



4th Session, 37th Parliament

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE
**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT**

Victoria

Wednesday, November 26, 2003

Issue No. 3

BLAIR LEKSTROM, MLA, CHAIR

ISSN 1708-315X

Published under the authority of the Speaker

Hansard Services publishes transcripts both in print and on the Internet.
Chamber debates are broadcast on television and webcast on the Internet.

www.leg.bc.ca/cmt

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND
PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT**

Victoria
Wednesday, November 26, 2003

Chair: * Blair Lekstrom (Peace River South L)

Deputy Chair: * Mike Hunter (Nanaimo L)

Members: * Bill Belsey (North Coast L)
* Harry Bloy (Burquitlam L)
* Jeff Bray (Victoria-Beacon Hill L)
Tom Christensen (Okanagan-Vernon L)
* Ken Johnston (Vancouver-Fraserview L)
* Harold Long (Powell River-Sunshine Coast L)
* Sheila Orr (Victoria-Hillside L)
Barry Penner (Chilliwack-Kent L)
* Gillian Trumper (Alberni-Qualicum L)
* John Wilson (Cariboo North L)
Joy MacPhail (Vancouver-Hastings NDP)

* *indicates member present*

Clerk: Kate Ryan-Lloyd

Committee Staff: Josie Schofield (Committee Research Analyst)
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Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

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MINUTES

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT



Wednesday, November 26, 2003

8 a.m.

Birch Committee Room
Parliament Buildings, Victoria

Present: Blair Lekstrom, MLA (Chair); Mike Hunter, MLA (Deputy Chair); Harry Bloy, MLA; Bill Belsey, MLA; Jeff Bray, MLA; Ken Johnston, MLA; Harold Long, MLA; Sheila Orr, MLA; Gillian Trumper, MLA; Dr. John Wilson, MLA

Unavoidably Absent: Tom Christensen, MLA; Joy MacPhail, MLA; Barry Penner, MLA

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.
2. The Committee reviewed the report of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure on the public consultation process.
3. It was agreed that the Committee issue a province-wide call for written submissions. Work will also be undertaken to further develop the Committee's web site and to contact key stakeholders to inform them of the review process.
4. **Resolved**, that the Committee approve the following public meeting schedule: (Jeff Bray, MLA)
January 19 Expert Witness Briefings
January 20 Victoria Public Hearing
January 21 Vancouver Public Hearing
January 22 Prince George Public Hearing
Kelowna Public Hearing
5. The Committee adjourned at 8:39 a.m. to the call of the Chair.

Blair Lekstrom, MLA
Chair

Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Clerk Assistant and
Committee Clerk

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2003

The committee met at 8:03 a.m.

[B. Lekstrom in the chair.]

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Good morning, everyone. We will call the Special Committee to Review the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to order. I'd like to welcome everyone here this morning.

Our agenda is not a heavy agenda today but a very important one. We have been asked to review the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With that, we do have a requirement to talk to the people of British Columbia, not unlike other legislative committees. I believe it's important that we get out to areas of the province to speak with people on this issue and, as well, to allow written submissions either through the Internet or written in to the Legislative Assembly.

I have put together a draft report to the subcommittee based on what Mike Hunter, myself and Ms. MacPhail — as the subcommittee to put this together — have discussed. That is what we will be discussing today.

Prior to beginning that discussion, looking at the agenda, are there any issues that should be added to our agenda for this morning's discussion? All right, seeing none, we will begin.

Subcommittee Report on Public Consultation Process

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Everybody has a copy of the report of the subcommittee that has been presented. It carries with it two options that have been put forward, with a tour going to four cities in British Columbia and the option, of course, to advertise and make sure the citizens of B.C. are aware of what's going on and the opportunity to write in. As well, there will be the opportunity to hold a special meeting for expert witnesses that have indicated a willingness to come and speak to the committee — previous freedom-of-information commissioners and people of that sort.

With that, what I would like to do is really open it up for some discussion to see what the members of this committee think, if those dates are satisfactory, and we can go from there. I will start with Harry.

[0805]

H. Bloy: I would go for option 1. That would be my preference for the dates. The briefings by expert witnesses that are over that time frame.... I'm just curious how many we have in number.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): In expert witnesses? I think we are going to offer probably.... We've had indication from a couple of people who would like to come and speak already. Whether it would take a full day or a morning, I'm not sure. But these dates are flexible. I want to try and work with the committee. I have

Gillian, and then I'm going to go to Sheila, but I'll continue with you, Harry.

H. Bloy: So the expert witnesses will pick a date in that time frame in which to do it?

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Yes. That was my hope. If that time frame doesn't work, then we can certainly entertain other time frames.

G. Trumper: I don't have any problem with either of the options, except that I think the January 5 to 13 should be.... If you're going to be looking at days, it should be nearer the 13th, because I think you may have people missing on this committee, probably. I don't know what people's plans are.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Okay.

H. Bloy: There's a caucus meeting on the 15th.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): On the 15th?

H. Bloy: Yep. In Vancouver, from ten till 12.

Interjections.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): We will look at that, then. A very good point.

Gillian, is that...?

G. Trumper: I just thought it should be later rather than earlier.

S. Orr: I agree with Gillian about it being later, because I certainly am going to be away. I like option 1, because if we're going to do it, let's get it all done in one bulk.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Just for your information. On the third day, the 22nd or the 27th — whatever the committee decides on.... I thought we could conclude both of these meetings in one day with an early morning meeting from nine until one in one of the areas and then from four until eight or something in the other, with a return trip to Vancouver-Victoria so members didn't have to spend the night away. If we can accomplish that....

S. Orr: Good idea.

B. Belsey: I will be out of the country until January 17.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Until the 17th? Okay.

B. Belsey: But certainly after that, whatever your pleasure is, I'll be there.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): I thought it was important — and I would look for your guidance on this — that the

briefings from witnesses who have had extensive understanding of the bill before and worked with it.... I thought it would be appropriate to try and fit them in before the public hearings. That was the reason I had tried to put that one before the travel schedule.

J. Bray: I'm just wondering about the cities you selected. Was that sort of unanimous among the subcommittee? There weren't any other cities that might have cropped up for discussion, or based on the turnout the last time this committee sat, this was felt to give ample opportunity?

B. Lekstrom (Chair): That did come into it. It's really unlimited as to where you can go. The turnout wasn't overwhelming at any of them, for the most part, to be honest with you. I think that with this legislation, the people who pay attention to it are the ones that are aware of it and will utilize it.

We didn't have crowds similar to a Finance Committee meeting, for instance, from the review I did. Those were trying to touch the areas of the province, but it is unlimited, and I leave that open for discussion to this committee — whether it's enough, whether it's not enough and so on.

J. Bray: I think it's just important to note that this is a committee that's different from Finance and others. I reviewed the last round of hearings, and there were locations where there was almost nobody arriving. I do think it's important just to note that this is different from those other committees because of that. I think this is a reasonable schedule, and it's a good attempt to get out to some of the major centres to ensure as much access as possible and promote the fact that we are doing the review and that people can do written submissions.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): All right.

G. Trumper: I just wonder — and Mike Hunter might have some thoughts on it — about that Victoria public hearing, whether anyone's given any thought to it maybe being in Nanaimo, which is more central for Vancouver Island — just because of the time of year. I just put that out.

[0810]

M. Hunter (Deputy Chair): I was going to suggest that when we go to Vancouver, we go to the lower mainland and the thriving metropolis of Burquitlam, whose many fine places.... There's a SkyTrain station right there.

In answer to Gillian's question, when the subcommittee talked about this.... I mean, you all kind of gravitate to your own place. Looking at the past and the expertise that might exist around this subject, I think we've tried to pick the four cities that seemed, to me, anyway, to offer perhaps the most interest. I think what Jeff Bray said is important. We're going out, be-

cause I think it's important that we do. This isn't the only way the public can access this committee.

I agree with Blair. There is an endless list of places we can go and justify it. The East Kootenay is not on here either — perhaps the only area of the province that we haven't covered. I'm satisfied that what we've proposed here gives.... The important thing is: is the public going to be adequately notified of the work we're doing? That's more important, I think, than physical location of where we go. But that's part of it, and I think the four cities we've suggested give us a reasonable coverage of major population centres. If people can't travel, they can write in. As long as this is backed up with a campaign and the public knows about it — and I'm sure the Clerk of Committees will deal with that — I'm happy with it.

H. Long: Well, I'm going to go along a little bit with what Mike is saying, but I don't believe there's a huge hit either way here for or against the committee. I don't know whether Vancouver proper is the area to go. I think there's more in Surrey than there is in Vancouver, for instance.

I would believe that Vancouver is not the place to actually do it. Most of the people who work in the Vancouver area come into Vancouver from the outlying areas. I would sooner see something done in Surrey. I think it would be a better place to do it than downtown Vancouver. People from outside of the area, from out where we are.... When I talk about Vancouver, I talk about Vancouver from the Pacific Ocean to Hope, for heaven's sake. That's my idea of Vancouver. I would say we pick the biggest part of the area that covers the most people.

If we were going to be in Vancouver, the Truck Loggers are on the 15th. Which two or three days is that?

M. Hunter (Deputy Chair): The 13th, 14th and 15th, I think.

H. Long: The 13th, 14th, 15th? And this is the 13th here. What day would that be, so I get some idea of where we would want to be between the 5th and 13th?

B. Lekstrom (Chair): What day is the 13th? I believe that's going to be a....

H. Long: I mean, 5th or 13th. That's what you're talking about. If we're going to be at the Truck Loggers, we can't be here. Is it going to be the day before the Truck Loggers? Can we do this on the 12th and then go to Vancouver?

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Again, that was for discussion. I didn't want to pull people that are going to the Truck Loggers out of there to spend the day, because it probably will be a full day in the two larger centres. If we can do it at either end and that's acceptable, I have no problem with that.

Just going back to the idea of Vancouver and reflecting on what you said. Part of the thought I put into it is that I think you're exactly right. The people do come in to the lower mainland or to Vancouver for their job. This is a workday. I thought it would fit in with the schedules of the people. I could be off in reading that, and I look for your guidance on that. That was my thought pattern on that. They'll be coming in. I imagine they will be.

S. Orr: I just want to go over the previous tour, or whatever you want to call it. Obviously, this is not riveting stuff, because I'm looking at Kelowna, where they had all of five presentations. Only two of them were from organizations, and the other three were from independent people.

I noticed that they did Kelowna and Kamloops. They did Kelowna then. They also did Prince George then.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Okay.

S. Orr: I noticed that when they went to the lower mainland, they did do Burnaby and they did do Abbotsford. I'm looking at the amount of presentations for the cost incurred in moving us around. I have to now question, when I see this — and this is very bad of me to have done this now....

B. Lekstrom (Chair): That's fine.

S. Orr: However, I'm looking at what we received in witnesses and where we went and the cost of this, and I have to question this. You know, I would think that in 1999, judging by the previous administration, this would have been pretty hot on their agenda. Obviously, I'll go along with the wishes of the committee, but I don't know what this is going to cost us, but maybe we should just be looking at two places.

I really apologize for doing that, because I agreed with the subcommittee. There's nothing worse than somebody reading something after the fact.

[0815]

H. Long: So you're saying Vancouver and Prince George?

S. Orr: This is an expensive venture. I'm going to leave that with you.

K. Johnston: I share Sheila's view. I looked at the history on this, and I see that hardly anybody showed up. I don't really have a problem with doing one day in Prince George, Kelowna or whatever — two locations. It was done in one day. I think four is enough.

Getting to the Vancouver issue. With all due respect to everybody who lives in Surrey and that, Surrey is a hard place to get to. It really is. The SkyTrain goes to one spot; the buses are nonexistent. So I think it's really strategically important to be in Vancouver

proper — downtown — for people's access. I agree with the Chairman that people will come from work. People will come from their organizations that generally are centred closer to downtown. They're out to Abbotsford and Surrey. I don't think it's prudent. I mean, on the Health Committee we held, I think, two days in Surrey, and it was hard for people. Most people came from the downtown area or the business centre.

You could pick where I live, actually — Richmond. It's close to the airport, if that's a concern. But when I read the list of last time's presenters, if you will, in the lower mainland area, they were basically downtown Vancouver-based organizations or social advocacy groups. I would suggest we don't go on a road trip out to beautiful Burquitlam or Surrey.

Anyway, I think we certainly don't want to extend this list. If we do the two in one day, I'm sure the costs will be kept down. I'm also concerned about the fact that since 1999, the Internet access has certainly covered most of this province. It would be a good way to promote that for this particular committee as well.

J. Bray: I was just actually going to concur with Ken and the others that normally, with committees, we do try to get out where people live and spread it about. But this is a much more specialized area. By and large, you're going to get academics from SFU and UBC and people perhaps in the legal profession who have more daily use of this. I think downtown Vancouver is actually appropriate in this case, because that's who is likely to come to our hearings.

G. Trumper: Well, I think we do have to do this — go out. I don't think we should go into any more places. I understand what Sheila's saying, but you know, we attended a meeting the other day.... We do so much with the electronic method of getting information out, etc., that we discovered from a very well-known group in B.C. that, really, they would much rather have a face-to-face meeting because they don't all have that time to spend downloading all the time. I think it's really important that we are out there, whether or not very many people come. I think we have to go that extra mile to make sure we are accessible to anybody — be it the academics or the average person on the street — who wants that opportunity.

B. Belsey: Coming out of the north all the time, there are lots of meetings that we used to come down to. Those that would have it out around the airport always impressed me. It was so easy to come in, go to your meeting, get back on your plane and get out. You could do it in a day.

If we're talking about eliminating some of these, and if there are some burning issues people want to come to this meeting for and present, maybe that's an option we can offer them — to meet somewhere around the airport and give them that opportunity to get in and get out in a day and tell them, "Present," as opposed to maybe downtown or Surrey or wherever we might go.

[0820]

H. Long: Okay. Well, I'm going to concur a little bit with what Bill is saying. I'll go back to Sheila on her issue with how much we're spending and so on. Is it possible to have the expert witness briefings and the Victoria hearing on the same day right here in Victoria? The next thing is: could we combine some of the others on the same day? How long do these hearings take? How long does it take for five presentations in a given area?

If you're using an aircraft to, say, start in Vancouver with an early morning one and fly to Prince George for a noon one and be back to another one.... We did this on the Health Committee. We flew around. We had two or three in a given day, because the aircraft can travel that far. You've only got one charter. You might be able to time it in a long day, because people will come out in the evening. You start early and just make it a longer day. You might be able to clean this up with Victoria in one day and the rest in another.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Just to answer that, we certainly had thought of that. Looking at the numbers, I would hate to put a situation in where we go three or four hours in Victoria, and we don't get to the people that have registered. Traditionally, we go with the day. If it wraps up early, we'll do that. For the two in Kelowna and Prince George, the intent was to have an aircraft, whether it be charter.... I believe that's probably the most effective way. We would leave Vancouver-Victoria early in the morning, get to Prince George or Kelowna, deal with the hearing, jump on the airplane, go to the next city that day, deal with the hearing and then be back here that evening. So you save the overnight charges. Financially, we definitely thought of that as well. I think that would work.

The expert witness one is at our discretion, in a sense. I thought it would be appropriate to have this before we went out and heard from the others. It doesn't necessarily have to be that way. The 20th, I believe, is a Tuesday. We could look at the Monday, which is the 19th, for the expert witnesses if that would work for people, rather than spread it out for that week in between. I would put that out for thought. We can certainly accommodate that. I believe that if we did something on the Monday prior to the Victoria hearing, probably from noon till four, that would work for something like that.

S. Orr: I was interested in the number of written submissions they had. There were quite a few, actually. If we're going to do this, and we're going to do it efficiently and cost-effectively, I would really like to somehow figure out how we can reconnect with these people — there's a lot of written submissions in here — so they know they have the opportunity to come to us again.

I'm looking to see where the bulk of them came from. Somebody was saying — it was Jeff, actually — that there are certain people who are going to really want to

have their say on this. It looks like it was in the written submissions where most of that was done. I would, if we could, like to get hold of the ones who put in the biggest submissions and make sure they know they can come verbally this time so that it's worth our while and it's worth their while too, which is important.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): That's an interesting point, Sheila, and one I had forgotten to go over. It is our intention to contact the stakeholders who dealt with this previously under that report, as well as make sure we communicate with regional and local governments, with chambers of commerce and with the business community to make sure they're all aware of that. That will be part of our campaign to make sure that British Columbians know they have full access to us. Thank you for bringing that up.

M. Hunter (Deputy Chair): I'm rather attracted to the idea of Monday to Thursday and getting it all over in one shot. I wonder: can I canvass how many of us are going to be away through that period up to the week of the Truck Loggers convention or are likely to be away? You see, we've got maybe five of us who are planning to be out of the country or somewhere else that week.

H. Long: During the Truck Loggers?

B. Lekstrom (Chair): From the 5th to the 13th.

M. Hunter (Deputy Chair): The time we had proposed for the expert witnesses.

I'm wondering, Blair, if the idea of shoving this all into one week, starting on Monday the 19th with the expert witnesses.... I do think it would be a wise thing to have that fresh in our minds before we meet with witnesses. Why don't we compress all this into a four-day...?

H. Long: Could you hold the hearing in Victoria on the same day...

B. Lekstrom (Chair): I'm not sure.

H. Long: ...as the expert witnesses? If we're here for the expert witnesses starting really early in the morning, can't we have an afternoon meeting? How long is the meeting going to take?

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Well, I'd put that out for discussion. To be honest with you, I see them as two different meetings.

H. Long: They are two different meetings. We have one here and then one there. The expert witnesses will be right here.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Okay. I wasn't sure in my deliberations and speaking that half a day would be

enough for Victoria. It may very well be, but we're not sure.

[0825]

J. Bray: Maybe on that point I can make a suggestion that we leave it with the subcommittee. If you get a sense that we're going to have six or seven expert witnesses to which we want to give ample time, then that would be a day unto itself. If it's only going to be two or three expert witnesses, perhaps you could consider it being a meeting in the morning and then have the public hearing in the afternoon as Harold suggests.

We can always book from noon till six. I think Harold's saying that if we're only going to have three or four expert witnesses, why not do it in the morning and save the overnight for people having to basically take their Monday out? I think that might be a reasonable solution, but if we leave it with you, with the subcommittee, to use your judgment as to whether or not we get a huge uptake for the expert witnesses.... Maybe that's a suggestion.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): It's certainly worthy of consideration. The problem that jumps out at me right away is the advertising that will have to go out. We are going to have to set the dates and times and notify the public of British Columbia, so to wait another three weeks....

J. Bray: We could announce the Victoria hearing as noon till six. We don't need to advertise the expert witnesses. If there are only three that want to come, do it Tuesday morning. If six want to come, do it Monday afternoon.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Okay. That's a good suggestion.

H. Bloy: I agree with leaving it with the subcommittee, but there's a point.... If you put too much all on one day, you don't get a chance to reflect. I don't mind the travel on one day to the two locations, but if you tried to do three or four meetings, by the end of the day it's just a blur — the presentation.

As much as the numbers come out, it's about us as a government being accessible and making it reasonable for the people to attend without staring at a watch and saying they only have five minutes to complete this because there are 20 people and we gave it two hours. I'd leave it to the subcommittee to make that final decision.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Okay. As good as the idea sounds, I still have some reservations about trying to do it in one day. If we do have half a dozen or five expert witnesses.... I would expect — and this is my read on it — that the presentation would probably be 30 minutes. I would expect there'll be a question-and-answer period. Trying to deal with that and then go

into a full public hearing meeting, I think, will probably be somewhat of a rush.

J. Bray: We'll leave it to your discretion, Mr. Chair.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Okay. What I've got from this discussion, though, is clear. I have heard that option 1 is acceptable, with the first briefing by expert witnesses to be dealt with, if possible, on the morning of the 20th and, failing that, on the 19th. I would suggest that if it is the 19th, it would be the afternoon. I would look, if there's any guidance on that.... The afternoon would allow people to travel in the morning to get here.

Okay. Seeing no further discussion, I would look for a motion from a member of the committee to reflect the option chosen.

J. Bray: So moved.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Option 1 has been moved and seconded, with the adjustment that January 19 would be the expert witness day unless it's at all possible to tie it in with the 20th. I do see discussion on the motion.

S. Orr: This isn't on the motion. I just wanted to put something on the record. That's all.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Could it come after? I'll call the vote, and then we'll go to that.

S. Orr: Absolutely.

Motion approved.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Carried unanimously.

S. Orr: I would like to put it on the record that I found this report very interesting. Previously, the schedule of meetings for this committee started, I note, in 1997 and actually completed in 1999. So I'm very thrilled to see that we're going to be.... The meetings went from '97 to '99. I'm pleased to see that we're going to be doing this in four days instead of two years.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Okay.

At this time I am going to ask Kate to address our committee on some of the work of the committee.

[0830]

Other Business

K. Ryan-Lloyd: I just wanted to clarify some of the work we will be doing on behalf of the subcommittee and the larger committee to identify a number of key stakeholders for the process.

As Blair explained, the intention was to send letters informing people who have participated previously in the process that the committee is embarking on. To that end, we've been looking at the witness list from the 1999 report as well as a 2001 special report into infor-

mation privacy in the private sector, which was another special committee that looked at the issues around personal information held by corporate and commercial entities. We've also looked at the list of speakers at the 2003 conference organized by the information and privacy commissioner's office, which was held in September. We have a good preliminary list that we will provide to the subcommittee for their input and review.

As Blair mentioned, a number of the public bodies such as municipalities, which fall under this legislation, will have an interest in participating. We'll be targeting those larger groups, such as the UBCM or the school trustees association, to make sure they're all fully aware and can communicate — through their websites, newsletters or other communication tools they use — with their membership to make sure everybody is informed. We'll be developing that stakeholder list with the subcommittee.

In addition to the advertising for the public hearing schedule just approved by the committee, we will be coordinating a provincewide call for written submissions and making sure that people in towns around the province have an opportunity to submit their thoughts to the committee in writing by e-mail, fax or letter. Of course, if the committee has an interest in receiving further dialogue with these people, we can look at other options in terms of perhaps getting them to travel down to the lower mainland or Victoria to participate in a face-to-face discussion, as appropriate. We'd be happy to outline any other options along those lines. I just wanted to keep you informed of the work we'll be doing, primarily with the subcommittee, as our next step.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Kate, maybe just a comment. We do have a webpage and so on.

K. Ryan-Lloyd: Exactly. The committee does have a webpage that's active already on the Legislative Assembly website. We have even developed an e-mail address for the committee. It's foicommitee@leg.bc.ca, and we'll be encouraging people to send in their thoughts and questions to that e-mail address in the near future.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Thank you very much, Kate.

H. Bloy: Where will we be advertising — in local papers or just the large city papers?

K. Ryan-Lloyd: That would certainly be at the discretion of the committee to give us direction. What we've done in the past is try to target the major community newspapers in every region of the province. Advertising can be quite a significant cost for committees. I would expect that because of the nature of this particular process, we will probably have to be looking at the larger daily papers out of Vancouver and Victoria, which are also more expensive ultimately. You

obviously have huge readership and circulation numbers there that we will probably have to incorporate. We can provide the subcommittee, for example, with a list of recommended newspapers in every community of the province, and we could work with the numbers on that.

H. Bloy: Especially if we're looking for written submissions, we have to be able to notify them some way. The newspaper is still kind of the official one, as much as I would like to say that it's e-mail. Then I think we'd have to specifically advertise in the major papers where we're going to be — in Kelowna or Prince George or whatever.

K. Ryan-Lloyd: That's right, yes.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Just a quick response to that. I think it is important that we get it out there to the smaller newspapers as well — whether it be Fort St. John, Prince Rupert or Smithers — to let them know when the hearings will be and how they can address the committee if they can't make it to those public hearings. As big as the circulation of the larger ones is — the *Times Colonist*, the *Vancouver Sun* or the *Province* — many of the constituents in the outlying areas don't utilize that service.

G. Trumper: I was just wondering on that. Maybe for the letter you send to councils, etc., we could have a generic letter that we could put in our own local papers for information, because letters to the editor do get read. That would certainly save the cost of advertising. We could all do that with the various papers we have in our constituencies, but making sure the letter is the same so the information and the dates are correct and all that stuff.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Excellent point. Thank you, Gillian.

S. Orr: I notice that we do have a draft letter that was given to us, which I'm assuming.... Can we use this? This has to do with inviting organizations to participate.

[0835]

B. Lekstrom (Chair): We can definitely fine-tune that. That is the intention of that: to communicate.

S. Orr: Can we do that?

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Yes.

S. Orr: And then I was going over.... I hate to hark back to the cost of this, but I would just like to go back to the original preliminary budget. Is that still on track?

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Kate, if you'd like to address that.

K. Ryan-Lloyd: Sure. The preliminary budget was developed with the assumption of five public hearings, I think it was. I have made some revisions to it, based on the fact that I think there will only be four public hearings now but an enhanced advertising campaign. As I explained before, advertising appears to be our most significant cost. So I have revised those figures upward, although they're still preliminary at this stage. I need to check with some of our advertising expertise. I can certainly report back to the subcommittee as to exactly how closely we can meet those targets.

S. Orr: Well, actually, if we are going to be doing this tour, I agree with Gillian. In that case, let's make sure we do advertise well, because it's important that people know they have this opportunity.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): On occasion that has been one of the issues we've heard from different committees: "Gee, if we would have known." So we will do our utmost to make sure that the people of British Columbia know.

H. Bloy: I believe that's the response you get with every committee: "If we'd only known." It doesn't matter how much you advertise and talk about it. It's amazing that they've never heard of it until this moment.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Well, the one thing I can assure you is that we will do this in a professional and effective manner and be as cost-conscious as we can, while at the same time allowing people access to our committee.

Is there any further discussion? Just one second. I will turn it over to Kate. We did have some questions at our last meeting.

K. Ryan-Lloyd: The representatives from the Ministry of Management Services who appeared before the committee at the November 5 meeting have provided the committee with some background information with regard to particular inquiries that were put forward. I have complete binders if anybody would like to take one away. It's certainly quite a lot of reading material.

This is information to respond to the following questions. The first question. The percentage of total

requests last year that would have resulted in the disclosure of information without anything being held back is one component of that binder. The second question was on the statistical information that includes the number of requests received per year, per month or over the past ten years; which ministers received the requests and whether the requests were for personal or general information; and where available, the actual exceptions that were used.

Those were actually questions posed by Tom Christensen and Barry Penner, and I have copies for those gentlemen. But if anyone else would like a copy, please let me know.

S. Orr: It's not a question as much as a comment. I would like to know what it cost to put those binders together and the staff costs from that ministry. You know, those questions probably could have been done on two or three sheets, but to produce a binder which looks all very academic and maybe a little bureaucratic.... I would really like to know what that kind of stuff costs.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): I would have to question to see if we can get that information. I would expect we could. These weren't at the request of somebody other than our committee. It was information we'd asked for. I see them as being very efficient. I've glanced at the binder. We did not put a binder together for every member of the committee — probably half of the binders required. But I thought it would be so that we could exchange them. I don't imagine every member of the committee will take this and go through it cover to cover. I may be wrong.

J. Bray: It looks like a lot of this is actually the policy manual just downloaded. The other actually looks like it's just printed off of their database. It's actually just the database that they already have, so I don't think they did a lot of additional work.

B. Lekstrom (Chair): Okay. I think that has concluded our meeting. A motion to adjourn moved by Mike Hunter.

The committee adjourned at 8:39 a.m.