



**Nova Scotia House of Assembly  
Special Committee on  
Rules and Procedures**

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Honourable Arthur R. Donahoe, Q.C., Chairman

September 5, 1990

TO: All Members of the Special Committee on Rules and  
Procedures

FROM: Arthur R. Donahoe  
Chairman

RE: Electronic Hansard

Last spring the Committee rejected a proposal made by me for the installation of an electronic Hansard in the House of Assembly. At the time, the reason expressed by those who voted against the proposal was that the cost was too high.

Following this decision, I conducted a review of the proposal and had tests carried out on the level of lighting required to provide proper television coverage of House proceedings. These tests have determined that it is not necessary to install a new lighting system in order to produce satisfactory coverage of the House proceedings. This decreases the cost of the installation of the system considerably.

Therefore, I am now presenting a new, modified proposal to the Committee.

The proposal I am now making calls for the construction of a control room area in the current library annex adjacent to the second floor stairwell. This area would accommodate the bulk of the technology associated with the installation, including the monitoring, switching, and recording equipment. A computer interface would assist the operations staff with shot selection by automatically moving each camera to a pre-programmed position which corresponds to the seating plan.

Inside the Chamber, three small cameras would be in fixed positions and operated by remote-control. One camera would be mounted on each side of the House, most likely on the interior moulding for the east and west doors to the Chamber. The third would be mounted over the main entrance.

The cameras recommended entail CCD technology, which substitutes conventional tubes with computer chips. This allows the reproduction of high quality images at lower light levels than required by previous tube-model cameras. The following is a schedule of estimated capital and operating costs.

#### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Extended electrical systems	20,000
Carpeting	30,000
Control room, maintenance areas	30,000
Draperies & wall treatments	20,000
Custom shelving, furnishings	11,500
Cable raceways	10,000
Electrical cut and patch	10,000
Paint walls & ceiling areas	8,000
Camera mounts/enclosures	7,500
Ventilating system	5,000
CATV installation	1,000
Contingency - 10%	15,300
<b>Total Physical Environment</b>	<b>\$168,300</b>

EXPENSES	Fiscal 90/91	Fiscal 91/92
Additional Hansard		
Personnel	9,375	37,500
Parts/supplies	3,938	15,750
Tape Stock	2,000	8,000
Service Contract	1,875	7,500
Start-up costs	37,500	0
Contingency - 10%	5,469	6,875
Equipment Rental*	63,400	126,800
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$123,557</b>	<b>\$202,425</b>

\*assumes 6 months rental in fiscal 90/91, 12 months in 91/92

In summary, the total 90/91 fiscal year expenditure is \$291,857, and the 91/92 total expenditure is \$202,425, the physical environment costs having been paid and equipment installed in 90/91.

These costs are considerably below those in the proposal I presented to the Special Committee on House of Assembly Matters.

In all other respects, particularly the rules of coverage, the proposal I am now making is similar to the one submitted by me to the Committee on April 3, 1990.

I am again asking the Committee to consider this matter and to decide whether the proposal I am now making is acceptable.

If this proposal meets with the approval of the Committee, I expect that the installation can be completed and ready for operation during the 1991 Session of the Legislature.

ARD:nk

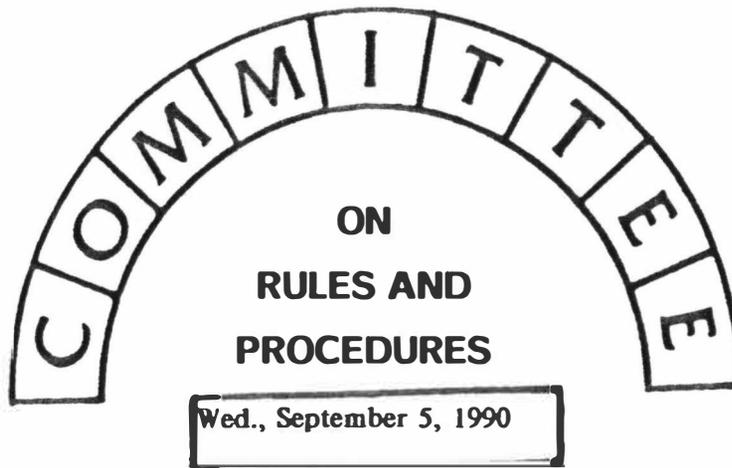
# HANSARD

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## NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



### COMMITTEE ROOM 1

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**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
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Mr. Richard Mann

Mr. William Gillis

Dr. James Smith

Mr. John Holm

In Attendance:

Mr. Graham Walker, Chief Legislative Counsel

HON. ARTHUR DONAHOE, Q.C. (Chairman): We have a quorum and I think we probably should get underway. A memo has been circulated and I hope members of the committee have had a chance to read it. Basically, the meeting has been called for a second look at a matter we discussed earlier in the year and came to a conclusion on. However, what I am proposing now is a somewhat modified version of the proposal that was presented to the committee earlier in the year.

I am satisfied after these tests that it is possible to put in a properly and acceptably functioning electronic Hansard system without having to spend the money that was originally thought would be required for improving the lighting in the House. As long as the other things are done that will lighten up the Chamber, in other words, the new carpeting is put in, a different shade is used for the blotters on the members' desks, which will be a little more reflective of the existing lighting and the wall colouring is changed slightly to a greyish-green tinge colour, the existing lighting should be sufficient to produce a picture of sufficiently high quality that it will accurately and properly portray what is going on in the House.

Once that became known to me, I considered that it was advisable to come back to the committee again, because the cost factor had been so important in the minds of those who had looked at the proposal last spring and were opposed to it. It is now considerably less expensive to complete the project and the figures are on Page 2 of the memo. These are substantially below the figures that were included in the proposal that the committee rejected last spring. So I thought it would be worthwhile to come back to the committee again to see if maybe in the light of these changes a different point of view might be taken by the committee and it would be possible to proceed with the installation.

If there was sufficient support in the committee, I would feel that I would have the authority to go ahead and have the necessary work done to have the installation put in place. However, I would feel that before it could be operational, we should have a resolution of the House itself authorizing the operation to be begun. So that is the position we are in now and therefore, the proposal I have put down on paper. I am asking the committee to consider whether in its opinion it is a worthwhile and appropriate thing to do.

MR. WILLIAM GILLIS: Just a short snapper. I assume that if the committee did agree and the work was done that that resolution would be put forward at the first available time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would be put forward at the earliest opportunity, yes. Al?

MR. ALLAN MOSHER: Well, Mr. Chairman, I first of all would like to compliment you on not only your perseverance in this matter but the work that you have put into this. I would like to make a motion that this committee accept the recommendation of you, Mr. Chairman, and take whatever steps are necessary to have this electronic Hansard system in place for the 1991 legislative session.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. John?

MR. JOHN HOLM: Mr. Chairman, a number of questions, if I might. First of all, the operating costs under the present proposal for a complete year of operation would be basically the same, or would be the same as that under scenario two of the proposal put forward?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. That is correct.

MR. HOLM: Okay. So that a year's operation would still be approximately \$200,000?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Correct.

MR. HOLM: Okay. Now, you said in your memo, at least in the one that went out to the Party Leaders, that you had reviewed the proposals and carried out tests. I am wondering, who conducted the tests?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The tests were conducted by Andrew Cochran and an organization called, something East. What is the name of the outfit?

MR. HOLM: It is his company, is it, though?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. It is not his company, he is a consultant and has particularly assisted me in the preparation of the original proposal that I made to the committee in April. This is not his company but it is an outfit that he is familiar with that takes film and records things, and so on, and has facilities for editing, and so on.

MR. HOLM: He was the one who arranged for it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, he was the one who arranged it.

MR. HOLM: Okay, I guess it would be somewhat important to know what qualifications his company has. Presumably they are experts in the field and I am sure they are.

Another one I am looking at, I am wondering when the scenarios were looked at before scenarios one and two, back in April, there was quite a bit of discussion about the lighting, and so on, at that time. What has changed? Why is it now possible by doing these things, or how is it that it came to light at this time when it had not at that time?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, because of what I had been told by the company that came here three years ago, I was always of the view that extensive changes were going to have to be made to the lighting system in order to have a proper system.

MR. HOLM: Because of Imagineering?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is right. The Imagineering people indicated that we were going to have to change the lighting. As he looked at the matter and became involved in it, Andrew Cochran began to wonder whether, in fact, that was the situation. After the committee rejected the proposal last spring he and I had a conversation, and as a result of that conversation I authorized him to go ahead and have tests conducted as to whether, in fact, we did require the extra lighting. It was as a result of that, that

the tests were carried out and the conclusion was reached that additional lighting is not required.

MR. HOLM: Just a couple more, if I might. One of the things, and in your opening comments you have talked about, if this committee supports this proposal you would see going ahead and doing the work and then the resolution. That would still cost \$168,000, a small piece, maybe, in the scheme of things, but a pretty large chunk of change, nonetheless.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. HOLM: Obviously, the House is not sitting. I know in the last proposals you were saying that you thought that there was some money in the Speaker's budget, where some of the funds to do this kind of work could come from. Is there sufficient funds in the Speaker's budget that you could do the \$168,000? Where would this money come from at this point in time?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The answer is, there is not enough to do it all. However, I have a proposal in mind that if the committee approves this, I plan to put it to the Internal Economy Board and if that is approved by the Internal Economy Board, it will result in the freeing up of approximately \$100,000 which was budgeted for another purpose. But if the Internal Economy Board is agreeable, it would then not be used for that other purpose but would become available for this purpose.

MR. HOLM: Would you be at liberty to share with us what that would be, or is it appropriate?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, my thought is to go to the Internal Economy Board and propose that instead of two trips to Ottawa for each member of the Legislature, which is at present permitted under the regulations, we reduce that to the point where only those members who have already taken those trips to Ottawa, well, they have been reimbursed for them, as they are entitled to be, but in other words, that no more Ottawa trips be paid for during this current fiscal year. If that is done that will free up approximately \$100,000.

MR. HOLM: Not having taken any of them yet, in a number of years, I really do not have any problem with that. That might be a problem, generally, for the odd occasion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, it may cause a small inconvenience for some members who would have . . .

HON. JOHN LEEFE: Surely, nobody would want to go to Ottawa. (Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Some members might have legitimate reasons to go to Ottawa and it may be that the board will say the Speaker can have discretion to allow a member to go if there are particular circumstances that require a member to go. I could have authority to approve a particular situation, if required. Basically speaking, if no more trips to Ottawa are taken by MLAs we will have about \$100,000 available. That would be the main source of the funding for this and we would have to find \$68,000 somewhere else. It may have to be an additional appropriation, I do not know, but we could find almost two-thirds of the cost that way.

MR. HOLM: Okay. I guess the last points I would like to raise have to do with cost based on the renting of the equipment. I am wondering, and it may surprise you to know that I am not adverse to the proposal that is being put forward in terms of the expenditure and the amounts of it, I guess, subject to one or two things being looked at.

One of them would be the comparative cost, one here we are talking about renting, but what would the cost be if it was leased or leased to purchase? It is not only, then, for this year, but we are looking at, maybe, what would the cost then be three or four years down the road that maybe the savings, because you can still get service contracts, would warrant spending an extra couple of thousand dollars a year at this point, at the front end, to save many thousands of dollars just a few years down the road.

The last point, and the figures that are here, if this procedure is to go ahead, and especially in light of everything that has gone on in all the controversies, certainly, that have gone on over the last numbers of months, for the purchase or the renting, however we are going to get the equipment, and so on, I presume that it would be done through the Speaker's Office rather than through Government Services. Maybe I am wrong. Maybe the equipment would be acquired or rented through Government Services, I do not know. But I believe that that has to be tendered through the tendering process.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It will be tendered. The intention is to call for tenders. The specs will be written and they will be put out to tender. The feeling is, at least the view of the committee last spring was, that if we were going to go ahead, the better way to go was by way of a lease-purchase arrangement rather than an outright purchase at the outset. Not all of you, I suppose, have the original proposal that I made, but the television equipment cost to purchase and install would be about \$450,000. The expenses of running it would be down to \$75,000 a year, instead of \$200,000 a year.

MR. HOLM: No, no, I appreciate that. What I am looking at is in the letter, and I assume it is in the same memo that was just given to us, on Page 2, where it says equipment and it says rental. It does not say lease-purchase. Maybe I am splitting hairs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I think you are. Lease-purchase is what it would be.

MR. HOLM: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I used the word rental but . . .

MR. HOLM: Because I see that as an important difference. Maybe I am right and maybe I am wrong. I guess the other thing is that I think it should also be, and maybe the mover of the motion would be prepared to amend his motion in some way, I do not know the wording in drafting it, but make sure that we include in that motion the reference to tendering. If that was done, then I certainly would have no hesitation whatsoever in saying that I would be prepared to support the proposal.

MR. MOSHER: I do not know if we have to amend the motion. It simply says, "Accept the recommendation and take whatever steps are necessary to have this

electronic Hansard system in place for the 1990-91 legislative session.". Surely we do not need an amendment on the motion for that, do we?

MR. HOLM: Maybe I missed something. Maybe it is in some other spot.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I could move an amendment to my proposal, if I might, and just say that down at the bottom of Page 2 where it says, "Assume six months rental in fiscal 1990-91 . . .", and by the way, we may not have to rent the equipment for six months.

MR. HOLM: No, no, probably will not.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe three months might do it.

MR. LEEFE: Well, these guys will decide that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would add this, "Assumes six months rental following tender call for equipment or rental".

MR. HOLM: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So instead of amending Al's motion, I will indicate that there will be a tender call for submissions on the equipment. The specs will be written in such a way as we make sure that we get the kind of technology that we need, but then within that limitation, as long as we get the kind of cameras and equipment that we need to operate the system properly, then I think the tender is the proper way to go.

MR. HOLM: Who and how would the specs be drafted?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that is where I intend to continue to use Mr. Cochran's advice on that, because he is knowledgeable and as I say, he was very helpful to me in the preparation of the original proposals of the committee last spring.

MR. GILLIS: Mr. Chairman, that amendment you made, was that on Page 2 at the bottom?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 2 at the bottom, yes.

MR. GILLIS: "Assume six months rental following a tender call for equipment.", it should read. Is that it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, that is right.

MR. GILLIS: In fiscal 1990-91, and so on?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, right. Any further questions or discussion? Could I ask, then, that those in favour of the motion, please raise their right hands.

The motion is carried unanimously.

MR. HOLM: Can I ask a follow-up question on that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you may.

MR. HOLM: After the tenders, and so on, come in, the decision as to who or what or how it is done, that would be your own individual choice?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It would be my decision in consultation with Mr. Cochran's advice and the advice of the people in Government Services.

MR. GRAHAM WALKER: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I might have permission of the committee to make a change following on this to Rule 83? You recall that the House adopted new rules to be effective on day one, next session. Rule 83 relates to debates and the authority over the debates by Mr. Speaker, but it only includes the printed record. I wonder if I might have the authority of the committee to put in some words that should go in at the same time as the resolution to give Mr. Speaker approval of the electronic Hansard?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. I think that is right. I think we are going to have to direct the Chief Legislative Counsel to draft the necessary amendments to the rules which will be presented at the earliest opportunity after the House next meets to permit the thing to get into operation. That would be included in that. Rule 83 could be amended at that time.

MR. WALKER: Yes, and you do the resolution. If the committee wishes, the resolution really should be retroactive to the opening of the House because you may want to start the Hansard, if you have it in place, from the time the House opens.

HON. RONALD RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, would it not be possible to do this before we prorogue in the morning?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Exactly. If there was a unanimous agreement on the part of all members in the House, there is absolutely no reason why that resolution could not be introduced in the morning, and noticed waived and have it dealt with and ready for commencement 3 o'clock in the afternoon, or 4 o'clock in the afternoon, whatever.

I want to thank the members of the committee. I am very pleased by this decision. I can assure you that I will go ahead and move with all due dispatch to get this decision implemented.

Now, there is only one other thing that I want to ask the committee to think about for just a minute and we will get out of here in a couple of minutes. A number of us attended the Canadian Regional Meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Fredericton last month. While there, I was particularly impressed by the structure of the support staff that the New Brunswick Legislature has available to it.

They have a very efficiently functioning Clerk's office with a Clerk of the House and a Clerk Assistant Procedural and a Clerk Assistant Committees. They have a good committee system in the New Brunswick Legislature which I think, at least on paper, functions very well. Now, mind you, they have a unique situation in New Brunswick in that only one Party is represented in the Legislature.

For some time, this committee has talked about our own committee structure and support staff for committees. I know Bill Gillis is particularly interested in this and has spoken on the point a number of times at our meetings in the past. Last year, there was some criticism levelled at the fact that we travelled fairly far afield to take a look at a couple of other Parliaments. I am wondering if this year there may be a wish on the part of the committee to take a trip all the way to Fredericton to look at their structure and to see if there are facets of that operation that we could usefully incorporate into our own House? I know that they do give a lot of support to their Legislature committees and they do have a good functioning system. They have three full time people, a full time Clerk and two full time Clerk Assistants, and the committees are serviced very well under this system.

It may be, if we are trying to beef up our own committee structure and help the committees function a little better, that this is a model that we could usefully look at. So I throw that out for the consideration for the committee.

MR. GILLIS: Mr. Chairman, you may recall in the past year I distributed to you, and I assume it was distributed to all members, some information about New Brunswick and some of the support and some of the details on committees, and from that written word, it certainly seemed like a lot of sense and a lot of things were being done that should be done. If this would help us to support our committees better, I would support it. I think if you have a good structure that you can provide the support, there may be things that the Legislature is doing, in due course, through time, once that is set up, that it would not have to do and more could be done by the committees. What we are now doing as committees, we could do better. So I support anything that would improve our support to committees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: John.

MR. HOLM: Prior to doing that, I wonder if it would not be possible for somebody, and maybe it is not as hectic a time for Graham, or some others on his staff, and I am not talking about doing up a massive project or tremendous amounts of research in all jurisdictions, but I think it would be nice to get not only New Brunswick, and that certainly is the closest, and I am not suggesting that we travel to British Columbia, Saskatchewan or Prince Edward Island, except other than on paper or by FAX. I am just wondering if it would not be possible just to get a brief overview of how committees, and so on, are handled in all the different jurisdictions across the country?

MR. WALKER: That is what that bound volume was, I assume.

MR. HOLM: Yes. I was just wondering if there was anything that was in a very capsule form.

MR. WALKER: No, we could try, if you like, to do a table for you. One of them in the book has one.

MR. HOLM: I must confess, I have not, quite honestly, gone through . . .

MR. WALKER: For example, this one has a table to it.

MR. HOLM: Yes. I do not know how much work would be involved or how difficult it would be to pull something together.

MR. WALKER: The Ontario House has theirs done.

MR. HOLM: Even, quite honestly, and maybe, instead of doing that, because again, even looking at something on a piece of paper may or may not really give you a good

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is why I suggested that it might be worthwhile . . .

MR. HOLM: Yes, I am just wondering if there is somebody, a parliamentary expert, I do not know who, I have no idea what Agar Adamson would know or does not know about committees, and I am not suggesting him. But if there is somebody, an expert or a person knowledgeable about who operates in the different jurisdictions across the country, maybe associated with one of the universities, that might not be a bad idea.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, can I suggest to you that rather than an academic, we would be far better off talking to somebody who is actually doing the work, a Clerk I am thinking of Bob Marleau from the House of Commons, Claude DesRosiers from the Ontario Legislature, or David Peterson from New Brunswick. Those fellows, I think, are far more familiar with the way the nuts and bolts and the way things actually operate, than would any academic.

MR. HOLM: Yes, I appreciate that. I guess what I am trying to get at is . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: These are articulate people who know the shortcomings as well as the strong points of the various systems that they work in.

MR. HOLM: I am not trying to scuttle the idea that was put forward. What I guess I am trying to get at is somebody who is, if a non-biased speaker, maybe, was speaking for Nova Scotia, not in your case but somebody who was less-biased than yourself, they might instill the virtues of our system. I am thinking if there is some way we could get somebody who was impartial, who would not favour New Brunswick over Ontario or over another one, but who could talk about all systems in a fair way.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, surely, the people that you should be speaking to are the people who utilize the system. I think as Opposition members and government members and, quite truthfully, with all due respects to the Clerk, the Clerk understands the viewer critic side of it but I think the members understand how the system works

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, that is true.

MR. RUSSELL: . . . from the point of view of what they get out of it. I think that is what we are trying to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, if we went to New Brunswick, we could certainly arrange to meet with a number of the members of the New Brunswick Legislature and get their views as to how . . . (Interruption)

MR. RUSSELL: Is the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee over there in Opposition? (Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I do not know that we want to come to a conclusion on this today but I throw that out as a suggestion. A visit to another jurisdiction that would not take us very far afield and should not provoke a great deal of criticism, I would not think. Who knows?

MR. LEEFE: It might be interesting to have a look, even on paper, initially, at one or more in the New England States that are approximate to Nova Scotia, the size of Maine, for example. We might well learn something from how they do things.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The congressional system is different than ours. Yes, sure. Their committees have a lot more power and authority than ours do.

DR. JAMES SMITH: Is the system in the New Brunswick Legislature the same extent . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it has been in place now for several years. I think put in during the term of office of the previous government, in fact. I do not know if much change has been made in it during the . . . (Interruption)

Yes. David Peterson is the architect of it, really.

MR. RUSSELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, if I may, you will be calling a meeting, I take it, sometime, and when this matter is underway at that time, perhaps we could resurrect this and . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, I just wanted to let the committee know that I had not forgotten this aspect of our mandate.

MR. GILLIS: Mr. Chairman, what about making some inquiries about what they could show us and what time period? For example, we could maybe even go over in the morning and come back later in the same day, or something like that, or go over the night before, do it in the morning and come back after lunch, to just explore what might be the possibilities. The ministers are busy, especially, and I am sure they do not want to get tied up, Mr. Chairman, but maybe you could give us a few options.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Okay. All right. Will do.

MR. HOLM: Somehow or other maybe we could have something settled before we go, whatever, just to try and figure out, I guess, the kind of things we are looking for.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Okay. Very good. Any other business that anybody wishes to bring up?

MR. GILLIS: Mr. Chairman, some of that material that may have been referred to in the bound volume may provide some background, including some material from New Brunswick, themselves, and gives some of the guidelines.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, maybe we can ask Graham to recirculate just the New Brunswick portion of that, okay, so it will be partially available to us.

MR. WALKER: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Okay. Wonderful. Any other business then?

Could I have a motion we adjourn. Mr. Gillis so moves.

The motion is carried.

Thank you all very much.

[The committee adjourned at 3:15 p.m.]