible for taxpayers' dollars. We are in a deficit position, and we are working our way out of it in a responsible fashion. We have the Legislative Assembly sitting here, and if the hon. member would use the time more productively in the Legislative

Assembly instead of repetitious oratory, we would get a lot more examination in during the estimates than we would get in 10 meetings of Public Accounts in between. However, that be so it be.

I don't think we are in a position to go back and request additional funds, because the additional funds are not there. It's an operation in futility. In this job there are so many things we do as politicians that we should be at and give higher priority to when we know that the end result is that nothing is going to happen, because the money isn't there. Not because there is no desire to have it, because I'm sure every member in this House, including all three parties, would love to have Public Accounts meet in between the sessions, hon. member...

MR. McEACHERN: Put your money where your mouth is.

MR. MOORE: ... and make sure every minister was brought before us, and examine them... [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Members, let's address the committee itself. And if I'm making cautionary remarks, I should also point out that we're not going to serve the purpose of investigating the public accounts by making ad hominem comments.

MR. MOORE: I'm sure that everybody agrees with the hon. member. However, this motion is premature by about five years. I suggest he bring it back in five years' time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion on the motion to seek supplementary requisition so that we would be able to meet outside of session?

Mr. Chumir.

MR. CHUMIR: I support the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's terse, succinct.

Are you ready for the question? Mrs. Laing.

MRS. B. LAING: I was just going to add that it would cost approximately \$3,000 for me to come over this extra time, because you've got your expenses, you've got your airfare. Can we afford that times 24 members, plus the ministers' expenses? You know, that's a big bill.

MR. McEACHERN: Peanuts compared to an \$11 billion budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's address our comments to the committee itself.

Those in favour? [interjections] Anyway, are you ready for the question on the motion by Mr. McEachern? Okay. Those in favour of Mr. McEachern's motion? Those opposed? The motion is defeated.

Well, the next item on the agenda, actually, was to ask the Auditor General to make a few comments. But in light of the hour and the fact that you're coming back for two more meetings, would the Auditor General just care at this point perhaps to introduce your staff and the people you have with you, and make maybe one or two observations, if you care to.

MR. SALMON: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. We're here today in this organizational meeting, and I've sat in these in the past and

they've followed a similar pattern. It helps me to at least get used to the group that's in the committee. There's a lot of new faces this day, and so it's been good for us to be here.

I'd like to introduce the two assistant Auditors General from the office, Ken Smith on my right and Andrew Wingate on my left, who are heading our two audit divisions. I therefore chose to have them here today to listen. They'll come as well when I am speaking to the committee or answering questions, and I will refer certain things to them if need be.

I think maybe for the benefit of the committee, if I just have a few minutes, would be that there's a number of new people, and if they haven't had an opportunity to recognize that the Auditor General's report was released on February 9, 1989, by the chairman of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices in accordance with a process we developed about three years ago where all parties of the Legislative Assembly were contacted and the release was made on the basis of their approval prior to tabling, which in past years had been always on a tabling basis. The report is then tabled in accordance with the legislation when the first session meets. This is the third time we've released it in this way, and for those that may not be familiar, I believe this is the pattern where the public accounts' has been released prior to a tabling as well. Once that document has been released, if ours is available, there really hasn't been any benefit in us holding that until the tabling time, because it does give Members of the Legislative Assembly the opportunity to review that report outside of the time of the session.

As far as the report is concerned -- and certainly I hope everyone has had an opportunity to examine the report or will have before we discuss it in detail -- the format is very similar to last year's in that we have designed it with the various four sections of the report. I think this provides the members with the opportunity to see the recommendations we have made for this particular year within specific departments. For those that have become familiar with this particular report, there are some 47 recommendations in section 2. They're in bold type that is designed to bring their attention to the Legislative Assembly or particularly to the Public Accounts Committee. The first section of the report, which is very short, is just an overview, an indication of the results of our audit work for that particular year. Then we have sections 3 and 4 that describe our approaches to our audits, and a little bit of descriptiveness about the office and the organization of the office itself.

I don't really feel that it's important that I discuss the recommendations or go through any of the details. We've found in the

past that if we could give just an introduction to the report, and then anyone would like to ask questions about the report itself. Then we can go into any details on a question-by-question basis rather than my explanation taking place.

With those short, brief introductory remarks on the report I'll leave it up to the committee to design their method of asking questions and how they'd like to approach it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We may have time for one or two quick questions to the Auditor General right now in terms of his remarks.

Mr. Moore.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, I look at the time, and I make a motion that we adjourn until 8:30 next Wednesday, June 28, when the Auditor General will appear and give his full overview. Then we'll be ready for questions.

MR. McEACHERN: We've got 10 minutes. Why waste it?

MR. MOORE: If I may answer that question, seeing it was directed to me probably . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it wasn't. Nobody heard the question. It was just something that was . . .

MR. MOORE: I would say the reason for that is that before we ask questions, they may be premature until we hear the overall report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did you want to speak on the motion to adjourn?

MR. McEACHERN: Yes. I have a couple of quick questions I would like to ask the Auditor General, and he has 10 minutes, which is ample time to answer them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I just erred. A motion to adjourn is really not debatable. I'll just put the question without debate.

There's a motion to adjourn until next Wednesday morning at 8:30. Those in favour of the motion to adjourn? Those opposed? See you next Wednesday.

[The committee adjourned at 9:52 a.m.]