



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HANSARD VERBATIM REPORT



No. 1 — February 8, 2018

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Mr. Glen Hart, Deputy Speaker
Last Mountain-Touchwood

Hon. Greg Brkich
Arm River

Mr. Dan D'Autremont
Cannington

Mr. David Forbes
Saskatoon Centre

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Meadow Lake

Mr. Warren McCall
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

Hon. Paul Merriman
Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland

[The board met at 08:50.]

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay, I see we have quorum. It's a little . . . attendance is a bit down but I'm sure we can get the work done today. We have representatives from the various bodies that we need to have. So with that, I will just call the meeting to order and we'll start with some introductions. I guess maybe I'll start with myself. I'm Glen Hart, member for Last Mountain-Touchwood, Deputy Speaker and Acting Speaker, so I get to sit at this mike this morning, today.

From the opposition we have Mr. David Forbes, MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Saskatoon Centre. From the government side we have the Hon. Paul Merriman, Minister of Social Services and member from Saskatoon . . . Sutherland?

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Yes, close.

The Deputy Speaker: — Close enough. Mr. Greg Brkich, member from . . .

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Arm River.

The Deputy Speaker: — Arm River, yes, without the Watrous. And Mr. Dan D'Autremont, member from Cannington.

Also we have, this morning with us we have Ms. Hayley Lucas, right to my left, immediate left. She's from the Speaker's office. And we have Sandra Gardner. We've seconded her to help ensure that the meeting flows properly and all the motions get signed and so on.

So what I will do now is we'll look at the agenda. I have already . . . I think what I'd like to do is, unless members have some additions to the agenda, I would propose that we would work with the agenda as presented and perhaps move some portions as the day progresses. I think what we'd like to do . . . I don't think anything will change in order as far as up to item 12. After item 11 we may move some of the motions forward and so on. We'll do that as the meeting progresses.

So with that, I'd ask a member that the proposed agenda for the meeting 1/18 be approved as presented. Would a member so move? Mr. Brkich. Do you have a seconder? Mr. Forbes.

Okay. We have a number of tabling items and we'll just go through them. And if members have any questions, please . . . Oh, sorry. Already we've missed one item here. I would ask a member to move that the minutes for the meeting of 3/17 be adopted. A member so move? Mr. Merriman, seconded by Mr. Forbes.

Okay. Now we'll get to the tabling items. Item no. 1, tabling of the Legislative Assembly mid-year report on progress for the period April 1 to September 30th. Are there any questions with that particular item?

Seeing none, we'll move on to item no. 2, tabling of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's third quarter financial report for fiscal years 2017-18. Any questions regarding that tabling item? Seeing none, we'll move on to the next item.

Item 3, tabling of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the Registrar of Lobbyists' third quarter financial report for fiscal year 2017-18. Are there any questions? All right.

Item 4, tabling the Advocate for Children and Youth's third quarter financial report for fiscal year 2017-18. Any questions? Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — I do have a question and maybe it's that I'm just not reading this right. But when I'm looking at the third quarter financial report, on the chart that's there it talks about how the money that has been spent is 100 per cent and the variance is zero. Does that mean that you've spent all the money for the whole year? Or up to the end of the third quarter . . .

A Member: — The projection . . . [inaudible].

The Deputy Speaker: — Perhaps could you come to the mike to answer. We've got quite a noise in this committee room. Seems to be, I think, the air exchangers or whatever, and apparently they are going to be turning them down so . . . Just if you wouldn't mind introducing yourself. Or Mr. O'Soup, would you like to answer or have your official answer for you?

Mr. O'Soup: — Yes. This is Bernie Rodier, my director of administration, so I'll have her answer.

Ms. Rodier: — So it's set up to show that the projection to March 31 of 2018 is projected to go out 100 per cent, like to 100 per cent spendout. Is it confusing to you, the way it's written?

Mr. Forbes: — It is, because the other reports that we get are up to the end of the third quarter, and so they end up spending at 75, somewhere in that zone. And so it's a little alarming when you had spent all your money at the end of December and you had three months to go. So it's just, I think it's a technical thing. I think that I understood what you folks had said up to, but I noticed an inconsistency between the reports.

Ms. Rodier: — So would it be helpful to resubmit something that's more accurate to the third . . .

Mr. Forbes: — I just wanted to raise that, flag that. Because, you know, we don't spend a lot of time on these, but sometimes . . . whoa, man. Because I look at for when it's 85 per cent of spending or if it's 65 per cent because people are underspending or overspending in some . . . Anyway, so I just wanted to flag that. Thank you.

Ms. Rodier: — Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Thank you. Item no. 5, tabling of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Elections Saskatchewan, third quarter financial report for fiscal year 2017-18. Are there any questions on that item?

Seeing none, move on to the next item. Item 6, tabling of the Ombudsman Saskatchewan and the Office of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner's third quarter financial report for the fiscal years 2017-18. Are there any questions with that

particular item?

Ombudsman

The Deputy Speaker: — Seeing none, we'll move on to a presentation from Ms. McFadyen for the 2018-19 budget. Ms. McFadyen, as I see, is coming forward. I would like to welcome you, Ms. McFadyen. If you would introduce your official and make your presentation.

Ms. McFadyen: — Thank you very much. This is Andrea Smandych, our manager of administration who is here with me today. I think everybody knows Andrea.

Mr. Chair, members of the board, I am pleased to be here to present the 2018 budget submission for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman and the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner. This is my fourth budget submission to the board as Ombudsman, and Andrea of course is here with me today. And I can say with her expertise and guidance we have always been very thoughtful about choosing our priorities for the year and how we allocate our resources.

And even though we operate outside of the executive government, we guide ourselves by the same direction that it has received. We will continue to manage our expenses very carefully, as we recognize that there will be another tight budget. Therefore we are not requesting any additional funding this year. As set out in our submission, we submit that if we receive the same level of funding as we received last fiscal year, we will be able to handle our known and any unknown pressures that may arise during the year.

So 2017 was busy for us. We handled over 4,000 complaints on the Ombudsman side. As the Ombudsman, our role is to receive complaints from the public who feel that they have been treated unfairly by an administrative action, process, omission, or decision of a provincial government ministry, agency, or a municipal entity. We carry out that role independently of the provincial and municipal government entities that we can take complaints about.

Our role is to assist the Legislative Assembly to ensure that the executive government entities and local governments who carry out the duties that have been given to them under legislation are carrying out those duties as intended and in a way that is fair and reasonable for its citizens and according to law. In reviewing complaints, we make recommendations aimed at improving those decision-making processes and improving public service program delivery.

[09:00]

In our submission, we provided details of our past year and some of our accomplishments. As I said, our complaints have remained steady. Just a little over two years ago, the Ombudsman's mandate was expanded to include the right to take complaints about municipalities and their council members. To put that in perspective, there are about 200 provincial government entities that fall under our jurisdiction when you count all the ministries, the Crowns, the agencies. There are 778 municipalities and about 4,400 council members, so this has really increased our mandate.

By October 2017, so in less than two years, we had received our 1,000th complaint about municipal government. In these two short years we feel we have done a lot of work to increase accountability and transparency within municipalities and how they serve their citizens. Last year we released six public reports on municipal conflict-of-interest cases. We've reached out to municipalities to explain our role. We've provided council members with information to help them better understand their obligations under provincial legislation, which is to provide good government, and how to take steps to ensure that their private interests do not conflict with their public duties.

As well as dealing with municipal complaints, we also made over 25 formal recommendations to provincial government entities, which we will report out on in our 2017 annual report which will be tabled with the Legislative Assembly in April.

Our office also fulfills the role of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner. *The Public Interest Disclosure Act* provides a process for public servants to come forward and disclose allegations of wrongdoing in the workplace without fear of retaliation. As commissioner, we receive and investigate disclosures of wrongdoing and complaints of reprisal from public servants. In 2017 our numbers remain consistent with previous years. We received a total of 13 enquiries and disclosures. We completed three disclosure investigations this past year, and we will report out on those cases in our annual report.

So while our main role is to review complaints, we also have a role to provide public education. We want the public to know about our office and that they can come to us if they feel they've not been treated fairly when dealing with executive government and local governments.

This past year we conducted information sessions for constituency assistants of both the government and opposition caucuses so that they better understand our role and when they should refer constituents to our office for assistance.

We also did outreach in Melfort and Weyburn. We provided public information sessions, we set up temporary offices for the day to meet directly with residents, and we also provided our fair practice training for local public servants. Our fair practice training is offered free of charge to employees and officials of provincial government organizations and municipalities. In these one-day workshops, we explain what the Ombudsman does, and we help public officials understand what administrative fairness is and how they can better communicate with and respond to the public when carrying out their duties.

We also reached out to the municipal sector in 2017. To be efficient and cost effective, we conducted webinars which explained our role, how we do our work, and provided information to council members about what a conflict of interest is and how they can better identify a potential conflict of interest, what they need to do about it so that they can meet the requirements of provincial legislation and the common law.

We will continue this outreach in 2018. This year our focus will be on what municipalities need to do to set up their own complaint process to deal with code of ethics complaints. Under

provincial legislation, all municipalities are required to have a process in place to deal with code of ethics complaints made against council members. Many municipalities have contacted us, not knowing what this means or what they are required to do. So therefore we feel we have an opportunity there to show them how they can address these complaints in a procedurally fair manner, thereby helping them improve how they carry out their roles for their ratepayers.

So while our complaints have increased over the last few years, we are not requesting a budgetary increase. We believe we can handle the growth of our workload and any other financial pressures we have such as service provider increases, economic increases as are outlined in our submission starting at page 12. Our funding for this upcoming year remains the same as last fiscal year.

But before closing, I would just like to mention that about three years ago several officers and I brought forward a project for co-locating our office space in Regina. Given the fiscal realities at the time, the proposal did not move forward. Since that time, the other officers have moved on and secured space on their own; however, we have not. We've been in the same space since 1994 and we are quite cramped. My employees are not complainers, but they are double- and triple-bunked in some offices. I realize that's not an ideal way to work, especially because our complaints must be dealt with in a confidential and private manner.

So we have requested Central Services to renew our lease for another year, of our current space. And we're going to look at the possibility of new space and, given the current real estate market, maybe we can find some suitable accommodations in downtown Regina at a reasonable cost. But before making any decisions that require any additional financial commitments, we will come back to the board. But I just wanted to give everybody a heads-up.

So therefore in closing, for the upcoming fiscal year we are requesting the amount as set out in our submission at page 17. It will support our existing operations and is the same as the funding we received last fiscal year.

Another thing: we're also requesting that the title of our estimates document be changed from Ombudsman to Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, which is outlined on page 3 of our submission. This will properly reflect our two mandates because we have two pieces of legislation. And that is it for me. Thank you very much. I'm happy to answer any questions anybody has.

The Deputy Speaker: — Thank you very much, Ms. McFadyen. Do members have questions? Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you for your presentation. Just a couple of questions. One, have you seen an increase in a number of issues raised around public disclosure?

Ms. McFadyen: — No, we haven't. Our numbers have been steady, which is every year since we got jurisdiction in 2012, it's been under 20. I find that interesting. Like that's one thing we really try to do, is get out there so that public servants know they can come to us in confidence and make inquiries to see if

there's something they should come forward with.

In talking to all of the other provincial public interest disclosure commissioners, all of them have the same . . . Their numbers are similar to ours. So I'm not that surprised. What I am surprised, because under the Act there's two processes: public servants can come to our office, or each provincial government institution has to have their own process. So people can choose either one. They have to report out annually through the Public Service Commission on all the disclosures that they receive, and there has probably, in five years, there's been one made in all of the provincial government institutions.

I would like it to be that it's not a bad thing. People can come forward. It's open for a government to examine how it does things to improve its processes. So again it's something I would . . . We're always looking at trying to get the message out there that this Act is here because lots of times public servants, when we go out and do Ombudsman stuff, we always try to remind them that there's this Act. And lots of them aren't familiar with it, so we do see a role there.

Mr. Forbes: — And my other question is — it sort of twigged on me when you were talking about CA [constituency assistant] training and fair practices — do you ever get complaints about unfair treatment at MLA offices?

Ms. McFadyen: — That's not within our jurisdiction. So we would not . . . So if we got one of those, it would be outside of our jurisdiction. And we would refer them back to your office to have the matter dealt with.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you and welcome. On page 7 you list your comparison of complaints received for 2017 projected outside our jurisdiction. I'm wondering like what kind of complaints you get from outside the jurisdiction and how that relates to us.

Ms. McFadyen: — So outside jurisdiction would be a complaint about an MLA office, federal government, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], they're mad at Walmart, so those type of . . . anything that isn't a provincial or municipal organization. So when those complaints still come in, someone has to take the information down, and we do try to help people. So even if it's about the Canada Pension Plan, which is not within our jurisdiction, we make sure that our intake staff knows where they can refer them to get it dealt with.

So they do take a little bit of work; they're not just a hang up the phone. We still have to try to figure out . . . We try to help them figure out where to go because, you know, there's nothing worse when you're trying to get service and someone says, I can't help you, and they hang up. So that's why we do note that as a number because it does affect how we do our work.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I guess I was interpreting the word "jurisdiction" more as a political . . . You know, are we getting calls from Alberta and Manitoba? If so, why?

Ms. McFadyen: — Once in a while we get a call about Alberta, but we do have no jurisdiction.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Any other questions? Seeing none, I thank you, Ms. McFadyen, for your presentation.

Information and Privacy Commissioner

The Deputy Speaker: — We'll move on to the next item on the agenda, and that is the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. So I would ask Mr. Kruzeniski and his officials to please come forward. Welcome, Mr. Kruzeniski. If you would introduce your officials and proceed with your presentation.

Mr. Kruzeniski: — Good morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and members of the board. To my right is Diane Aldridge who is director of compliance. And when we get to questions, she or I may answer any questions you have about our review processes or our investigations. To my left is Pam Scott who's the director of operations and responsible for budget and HR [human resources] matters. And obviously if you have budgetary questions, Pam and I will try and answer them as best we can.

All of you have received our submission. And I'm not going to go through it in detail, and eventually we'll focus on the budgetary matters. Pages 1 and 2 deal with the mandate of the office, and it involves three statutes: the freedom of information Act, the local authorities freedom of information Act, and *The Health Information Protection Act*.

From about pages 3 to 7 we set out what our objectives are for the next while. And it really sets out the key action items, the things that we're working on in this particular fiscal year. In the fiscal year coming up, which we're discussing this morning, because we probably won't necessarily accomplish everything in that year, some of them we'll still be working on in 2019 and '20.

So if I can refer you, Mr. Deputy Chair, and members of the board, to page 8 and the bottom of page 8, I've set out a graph which basically tells the story of our office over the last while. And these statistics are given to you on a calendar-year basis. In 2016 we had hit a high point, and it was the highest year in terms of workload and opening of files. 2017 has exceeded that and we've ended up having opened 351 files, which is a 12 per cent increase over the previous year. So that certainly comes with certain workload pressures that I am concerned about and actually will address as we go through the presentation here.

In October of 2015 we experienced some of those workload pressures and I came to the board and asked for approval to hire a term position for five months, and then in the regular budgetary process for '16-17 I would outline the consequences. When I came back and made the submissions for 2016-17, it confirmed the workload increases and this board approved the term position for an additional 12 months which ends this March. And I do thank the board for recognizing the workload pressures and the extra staff required.

Basically the bar chart really proves that that workload pressure

has continued. So basically as a starting point we're asking that you confirm the funding that we've got in this fiscal year, for next year.

But we do have some additional requests which we put forward to you. And I want to explain why I am making that request. The Legislative Assembly passed amendments to the freedom of information Act and the local authority freedom of information Act in the spring of 2017. Those amendments were proclaimed effective January 1, which is just about five weeks ago. Those amendments, a major overhaul of those two pieces of legislation, added some things that really increased the responsibilities and therefore the workload of the office.

First of all, organizations were added who were subject to LAFOIP [*The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*], and that is the municipal police forces of the province. Now we wanted to and are trying to get a handle on what impact this will have on our workload. We surveyed the other commissioners across Canada and basically they advised us that we can expect a 10 to 15 per cent workload pressure; so in other words, in their jurisdictions 10 to 15 per cent of their work relates to police forces. We haven't had that . . . So that translates into a 10 to 15 per cent; looking at the number of 350 files in '17, this means an increase of 35 to 50 files in the coming year are related to police matters.

In addition, in doing that survey and working on it, we've discovered that there's not a lot of materials. We certainly, in other instances, have borrowed from other jurisdictions and copied their materials, and we just found that there is not that much out there. And we feel a need to educate citizens of the province as to what they can expect from police forces and obviously work with police forces to educate and inform.

[09:15]

Diane has had a preliminary meeting with the privacy officer of a police force. Diane and I are meeting with the police chiefs on February 22nd, and certainly one thing we'll be talking about is training and offering to meet with their privacy officials in each of their police forces.

Now a credit to the police force is they have been preparing in 2017, getting themselves ready for it. But it still will involve work. We've had one consultation where we've been asked to review over 20 of the forms used by a particular force and just give them comments.

So another way we went at it, since we're five weeks into the legislation being effective, as of yesterday we checked the four major police forces, and they have received some 67 access requests. So in fact what we thought might happen is happening. If you project that to an entire year, it looks like the police forces might get 670 to 700 access requests. Will they all land on our desk? No, because some instances the citizen will be happy with the documents he or she obtained. But if you think that 5 or 10 per cent might not be happy with what they've got and want a ruling for us or want to know what the rules are going to be in the future, that would sort of mean a 35 to 70 file load increase.

In addition some other responsibilities have been given there to

us, and that is that under the amendments the Legislative Assembly has said that part IV of FOIP [*The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*], which is the privacy protection part, will apply to ministers' offices and to MLAs' offices. And we have certainly discussed that previously in terms of the need for getting consent and that sort of thing.

Now part IV deals with the collection of personal information and the use of personal information and the protection and disclosure of that information. So we're expecting, number one, questions from MLA offices which, I guess, we welcome. We want it to work well: possibly presentations to the respective caucuses or meetings of constituency assistants, and developing and improving our materials to meet the questions that will arise.

Now we obviously hope, since the Legislative Assembly is made up of fine men and women, that there will be no complaints to our office. But knowing how things work, we're actually expecting some, which will increase our workload pressure.

Further, the Legislative Assembly mandated some other obligations on organizations, basically government institutions, Crown corporations, the municipalities. One of them is the duty to assist. So when a citizen makes an access request, there's an obligation, in a sense, to get on the phone and try and work it out and solve it and narrow the scope of what's asked for or clarify what's being asked for. We expect we'll get some requests for reviews out of that saying, you know, the organization wouldn't talk to us, the organization wouldn't co-operate, the organization misled us — kind of the standard things that people get upset about as they interact with agencies.

Another obligation imposed on an organization is the duty to protect: all right, organization A, you have all my personal information; there is an obligation there to secure it and safeguard it. That applies to the paper world, but it also applies to the electronic world. And I'm sure all of you are aware of the various media reports on hacks and breaches all around the world happening to very major organizations. They can happen here in Saskatchewan too and, when they happen, we will expect that there will be requests for reviews or investigations. Now very closely linked to that is a new duty imposed upon organizations. And that's the duty to notify those affected when a breach occurs, and it's in the instance where there's a real risk of significant harm.

So if you have a breach and you notify 100 people that their information has been released to the public and maybe they're concerned about identity theft or whatever, we expect that out of that some citizens are either going to phone us or lodge a complaint with us and say, that public body didn't do enough to protect my personal information. So we expect again some increased work pressure and file count increase there.

The definition of "employee" has been expanded. An employee is now expanded to include an individual under contract. Whether it's a term contract or a long-term contract, if it's a contract, they are now covered by the Act. Similarly an individual engaged as a consultant would be covered under this expanded definition of an Act. Just expanding the definition obviously will suggest and create the possibility that there will

be an increased number of reviews.

The new Act also imposes some obligations on public bodies re dealing with their information service providers. We refer to them as IMSPs [Internet message support protocol]. But commonly this would be your computer service provider that provides you with services on site or at their site or wherever. And there's an obligation to have agreements with IMSPs. I have no doubt in that process there will be some instances where organizations don't get agreements. There'll be others where the agreements are inadequate and people will complain to our office saying, you didn't do enough to protect my information, and look at the agreement you had with XYZ; it was totally inadequate and didn't have enough protections around security.

Another area is applications to disregard. In some instances there are individuals who make numerous requests, make frivolous or vexatious requests, or the organization believes that they're frivolous or vexatious and that it's abusing the system. And I certainly acknowledge we need a good sense of balance. If people use the system to get the information, so occasionally an organization can think some individual's gone too far, they can apply to our office for approval to disregard that access request.

Now I think the bar's pretty high in terms of defining frivolous or vexatious or abuse of process, but at the same time those applications to disregard an access request are going to be made to our office. We've decided they have to be given priority status. Why? Because the citizen has asked for the information. Application's made to our office. Everybody's on hold — the public body, the citizen — and if we take too long, it's just holding up the whole process. So we feel our obligation, in a sense, is to give them priority — drop everything else and bring it right to the top of the queue and work on it first.

So all of these, I know, will result in workload pressure. It will increase the number of reviews or investigations that we have.

There's two other areas, and one of them involves a piece of legislation that is currently in the House. It's called *The Data Matching Agreements Act*. It has been introduced into the House. I'm assuming it may get passed in the spring, and I'm just making that as an assumption, totally recognizing that it is up to the Legislative Assembly to debate it and pass it and, in due course, see if it gets proclaimed.

If passed, this legislation will add about six additional responsibilities to us and it's all about data-matching projects. And people have said to me, well what is a data-matching project? If one organization has a database with important information and another organization has database B with other important information, by computer experts sort of extracting information from database A and database B, they can come up with certain conclusions as to how to improve a program or whatever purpose they're sort of doing the project for.

The legislation says you, first of all, do have to have a purpose. You can't just do this for the fun of it. You have to have a purpose as to why you want to take information from two different databases. The Act sets out what an organization will do. Our job will be to review the data-matching projects and

their agreements; make recommendations as to the operation of the project; review the report when the data-matching project is over. If there's a breach, investigate that breach. In certain circumstances, recommending ceasing the operation of the project or destroying the information. And if any citizen has a concern, they obviously can lodge a complaint with us and we can investigate that concern. So some of those things will have to be done on each data-matching project that occurs. Other things may have to be done depending how the project goes.

Finally the government has moved from basically 12 health regions to one provincial health organization. And although in that move there is no direct effect upon us, but no doubt as you consolidate and merge 12 organizations with a lot of extremely sensitive health information, our job as an oversight body will be to work with the new body and to work with eHealth to make sure that that's a smooth transition.

I have been communicating with the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Minister of Health. And hopefully, from an access and privacy point of view, hopefully that transition goes well, but there certainly will be more work as there's consolidation of privacy shops, re-examination of agreements with the 12 organizations in terms of confidentiality and privacy of information, and merging them into one.

So all of this to say is the workload pressures are there. My estimate is that our file count, or review and investigations, will increase some 20 to 25 per cent over the numbers we had in 2017. For that reason, with these added responsibilities, I am asking over and above the funding we have for one additional analyst to help us through the next year. As my estimates are a little bit of estimation involved, we would suggest that we hire that analyst on a term basis. We would be back reporting to the board next December or January in terms of the workload and letting you know the successes and challenges of the new amendments in legislation.

We have two further requests. One is a 2 per cent increase on salaries for in-range movement. We requested that last year. The board approved it. We follow the Public Service Commission guidelines so that staff in our office were treated in the same way that the public service staff were treated.

In the same sense in the coming year, if you approve this amount, we will look to PSC [Public Service Commission] to be the leader in terms of whether the in-range movement is granted or not or in what percentages it is dealt with. And also assuming that the board would treat all the officers in a similar way when it comes to in-range movement, and obviously PSC being the larger organization, strikes me they're the one to follow.

Finally, a one-time request. The information and privacy commissioners meet once a year somewhere in Canada in a province or territory. The last time they met here was 2008, so 10 years ago. It's done on a rotation basis and it really was Saskatchewan's turn to host that conference. So we're requesting one-time expenditure to host that conference. And I do point out that a registration fee is charged back to each jurisdiction. But you know, observing the different conferences across the country, that registration fee doesn't totally cover all the costs, but it does cover a portion.

I'm advised the best . . . well the best or the only accounting practice is that our obligation is to flag for you, approval of the entire expense. But I am aware that registration revenue will come in and will end up going directly to the Consolidated Fund.

So in conclusion, Mr. Chair, and board members, we're asking for last year's funding plus one additional term analyst which I will report back to you next December or January; in-range movement for salary adjustments which will follow the PSC guidelines and directions; and finally, one-time funding for a federal-provincial conference. And that is basically it. So now, Mr. Chair, Pam, Diane, and I will attempt to answer any questions that the board has. Thank you very much for listening.

[09:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — Thank you, Mr. Kruzeniski. Members, questions? Mr. Brkich.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — You had mentioned a consolidated fund on the registration fee. Well what's that, the fund?

A Member: — The GRF [General Revenue Fund].

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — It goes back to general revenue?

Mr. Kruzeniski: — I'm sorry. Yes, it goes back to the General Revenue Fund.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Okay, thanks. I just wanted a clarification.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Yes, I have a couple of questions. When you've been talking about the data-matching agreements and you're anticipating some more work from that, can you tell what organizations will be using that? What kind of organizations do you anticipate to be using that?

Mr. Kruzeniski: — Well I'm reluctant to speculate, but I would say those that have significant databases. And by gathering information from one or two databases, they could find out information for, number one, they have to express the purpose for which they want to do it — say for program evaluation to determine whether a particular program is effective or whether they could make it. So I don't want to pick on any organizations, but I'm going to pick on the ones that I think have extremely large databases, and they would be eHealth. They would be Social Services. They would be Justice, you know, the Corrections side of things and, I suppose, the prosecution and court side of things.

Those are three or four organizations that have very large databases and might develop opportunities where they would have a project where they would want to achieve certain purposes. And extremely essential in this is an upfront declaration of what the purpose is for trying to do the matching.

Mr. Forbes: — And a further question. And I just was reading in the paper a couple of weeks ago, but some of the bills that are

before the House had caused me to think about this. The federal commissioner of privacy is now talking about the right to be forgotten. Are you familiar with that?

Mr. Kruzeniski: — He's talking about what?

Mr. Forbes: — The right to be forgotten. What's happening, it's apparently in the European Union where they're in a major court battle with Google where it's sort of the reverse of . . . I think we have a bill before the House on revenge porn, do we not? Or did we deal with that?

But at any rate, the idea is that several years later you want certain files to be gone, but you can't get rid of them because they're actually the property of Google, and they're not your own personal property anymore. And they're saying, Google's argument is that they have a right to maintain . . . It's sort of a free speech thing. You've put it up once; now it's the property of the world, not yours. And 10 years later you say, you know what? I've kind of changed my mind. I want to take that writing or whatever that is down. And have you been following that?

Mr. Kruzeniski: — I believe Diane and I have been following that from a high-level point of view.

And I first want to say is, the amendments we have in FOIP and LAFOIP I sort of view as round one. And we need, once we sort of get our arms around the current amendments, to talk about round two with amendments to our legislation.

And the issue you raise probably falls right into that category that, if there were a round two in terms of freedom of information legislation, this may end up, you know, right in the Assembly in the next one, two, or three years debating what should be, in terms of provincial databases, the right to be forgotten. Many, many . . . well the European Union has taken a lead on that.

We'll certainly watch what the federal government does with the recommendations of the Privacy Commissioner there. And, you know, it usually has a bit of a trickle-down effect: what implications would all of this have for federal databases, RCMP and federal government and all that? And then you start narrowing it down to provincial databases.

Now to some extent — you know, maybe a simplistic view — this sort of started with things like Facebook that many people post things and later realize that they maybe shouldn't. So these are global-type operations. Facebook is certainly global, where we have to struggle with them at a global level. And we need to watch very carefully what develops there, either in Europe or in the United States, then in Canada and then in the provinces.

So I would say it doesn't impact us directly but, as those things develop, there may be an opportunity for this House, this legislative . . . to debate to what extent we want to mandate or allow people on provincial databases over which the province has jurisdiction to indicate, you know what, I want the information pre when I was younger than 18 to be eliminated from that particular database. Any supplementary thoughts, Diane?

Ms. Aldridge: — Yes. So a couple of things come to mind.

And first, obviously the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, their role with PIPEDA [*Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*]. They have brought our reach in terms of information that has been put on the Internet because of their role when it comes to commercial activities.

The other comment that you had mentioned was about the revenge porn. That's actually the amendments to *The Privacy Act*, which our office doesn't have anything to do with. And just in terms of that, you know, that right to be forgotten, we think about too, to the extent that employers — whether it be the public or private sector — that are doing social media background checks and taking a look to see whether or not this person actually has made a fool of themselves or said or done something online that then can affect their reputation going forward. So our office definitely has an interest in topics like that.

Mr. Forbes: — Yes, and I think it is one to keep on top of. And I know there was a major court case — I think it involved Google — where they wanted to have the court case in Los Angeles, but it was decided to have it in Vancouver, which was much more advantageous to the claimant, as opposed to Google with their army of lawyers in Los Angeles or San Francisco. So I think we can make it an issue here in Canada and even localize where the damage is done, as opposed to the corporate office of Google. So thank you. I just wanted to raise that.

Mr. Kruzeniski: — So we'll certainly be monitoring it as it occurs. And as we sort of move to round two, about thinking amendments, you know, we'll come up with something that seems appropriate for the province, and members of the Legislative Assembly may have the opportunity to have a good debate about it.

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay. Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. On the data matching, you're talking mainly government entities, institutions, rather than private industry or a combination of private industry and government. Would that be the case?

Mr. Kruzeniski: — Well, you know, Mr. D'Autremont, with all of legislation that sets out a framework, I'm not sure that we know exactly, you know, what a government organization might want to do. But my initial thinking on this is that it should be only large government organizations with the technical expertise to carry this off properly. So I could see Justice and Social Services coming up with a purpose and proposing a project, and then there's kind of an approval process for the project.

Could a government organization opt to then work out something with the city of Regina? That would be covered by the framework of the legislation. I think there is one clause in there that says, you know, a participating organization could be anyone approved by the regulations. I think that's how it reads. So theoretically that possibility exists. In my mind, you know, it wasn't introduced to work out situations where government and private enterprises worked on data matching. I think that introduces a whole, kind of, bigger concept.

And if you think about it, places like Apple, Google, and

Amazon have some awfully huge databases. Heaven only knows what they have in there about me. So yes, if I can read into your question, Mr. D'Autremont, my preference is, let's start with larger organizations that know what they're doing and make it transparent and move very slowly and cautiously.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'm sure they know what your favourite brand of dog food is so, you know, they'll be tracking you.

Mr. Kruzeniski: — That is very private, personal information, Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'm sure your dog thinks so too.

The request for an employee, I'm pleased to hear that your request is for a term rather than a permanent position. I don't like the term "permanent." That means they get to stay here until their bones disintegrate. Full time is a better term. So I'm glad to see that you have asked for a term rather than a full-time employee.

And on the question of being forgotten, I want the tax department to forget me but not the pension-paying side. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay. Are there any other questions from members? Seeing none, thank you, Mr. Kruzeniski for your presentation and we will be deliberating on all the presentations at the conclusion, or later on today is my hope. So thank you so much.

Mr. Kruzeniski: — Thank you very much.

Chief Electoral Officer

The Deputy Speaker: — We'll move on to item no. 9, review of the 2018-19 budget for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. And I'd invite Mr. Boda to come forward, and if he has officials . . . I see we have a number of officials moving forward. So if you would introduce your officials when they're in place and make your presentation, we'd be pleased to hear your presentation. Mr. Boda, if you'd like to proceed.

[09:45]

Mr. Boda: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for inviting us here today to discuss Elections Saskatchewan's 2018-19 budget estimates with the board. I have with me today Jennifer Colin, our deputy chief electoral officer in charge of corporate services and electoral finance, and Jeff Kress, our deputy in charge of electoral operations.

So with your permission, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'd like to take about 15 minutes for a brief review of our budget estimates document and then we'll follow up with some questions, I'm sure.

Those board members who've been here for the past budget presentations by this office will have heard me speak of the need for modernization. Last year I went so far as to tell you that our current system of voting individuals into this legislature was antiquated and unsustainable.

Before we move on and to ensure that we are all on the same page, please understand that I'm not referring to our electoral system of first past the post or in any way how votes are translated into seats in this legislative body, but rather to the actual process of how voters cast their ballot for their chosen representative — the administrative delivery of the event, in essence.

The need for modernization remains a key priority of my office, and we will speak more to this in a few minutes. But we also need to recognize the great improvements that have been made at Elections Saskatchewan over the past five years, and we need to dedicate resources and energy to sustaining those improvements. This twin theme — that of sustaining and also modernizing — is the newly identified strategic imperative of Elections Saskatchewan, a key part of our new strategic plan that will guide our institution over the next five years.

Under the two themes of sustaining and modernizing, we have offered six key priorities in our written budget submission, starting on page 7. And so I'm going to ask Jeff if he'll offer a brief introduction to these areas.

Mr. Kress: — All right. Thank you, Michael. I'll begin by discussing our first key priority — sustaining key relationships developed over the past four years. In delivering a general election, you quickly realize how dependent you are on outside service providers to successfully implement an event, along with the benefit that comes from fostering strong, effective working relationships with organizations that you depend on. It's much easier to ask for something when you have developed and maintained those relationships.

I'll just offer one brief example from the 2016 general election. We had ongoing interaction with the province's chief medical health officer. Keeping in regular touch with this office and on top of personal care homes and facilities which might be quarantined helped us to know what steps we needed to take to keep our workers safe. This relationship, along with many others, proved integral in the success of the 2016 general election.

A second priority: Elections Saskatchewan now has its core head office team in place and has prioritized the need to sustain that core team and prioritize staff retention and development. What that means for us as an organization? It means that we'll be able to sustain a base of corporate knowledge, an institutional history, that this office has traditionally not had in the past.

A third priority focuses on substantial legislative amendments that will lead to true modernization. Before the end of this fiscal year, we will be releasing volume 4 in our post-election reporting, the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations for legislative reform. That report will offer recommendations focused on a phased-in approach that will effectively modernize our election system over the course of several election cycles. The end result will be to offer better service to voters, candidates, and registered political parties.

As for specific examples of what tangible items that first phase of modernization could include, it could mean things like electronic poll books maintained using a computer, as opposed to the hard-copy book maintained by hand. It might also include

tabulators to count ballots more quickly and more efficiently. Finally it could include changes which are more subtle but do have an impact on our ability to deliver elections in a cost-effective manner, such as removing requirements to publish certain items in a newspaper and instead allow us to place it online at lower cost and wider availability.

A fourth priority has to do with pursuing a number of initiatives for modernization to improve our election system which do not require legislative change. Last November Elections Saskatchewan published volume 2 in our report on the 28th general election. The report was an administrative review of our delivery of that event. We have and we will continue to work on ways to improve our systems and processes. Just one example, among many that could be mentioned, includes reviewing the design of our voter information card with voters and field staff to ensure that the messaging is clear.

A fifth priority focuses on modernizing our approach to human resources. We are an institution that hires and trains 12,000 people during each election cycle. Not only do we need to continue recruiting our field leadership team — the returning officers who directly administer the election at the constituency level — but we also need to turn our focus to how we can more effectively train our people, whether it's the field leadership team or the 12,000 officials required to run an election. With this training challenge in mind, we have begun exploring and will continue to explore possibilities of how we can use online training technology.

A sixth and final priority emphasizes the need to modernize our systems and infrastructure. It turns to a challenge that we have highlighted in past budget submissions: the fact that our election management system, a system that we call ESPREE [Elections Saskatchewan permanent register of eligible electors], is in need of replacement. The past year has seen Elections Saskatchewan completing a comprehensive business analysis of what our needs are and what options exist to satisfy those needs. And to that end, we are currently working with a supplier on a commercial, off-the-shelf solution to see how it works and whether it is capable of meeting our needs. The pending by-elections will offer an important proof of concept in a real-world environment.

So that concludes my remarks, and I'll pass it back to Michael.

Mr. Boda: — Thank you, Jeff, for highlighting those priorities for us. At this point I'd like to turn to Jennifer to offer some insight on the numbers that are associated with funding those.

Ms. Colin: — Thank you, Michael. I'd like to offer a brief overview of the cost breakdown associated with our 2018-19 budget request. Consistent with recent submissions from Elections Saskatchewan, the budget breaks down costs into two categories. The first is ongoing administrative costs. Those are costs associated with staffing, rent for our head office, office supplies, and so on. The second is event-related costs, and these are the costs associated with preparing for and delivering scheduled electoral events.

For the coming fiscal year, our ongoing administrative costs are projected to be \$2.81 million, which is higher than our current year budget by about \$136,000. This is the first increase to our

administration budget since the 2015-16 fiscal year and, as we have highlighted last year, includes the ongoing administrative costs associated with administering the permanent register of voters, which have been fully absorbed into our ongoing budget. And page 16 of our budget submission highlights the fluctuations in our administration budget over the past number of years.

Moving now to event-related costs, these are budgeted at \$1.27 million, an increase of just over \$300,000 from last year. And as with last year, the majority of these costs relate to the modernization efforts that Jeff has spoken to and are all directly related to preparations for the next general election, currently scheduled for November 2020.

Finally, the budget for the election management system replacement project is classified as a capital expenditure. The budget for this project for the next fiscal year is \$635,000. Depending on the results of the gap analysis and proof of concept that Jeff spoke to, next year would either be the first year of implementation of the commercial off-the-shelf system that we're currently testing or, if the proof of concept is unsuccessful, then it would be the first year of planning for a custom-developed application, in which case the system would not be ready for use in time for the 29th general election.

And I'll just pass that back to Michael now for some concluding remarks.

Mr. Boda: — Before we transition to questions, I want to be clear that in generating these estimates we have been mindful of costs and the province's current economic forecast. Jennifer noted that our ongoing administrative budget includes a slight increase which works out to about 5 per cent. And this follows two years of decreases and, really for the most part, allows us to maintain our staff and pay necessary rent and bills. Those two items account for roughly 88 per cent of our administrative budget. Everything else — employee travel, computer hardware and software, supplies, and so on — make up the remaining 12 per cent. And those are now very lean areas of spending for us.

I want to be clear that Elections Saskatchewan is a responsible steward of public funds and does not spend money it does not need to. All of you know that we have administered one by-election during the 2017-18 fiscal year — that being Saskatoon Fairview — and that given orders from the Lieutenant Governor in Council last week, I signed writs for by-elections in three additional constituencies: Kindersley, Melfort, and Swift Current. The work of preparing for and administering these by-elections has had a significant impact on our ability to move forward with other operational priorities.

Last year's budget included language around the need to recruit returning officers, for example, but because our operations service line was fully tasked with delivering and preparing by-elections, much of that recruitment work did not take place. What this means for us is that the dollars that would have been spent on recruiting 61 returning officers and paying legislatively required stipends to those returning officers will instead be used to offset our supplementary funding request for the administration of the coming by-elections.

There is one more area of restraint that I would like to bring to

the board's attention. For most of the fiscal year, we have been holding back the three and a half per cent of our administrative staffing costs in accordance with what we understood may be a broader directive from government. Again we will use these funds to offset the costs associated with the delivery of by-elections that take place before the end of this fiscal year. You'll note that we have included information on that amount of this offset in the budget memo, which I sent to the Speaker as well as both government and opposition members.

Switching topics very briefly, a few weeks ago now there was a story in the local media asking Sask Party leadership candidates their plans and thoughts on the date of the next provincial election. I would simply like to state once more, on the record and to both sides of the Assembly, that for election administrators at both the provincial and the municipal level, the sooner we have certainty on the date of the next election, the more effective we can be in planning for the coming elections and ensuring that they are conducted efficiently and effectively.

You'll know that I released a discussion paper on the topic last April, and in that paper I offered a variety of options that would resolve our, what we call the overlap problem. There are different solutions for sure, but I was very direct with respect to one issue, and that is that administratively, it is untenable for Saskatchewan's 2020 municipal and provincial election periods to be held concurrently. Practically speaking, it's the same 12,000 people that work for us to conduct a provincial election that also assist our clerks and administrators across the province in running municipal elections.

I would only add that the ideal solution really does need to be a legislative solution to ensure that the scenario does not recur every four years. In the context of legislation, I would suggest that something along the lines of what is in place to prevent an overlap between provincial and federal election writ periods in *The Election Act* may be appropriate.

To conclude, modernizing our election system is no longer a choice. It's well under way across the country, and it remains possible, even probable, that Saskatchewan voters will see a very different voting arrangement during the country's next federal election scheduled for October 2019. I firmly believe that once voters, candidates, and registered political parties see the benefits of election modernization in action, they will expect it at all levels of elections.

I would add, however, that the issue of timing is a key one as it comes to modernization. There's a point at which it's no longer possible from the best-practice standpoint to make comprehensive changes to our electoral system. That is why we've included an assumption within our budget that by January the 1st of 2019, we will know the substance of any legislative changes planned for the 2020 general election. This timeline would allow Elections Saskatchewan to efficiently implement changes and ensure the appropriate levels of integrity and checks and balances are in place.

[10:00]

What we very much hope to avoid is a scenario whereby we essentially are planning for two elections: one administered using the current rules and legislation, and another administered

under updated, modernized legislation. Such a scenario would increase costs due to preparing two completely separate sets of plans and processes while also increasing risks of integrity for the next general election.

So our budget request for 2018-19 reflects our commitment to providing accessible electoral events with the highest level of integrity at the most reasonable cost possible. We would ask that the Board of Internal Economy recommend to government that the allocation of \$4,719,596 to Elections Saskatchewan be approved for fiscal year 2018-19. As always I want to thank you, members of the board, for your attention and your support during the year. Mr. Speaker, at this point we would be happy to take questions about the budget presentation.

The Deputy Speaker: — Thank you, Mr. Boda. Before I open the floor for questions, I think, as you had mentioned a request for supplemental funding for the three by-elections. And I think what I would like to do at this time is table a memorandum from your office requesting supplementary funding. So if you would like to provide the members with a copy of the memorandum and perhaps we could include that in our discussions here this morning. So once the members have that, we will proceed to any questions or comments that committee members may have. I see the members all have officially received the document, so I'd open the floor for questions. Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much. Always interesting in reading your reports and very thoughtful indeed. I wanted to say that I think the idea of Take Part and, from what I'm reading, you're looking at utilizing, more heavily recruiting high school students. It's interesting. I think that's a good idea and hopefully that leads to greater participation.

And I also appreciate the fact that you're giving an off-the-shelf program a shot, as quite often when we go first to custom design, they can be kind of a bottomless well in terms of redesign, redesign, and then shifting ownership. And we've seen that for many years, so I really appreciate that because they've been tested by other jurisdictions as well.

And so I do want to just comment on the Chief Electoral Officer's comment about the concurrent election idea, and I think I may have been the one who started this one-big-election idea. Well it's been raised and I think it's intriguing, but I don't want to say I'm fully and 100 per cent endorsed. But I do think it's an idea that sometimes we've seen other jurisdictions do it and they have a much more — how do you say? — not a celebratory, but they recognize the importance of voting and they get out and vote for every darn thing they can, you know. And I think that's something that we worry about in terms of voter weariness, about going to the polls every year for something different. You know, what year am I . . . What am I voting for this year?

So I don't want to dismiss it totally, but I want to tell, and perhaps the other side, how this came about. Because we were meeting with some civic officials who seemed to be drifting off when we started talking about the issue of the next election, as if it wasn't really their issue. You know, it was our issue. And no, it's both our issues because you guys are having an election; we're having an election. It's like a car crash. It takes

two cars to crash, you know, and you can't just blame it on one person.

And so, Jeff, you talked about strategic partners. What are the civic people saying about the next election? Are they off in their own world, or are they at all worried about the fact that there's a concurrent election happening at the same time?

Mr. Boda: — If it's all right, I think I could respond, as I deal a great deal with the partnerships that are involved. And in generating the paper that was released last April, we spent a great deal of time with our municipal partners in terms of asking them questions about what their views were on holding . . . on the fact that our elections will be held, in 2020, five days apart.

And fundamentally what came to the foreground, and this is in speaking with clerks from Saskatoon, Regina, and elsewhere, we did engage with them, but what we heard without question was that it really was untenable to host, hold two elections concurrently when we both use the same workers who tend to be, if we look at the ages, they tend to be retired or beyond. And working that kind of a long day twice in five days is very difficult, plus we have other training that's involved. So that was the one takeaway that we had from working together with our partners.

The other issue is that a single date for elections would be extremely difficult to prepare for in the short term. So there wasn't a pining to combine the two elections in the short run, principally because it does take a great deal of time to transition the system in that manner.

And so you may recall I've mentioned in the past that in 2007 I was asked to do an assessment of the Scottish parliamentary and local government elections after it had failed. There was clear evidence that they had difficulty running that election, and they brought together those two elections. They were running them under two electoral systems and they confused the voter in such a way that they had difficulty completing the ballots. And also they changed the system very quickly in a way that they could not in many instances finish counting the ballots. And so it was my job to come, along with Ron Gould, the former assistant chief electoral officer of Canada, to offer an evaluation. And ultimately we determined, our recommendation — of course we were Canadians commenting on a Scottish election — but our recommendation was that they would bring the two elections apart.

There is also an element involved with the voter themselves because if you have two races working together or you have two races being run at the same time, in many instances it drowns out the municipal level. And so the issues of policy, the issues of ideology, the issues of new ideas are often drowned out at the municipal level. And the provincial level, the higher level, tends to take the foreground.

So that's kind of the feedback that we've been getting.

Mr. Forbes: — If I could have a follow-up. So were they at all willing to move their date? I know it's actually . . . I think it's set by our legislation, but are they saying we'd rather go in June; why don't you see what you can do about suggesting

something like that? Do they have a better date for them?

Mr. Boda: — Well the paper itself was not designed to . . . I did offer a recommended option ultimately, which was to delay the provincial election by five months only, and they were in agreement with the conclusions of the paper. But keep in mind that we wrote that paper in such a way, knowing full well that it's not my role as Chief Electoral Officer to make this decision. I can offer advice and that advice is it's untenable to hold two elections at once for a number of reasons.

But in terms of their point of view, I think what we wanted was to offer a fulsome discussion on the topic and to avoid this from happening every four years. And that's why we offered the three options. If you were to move the election by just a few weeks, for example, you would end up with the same problem in four years' time. It's just going to repeat.

So there are a number of options, and we wanted to encourage a discussion. I know that it has been discussed by SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], but I don't know what their conclusions have been. Perhaps you in the room would have a better idea of what SUMA's conclusions are. But there has been discussion. What I wanted to bring to the foreground today was that it's important to offer clarity and to offer a decision with respect to an election date so we can prepare properly.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Brkich.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Looking at cost of the three by-elections, and my memory is getting a little faded, but when you were here in the fall I think we discussed a little bit the by-election of Fairview compared to one by-election in Alberta. I can't remember if we'd asked for a little more follow-up on the cost difference and if you were going to check other jurisdictions, other provinces, what it costs them to run a by-election. Can you remember that conversation? I wish I had brought *Hansard* back with me from the fall, but . . .

Mr. Boda: — Absolutely. You'll recall that Mr. Kress was asked a question by Mr. Harrison on that topic and he indicated that we would get back to him. We did. We completed a memo and sent that to, at the time, the Speaker at the time along with Mr. Harrison and Mr. McCall so that both sides would have a sense of it.

And fundamentally we did do a fulsome assessment, which we can have a discussion on. I think that there are really two elements. We did a comparison. We backed up. I know that Mr. Harrison was asking about Alberta and what we did was we did a comparison of Alberta, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia because these are three jurisdictions that are fairly close to Saskatchewan in many ways. Nova Scotia, less culturally, but there are other elements that are there.

And I would look at it from two sides of the equation. One is on the micro level; we drilled down and we looked very carefully at that. And then there are some macro issues that I have been concerned about since 2012, since arriving here, and even before that. Some will know that I worked on what was called the Administration and Cost of Elections project — it's an encyclopedia online — and for many years I have been

interested in understanding the efficiencies of running an electoral process.

We have to fulfill democracy, so there are some elements that are there, but we also have to do it efficiently. So what I would begin with is, perhaps Jennifer can touch base on some of the micro elements, the comparisons that you're asking about.

Ms. Colin: — Certainly. So with respect to comparison between a by-election in Saskatchewan and Alberta specifically, what we found was that there's differences in terms of how costs are accumulated and reported. So one specific example is Alberta has a full-time warehouse person on staff and their warehouse is actually attached to their head office. And so during the course of a by-election, that individual's responsibilities simply shift to supporting the by-election rather than day-to-day duties. Elections Saskatchewan does not have permanent warehouse resources, and so when we need those warehouse resources, for example for a by-election, we go out and we recruit term workers.

Another difference is we allocate any of the costs of head office overtime directly to the by-election, whereas Elections Alberta absorbs those and reports them as part of their administrative budget. So for example in the two comparisons for Fairview and the recent one in Alberta, those two costs alone were approximately \$14,000, and once you back off the cost of the political party and candidate reimbursements in Saskatchewan, which do not exist in Alberta, the costs are very, very comparable.

Other examples include the fact that Elections Alberta has four days of advance votings whereas in Saskatchewan we have five, and certainly that increases the cost of the administration of the event.

Mr. Boda: — There are some, as we work through . . . And I'll make sure that you get a copy of that memo. Again we're happy to provide that to you. But as we work through this, the first thing that we understood, we came to understand very quickly, is this is not an apples for apples situation. It's really apples and oranges. But what we tried to do was determine more effectively how we could get it to apples and apples. And the memo offers some clarity with that respect and I think that what you find is that there is some consistency across those four jurisdictions.

But the other issue is that we wanted to look at some of the macro issues that I've been thinking about for a number of years. And there are some impacts in that regard, and one has to do with the extent of urbanization. We know that elections can be run with fewer resources when individuals are closer together. So it has to do with an issue of urbanization and the extent to which a jurisdiction is urbanized.

[10:15]

And looking at Western Canada alone, what we find is that BC [British Columbia] is . . . If you look at the per cent of the population which is located in centres of at least 1,000, BC is at 86 per cent; Alberta's at 83 per cent; Manitoba's at 72 per cent; and we're at a low of 67 per cent. And if you measure it — and there are other ways of measuring urbanization — you find a

very similar issue, that we are a spread-out bunch of people. And you can be more efficient in that regard.

I thought about my days of being a *Leader-Post* delivery boy here in Regina. And in the old days, I grew up in Regina northwest and there was a seminary up there where I had about 50 customers who had one . . . There was a mailbox and there were 50 mailboxes right next to each other and, oh my goodness, the money that I could make off these guys because it was more efficient for me to just put the paper in there every day. I didn't have to go four blocks in order to deliver another one and another one, so I made more money than other individuals as a paper boy. And you can translate that over to the electoral process. When you're spread out, it makes it more difficult in order to deliver the process. You can't be quite as efficient as other jurisdictions.

The other issue has to do with the size of polling divisions. And our polling divisions, by legislation we have to have two polling officials for every 300 people that are in the province. And if you look at that across the country, only Newfoundland has smaller polling divisions than we do. They're at 275 and we're at 300. But if we look at our other partners across Western Canada, you see Manitoba has 400; Alberta, 450; and BC is up at 700.

And so that is one of the things that we're looking at in terms of efficiency, improving efficiency within the election system, and looking at it in terms of legislation. But keep in mind that as you increase the size of your polling divisions, you have to compensate in some way because the individuals still have to do the same work. And so there are issues of technology, and we can introduce technology that will allow us to be more efficient in the polling place.

There is also the issue of advance polling. And advance polling, as you know, has taken off. And so we have to be aware that more people are going to advance polls, and that means there's less of a need for workers on the election day side of the equation. The problem is, how many people will come to advance polls, and how many people will vote on election day? And therein lies the challenge, because there's no way to absolutely judge that. And we're working through that right now for 2020, to determine what impact advance polling will have on our electoral process.

So from a macro level, polling divisions and urbanization are two elements, and we will make sure that you get a copy of that memo so you can have a look at it.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Merriman.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Again just building on the cost of this, it just seems to be very much spiralling upwards. And I understand the geographics that you have explained. Obviously we're more spread out than in Alberta. But just looking at some rough numbers online, the Calgary by-election, I mean it was in and around 250 to 280,000 is kind of what we were getting with a constituency base of in and around 40,000 people, if that's rough numbers.

So it seems like they're doing a lot more for their by-elections, a lot more people with a lot less money. And we kind of are

going the other direction. The cost of the last by-election was 330. Is that correct? Like in and around there for Saskatoon Fairview?

Mr. Boda: — 378.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — 378. So now we're up to 400. Is this trend going to get any better with the advancements that you're talking about? Some of the advancements with the . . . Like are you going to be able to say, we're going to reduce this by 10 or 15 per cent over the next little while because of our improved efficiencies on the by-election? Because my concern is, is within two years we're going to be at half a million dollars a by-election.

Mr. Boda: — Well it's a concern to all of us that we run elections efficiently. I would begin by just . . . The first thing that you have to keep in mind is \$124,000, \$125,000 is a reimbursement to political parties and the candidates in that number. And there is no political party or reimbursement in Alberta. So that's what brings it down initially. But then there are the other elements that Jennifer might want to refer to that will help you understand what the distinctions are, trying to get it to more of an apples and apples rather than an apples and oranges.

Ms. Colin: — Yes, I would just reiterate again with Michael, once you back off the political party candidate and party reimbursements, the costs are within a very, very small percentage of those with other jurisdictions. And the difficulty is again comparing costs that are accumulated using a different methodology with different systems.

So it's very difficult to really compare, but we did our best. We did follow up with our colleagues in other jurisdictions and the main differences are the polling division size that Michael spoke to. The staffing requirements that are within our legislation in some cases are very different than in other jurisdictions. The schedule of fees in Saskatchewan, which is the legislated amounts that are set to pay our polling officials and returning office staff, are very, very different and have very different models. So for example, in Saskatchewan we pay our returning officers and election clerks a flat fee for the writ period and the post-writ.

In Nova Scotia for example, their staff are all paid hourly. So it's very difficult to compare unless you actually have tracked the hours and you can do that calculation. So we did do a very thorough comparison. We compared approximately 10 by-elections in Alberta, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia with those in Saskatchewan and, with the exception of the political party reimbursement, we feel our costs are very comparable to those in other jurisdictions.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Merriman.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you again, Mr. Chair. And I wasn't aware of the 125,000 coming off. But even saying that, that brings us down to 275,000 for the proposed Kindersley election for in and around 10,000 voters. Would that be . . . Plus or minus. And again I hearken back to the Alberta one. If we're 275,000, they're doing 40,000 voters. So they're doing four times as many voters, comparing apples to apples. I'm just

wondering why there is such . . . And I understand the geographics; I get that. You're in a very tight area in Calgary. But four times as many voters for the same amount of dollars, I'm just wondering if you can explain that a little bit more.

Ms. Colin: — Certainly. And again I go back to polling division size as well as the geographic size of the Kindersley, for example. Administering a by-election in Kindersley is very, very different than administering a by-election in an urban centre like Calgary. The most recent by-elections in Alberta were actually in Calgary proper.

And so for a Saskatchewan example, in Kindersley we have 43 polling divisions with approximately 10 to 11,000 voters. In Saskatoon Meewasin we had 44 polling divisions with roughly the same number of voters. The cost of administering the polls alone in those two constituencies: \$45,000 for Kindersley versus about 18,000 in Saskatoon Meewasin, simply because we can take advantage of a much tighter geographic area. And voters do not have to travel that far when they are within the constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin as opposed to Kindersley, where we will have 20 regular polls and six advance polls simply to serve the geographic dispersion of the population.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Okay. So not to belabour this, but if Kindersley's really spread out, Swift Current isn't. Swift Current is a pretty tight constituency. Looking at the map that I'm seeing online it's pretty tight. So it's a \$6,000 difference for a tight constituency versus a spread-out constituency?

Ms. Colin: — The costs of Swift Current polls are again comparable to that of Saskatoon, so our polling costs in Swift Current are estimated to be about \$14,000. However there are other costs associated with an urban by-election that sometimes we don't see in a rural constituency, so for example, the cost of renting a returning office. In an urban constituency those costs are often commercial real estate rates, whereas in a rural constituency we might be able to take advantage of a community centre or a church hall, and often those costs are quite a bit lower. Kindersley, we will certainly incur more staff travel because of the geographic dispersion. And then some of the costs are just going to be incurred regardless of the size or the geographic spread, so for example, support costs, returning office costs and their staff, the costs of preparing and mailing voter information cards — those types of costs.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Brkich.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — A couple of more questions and I can understand . . . Funny I don't talk to a lot of my counterparts in other provinces; you probably do a little more. The one is a cap. You brought that up. But I guess Alberta, you have 40,000 voters so their cap would naturally be higher than ours is the question I would ask. With other jurisdictions, are we fairly compatible let's say, if you're trying to compare what we have for voters compared to what they've got.

And also the reimbursements that MLAs get in each province. Is the reimbursements . . . Are we in the same ballpark as most provinces when it comes to reimbursing the candidates back? And also are we fairly close to caps? Our cap is, I'll just say just

off my head, 50,000 for 20,000 voters. Would theirs, Alberta be 120,000 for 40,000? Can you give me some examples?

Ms. Colin: — When you refer to a cap are you referring to the spending cap?

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Yes, the spending cap. What a candidate can spend in the by-election.

Ms. Colin: — I don't have jurisdictional comparison of spending caps with me, but if you're interested certainly we can get that information for you. Based on our comparison of Alberta, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia, the reimbursements in Saskatchewan are certainly the highest of all three of those provinces. So for example, we're estimating in the range of . . . We range anywhere from 115 to 135,000 in Saskatchewan. In Manitoba, it's approximately \$21,000 per by-election. Nova Scotia is a little bit higher, and it's anywhere between 60 to \$80,000.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Thank you. Yes, if you could give me few examples.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. It was an interesting discussion on the idea of having joined elections so that they would be done on the same day. It works so well in the US [United States] where they're lucky to get a 50 per cent turnout. So I'm not sure that the benefits might be there, if we wanted to look at something like that.

If we make our own elections more efficient in the sense of having larger polls, so that — 700 was one of the examples — especially in the rural areas, while that may save the government money, it simply transfers that cost to the voter who has to travel a greater distance. Rather than going to their own community to vote, they've now got to go two communities over, you know. So we see that quite often in virtually everything where there's efficiencies created and, while the entity saves money, the cost is passed on to the consumer. And I'm not sure that should be our prerequisite when it comes to voting.

When I look at your budget request, I believe the basis for government requests to all ministries and entities was a zero-base budget. And you have come in with an 11.3 per cent increase request. That is substantial in light of what others are doing. We saw the Ombudsman here earlier that is requesting the same budget that the Ombudsman office had last year. So, you know, I think an 11 per cent increase is quite outstanding. We've seen the budgets for the Chief Electoral Office over the last six or seven years more than double on the administrative side.

[10:30]

I understand that all of your budgets are statutory; therefore our concerns are only noted rather than enforced. But I think an 11 per cent increase in a time of restraint is not acceptable. So that's all I have to say on that.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Boda, would you care to

respond?

Mr. Boda: — Sure. You had mentioned that there was a change in the budget over the last six or seven years and you'll also be aware that in 2012 when I came . . . The Hamilton report had been issued in 2009 and I was appointed in 2012 to make reforms to Elections Saskatchewan, to make changes which would address the concerns that were mentioned in the Hamilton report, which fundamentally articulated that there was, there had been a long-term underfunding of Elections Saskatchewan. We had four, I'll call them full-time, employees at that point, and there was an indication that that was simply not enough to run a modern election management body.

And as a result, we came to the conclusion together that there would be 13 full-time employees that would be engaged at Elections Saskatchewan. And then as we moved into a modernization effort which included the PRV, the permanent register of voters, there were an additional four positions that were added to that. The PRV in our view, and the evidence shows that it ultimately saves about 50 per cent in the long run on door-to-door enumeration. So I think that the increase that you were looking at in terms of budgets has to do with that sustaining, modernization effort that I was asked to pursue in 2012 and did so.

In terms of this budget, I think what we have always articulated is that an EMB [election management body] works over a four-year cycle, that we do not work on a year-to-year basis. And as a result, I think if you look at how we have managed our budgets in the last four years in terms of our ongoing administration, we have done our part in order to reduce the administrative budget as is possible. And over the course of the last year, as I had indicated, we reserved three and a half per cent of staffing costs in order to make sure that we were doing our part.

That said, we have to deliver on our promise of conducting elections in the long run and we have to remain sustainable. And as the budget document articulates, we've had an opportunity here. We've basically come to the point where we are fully staffed at this point, the promise that we made in 2012. We have a full staff at this point and we are ready to move forward into 2020. And as a result, some of that has to do with the increase that's needed, but some of it has to do with the fact that we took the administrative costs of the PRV and we have put them into our ongoing administration as well.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — You mentioned staff, that you were allocated 13. How many staff do you have that are full time and how many are under contract? Previously the Privacy Commissioner stated that contractors are now termed as employees, so how many are full-time employees and how many contractors?

Mr. Boda: — We do have the full complement of 17 full-time employees at this point. And as you can appreciate in terms of an election management body, expertise is needed from the outside. And so we do have some experts who have been there — for example, the permanent register of voters — who have been there working on the permanent register so that it can

transition to a program. And that is under way and will be under way this year.

We have others who are currently here with us at Elections Saskatchewan. You can appreciate that we are conducting by-elections and as a result we have multi-tasking that's going on. Even now we have a lot of multi-tasking that's going on with three by-elections that we're preparing for, but at the same time we have to prepare for the 2020 electoral event. And so as a result we do have some others who are helping us with that process, including there are three individuals that we've brought on additionally to assist us with this process.

So Jennifer, do you have anything else to add?

Ms. Colin: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay. Any other . . . Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, looking at page no. 23 under ongoing administration budget, you have contract services which is increasing by 90,000, 40-plus per cent. What is that?

Ms. Colin: — I'll get those details for you. Just a minute. So in the 2018-19 fiscal year, we have budgeted for some network security assessment. There's been a lot of discussion about cybersecurity and hacking, and so we are going to invest in getting an assessment of our network systems.

We also have a small allocation to help support us with our advancement of our project management methodology within our office as well as various other smaller contracts, so for example some assistance with doing some specific recruitment for our returning officers and election clerks. We have positions called supervisory returning officers and those individuals located across the province. The salary or the wages that are paid to them are classified as contractual services, and so that would be included in that number as well.

Mr. D'Autremont: — How much are you proposing to spend on your network security review?

Ms. Colin: — I believe we have budgeted approximately \$25,000. However, the full cost wouldn't be known until we actually determine the scope and the extent of that review.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So your small projects then, you're projecting to cost an additional 65,000?

Ms. Colin: — I don't have the specific details. We can certainly provide you with more information on that category after this meeting if you would like. I just simply don't have that level of detail with me today.

Mr. D'Autremont: — If you would, please. And then I'd like to move on to contractual services under event-related budget. You're going from 374,000 to 645,000, which is another increase of about 80 per cent.

Ms. Colin: — So that category would include any payments to returning officers, including their stipend, are classified as contractual services just in the way that government accounts

for those. We also have some funding in there for some of the initiatives that Jeff spoke to earlier with respect to doing some work in preparation for modernization, so looking at jurisdictional models, trying to figure out how that would translate to a Saskatchewan model.

We do plan on making an investment in our field training, so better ways to reach our election workers, including those 12,000 people that we do recruit on election day. We're investigating some online training options as well as some video training of our curriculum that we currently do.

We have some funding to support some initiatives that we are currently pursuing with respect to how we pay our returning officers and election clerks. Looking at the schedule of fees, we have a particular challenge with adhering to some of the requirements in *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, particularly with respect to paying workers within seven days of their last day worked. That is a significant challenge for us so we are currently engaging a legal resource to help us work through that issue.

So it's a variety of things that are combined to make up that number as well as some money in there to help clean up and finish off by-elections that have been occurring in the past year. So we will be looking at doing a warehouse cleanup and ballot box destruction and assessment for four by-elections. By the time we are legislatively able to perform that review and destruction, the costing for those by-elections has been closed and reported, and so those costs are just simply absorbed in a general fund.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I wonder if we can get a breakdown of those costs, if you would, please.

Ms. Colin: — Sure.

The Deputy Speaker: — Members, are there any other questions? If not, I would just want to make . . . I would like you to clarify something that was said earlier when the members were asking about the costs of Saskatchewan by-elections versus the costs in other jurisdictions. And I know when the comparison was between Saskatchewan and Alberta, you had mentioned that there's no reimbursement to candidates, which accounted for, in one example, \$125,000 difference between Saskatchewan and Alberta.

But also I thought I heard that it was mentioned that in your total costs of a by-election, you incorporate some of your head office costs. Is that correct? And if so, could you perhaps pick one of the requests for supplemental funding — say, Kindersley — and what head office costs would be included in that number? First, is that correct? And then if it is, what's the costing in the Kindersley by-election?

Mr. Boda: — I'll just start with the . . . The overarching issue is that larger institutions tend to have resources on an ongoing basis that we do not have as a smaller institution. And I think we did mention the fact that we don't have a permanent warehouse individual who is there all the time and can be accessed.

[10:45]

Often that is a head office cost, but in our context we don't have someone permanently there. They're there for the by-election to ramp up, to do it, and then to ramp down. So that's a general issue that we find. If you look across the country, larger institutions have those head office costs. So you have some specifics?

Ms. Colin: — So specifically, with respect to the temporary salaries, there are some minor efficiencies with respect to Melfort, Kindersley, and Swift Current all being held at the same time. But in general we are estimating head office and temporary salary costs to be approximately between 30 and \$40,000 for each event. With those three elections being held concurrently, that will be allocated across all three.

And that includes, as Michael mentioned, the warehouse support. Because our warehouse is not co-located with our head office, we do have an occupational health and safety rule that requires two people to be on site at the warehouse whenever they're working out there alone, just for employee safety.

We also have a policy where, if a full-time resource with Elections Saskatchewan incurs overtime as a result of a by-election, we do accumulate that and code that directly to the by-election. And that happens particularly when we are conducting training and we have to travel or conduct training on weekends or evenings, as well as during advance voting or on election day itself where staff are putting in very long hours. And we do compensate them for that and allocate those costs.

And as Michael mentioned, we do have a couple of temporary resources for these specific by-elections. In the normal course of business, we could absorb a by-election, say, once a year. But because we've got . . . You know, we're working on our fifth one within the last 12 months. There's a lot of work that has to go into not only administering the current by-elections, but we're still in the process of finalizing our review of candidate returns for Saskatoon Fairview as well as dealing with payroll and year-end and T4 reporting for Saskatoon Meewasin and Fairview. So it does create quite a bit of extra activity on the administrative end. And so we have . . . I believe we have two people at head office who work two days a week, specifically because of the by-election.

The Deputy Speaker: — Good. No, thank you for that. Seeing no other . . . Oh, Mr. Merriman has a question.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thanks, Mr. Chair, and again I'm just having trouble with the Alberta comparison. I really am just doing a little bit of research here. Alberta Elections has a staff of 25 for 4.3 million people. We have 17 for 1.2. The numbers just, you know, that means . . . Rough math is 25 people. That's including their warehousing people.

That's one employee for Elections Saskatchewan for every 172,000 Albertans versus we have one employee for every 66,000. It just seems like a stark contrast, you know, and I understand the employee structure. But when I look at that, they have eight more people than we do for literally four times the population. So anyways, again just I'm belabouring the point, but the math just doesn't add up for me. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Boda.

Mr. Boda: — Fundamentally I'm more than willing to have a one-on-one with you to have a discussion about this. But some of it comes down to the overarching issue of urbanization and the efficiencies that come with Alberta. Some of it comes with the culture that's in Alberta and is not in Saskatchewan or in Manitoba. If you look at the staffing levels in Manitoba, they're actually higher than ours and we're of comparable population.

But what that tells you is it's less a matter of population and it's more the other variables that are involved. What is the service that needs to be provided in the culture that you have? And how spread out are you? We again are a very rural province and so we're not the same as Alberta and I don't think we can ever be exactly like Alberta. There are many great things about Alberta, but we will never be exactly the same. We are Saskatchewan. But I'm happy to have that discussion with you further.

What I can tell you is as a result of Mr. Harrison's question which came forward, I have dug a lot deeper into this very question because it's a concern that I've had for some time. But what I'm realizing is you have to look at more variables than merely population, that our province is very different than Alberta.

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay. Any other questions or comments? If not, Mr. Boda, I'd like to thank you and your officials for your presentation. And I see the next item on our agenda is a refreshment break, so I think we will reconvene at 11 o'clock.

[The board recessed for a period of time.]

Advocate for Children and Youth

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay, I think we'll resume. We'll move to item no. 10, the budget for the Advocate for Children and Youth. And with us we have Mr. O'Soup. And if you would introduce your official and then proceed to present your budget proposal.

Mr. O'Soup: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker and Chair, and members of the board, for allowing us this opportunity to present our budget for the Advocate for Children and Youth for the year of 2018-19. Accompanying me is Bernie Rodier, director of administration. She's been with the office for approximately 22 years going on now, so we're in good hands today. So if you have any difficult questions, I will be deferring to Bernie here. So I'm very happy she's here today.

I want to thank all of the members of the Legislative Assembly for your support, and the staff of the Legislative Assembly Office for your ongoing support for the Advocate for Children and Youth office. I know we engage with you on many different occasions and you're always willing to help, and I truly appreciate that.

I'd also like to acknowledge the hard work of our staff throughout the year. This year was an exceptional year for us. We spent a lot of time in our northern part of our province this year, and you all know the challenges of travelling and navigating those areas of our province. So our staff did spend a lot of hours and a lot of time working with our children and youth in communities in the North this past year.

Now since being appointed just over a year ago, we've developed a new vision and strategic plan for the Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth, and it's outlined in appendix A. We've set out four new priorities with the strategic plan and those are, we want to foster positive relationships with First Nation and Métis partners. The reason why we want to do that is if you look at our systems, the estimates in our child welfare system, for instance, are as high as 90 per cent. Anywhere between 75 to 90 per cent of kids in care are indigenous. Our corrections system, I've been in those facilities and if you go in there I would say on most days the estimate would be up to 100 per cent of those kids are First Nation and Métis. Our education system and our health system are continually challenged to meet the needs of our indigenous people. So that's why we've set out that first priority there, is to build and renew and foster those relationships with our First Nation and Métis partners in the province.

The second part of our vision is focusing on the education system, not just in a way to get out our message to them in the way of public education — which is huge because in my experience in the last year and a bit when I talk to, I'll say, teachers, central offices, students, they really don't know who we are and what we do. They don't understand the rights that children and youth have and how it pertains to them. So part of that, the reason why we want to go into the education realm is it's also part of our legislation, but we want to educate our communities and our parents and our families and our staffs on the importance of education.

The other piece is that we are aiming to be a preventative, solutions-based office working with our partners to find solutions to reducing all of these numbers. And I believe that education is the key that we can use, that we need to use to reduce those numbers. So being as an educator for a background, I believe that we can impact those kids every day in the classroom. So that's why we've put part of our focus in the education system like we've never done before.

The third piece is prioritizing mental health services for children and youth. We all know the challenges that our systems are facing with the topic of mental health, particularly here in Saskatchewan. When we dig a little deeper the topic of suicide, particularly youth suicide and particularly indigenous youth suicide, young girls under the age of 18 are six times more likely — indigenous young girls — to die by suicide. Young boys are 26 times more higher, indigenous than non-indigenous, to die by suicide here in our province. So some alarming numbers. So you know, that just leads us into a larger discussion around the challenges that our mental health system, of course we know, is facing to meet those needs. So we'll be digging a lot deeper into that area as well over the next four years.

And the last piece of our vision in our new strategic plan is focusing on supporting and empowering children and youth voices so that they can be change makers within their community. I believe we've been given an incredible platform at the office of the advocate, and I believe we are the voice for children and youth who don't have a voice.

So I don't want to be just the only person standing in front of the microphone or in front of the TV camera and speaking for

youth. I want the youth to be speaking for themselves. I believe they have a voice. I believe they're truly inspirational and amazing and I want to give them back the platform of our office, our social media, our news releases. When they go out in front of . . . I want them to be answering questions for their everyday lives rather than me. And I mean I'll always be there to do that, but I think it's more powerful when it comes from the voice of our youth and children.

So these have been incorporated into our everyday office already. So this isn't just a strategic plan for the future, but it's something that we're living and breathing on an everyday basis with our staff, and they fully embrace that.

An example of that is the recent release that we put on December 5th of 2017 of our suicide crisis in the North, voices of youth from the North. That took over a year to do. We presented to over 1,000 youth across the North and over 12 communities. And by North we mean north of Prince Albert and not including Prince Albert, so anywhere up to the Northwest Territories border, between Alberta and Manitoba. And we ended up being in over 12 communities.

We initially targeted just around La Ronge where the six young girls had died initially, but as we went into the North, many communities requested that we come and we speak to them and we speak to their youth. So we did not want to turn anyone away so that actually expanded the scope of the project. So it ended up taking over a year.

So of those 1,000, over 264 gave their voice to the report, and you should've all received a copy in the last month. And the report is focused on them and their voice. We did research. We did a scan provincially, nationally, and internationally and we found the biggest gap in the topic of youth suicide was actually having youth voices included and youth engagement. So we decided we needed to fill that gap. We also met with elders, chiefs, leaders of the local communities, as well as mayors and their councils as well to ensure that they were up to date and that they were apprised of the process.

So incorporating issues identified by youth in their call to action is of utmost importance to us, and we've begun to have those discussions with some of our ministers and our ministries and our deputy ministers' office. So we've called them calls to action, not recommendations, because there's been so many recommendations put out from really amazing reports that have been done historically. But our youth are tired of recommendations and they are calling for action. So that's what we're focusing on here. So follow-up on the report is we're continuing to work with our youth and their families as well as with our government agencies.

The youth report, I'll say this, December 5th released; overnight December 5th, our website crashed. We were unable to handle the number of requests for this special report. So we estimated that first night, before I woke up in the morning, we had over 5,000 downloads, full downloads of the report.

Once we got our website up and running, within a week we had over 20,000 downloads. We had approximately 130,000 people visit and start to read and read parts of the report. And the report has gone international. So it's gone provincially,

national, international. You can track those things on your website. So we've had people from India, Russia, Siberia, Australia, United Kingdom, literally all over the world have accessed that report from the voices of children in northern Saskatchewan. So it's pretty unprecedented in our office that we've actually had that reach of our report. So we are getting requests nationally and internationally to come and speak about the voices of children and youth in Saskatchewan, and I believe that's because it has been such a gap in that area, in their voice.

[11:15]

So in addition to the youth suicide report, one of the main reports that we're focusing on is a young boy died the first day of kindergarten in Saskatoon, and we've been requested to do an investigative report into that as an independent officer of the legislature, from the school board. It was the first time in the history of our office that we've ever investigated the death of a child at school. And I've asked my counterparts of our national organization, the Canadian Council of Child & Youth Advocates, if they've ever done an investigation in a school or that happened at school, and they've never done it. So this is actually the first time in the history of all our offices across Canada that we're actually doing a report on a death of a child that happened at school. So we're anticipating that that report will be released within the next month or two. So hopefully in March is our target date, sometime in the mid to the end of March on doing that.

So there are two other really important areas I've mentioned, education and mental health. Those are things that we want to focus on. We do have limited resources, but as we are making inroads into the education system, we are seeing that that is a gap that has not been filled, and we are using our current staff to do that. The requests from education have come in like never before.

Previously there would have been maybe an adversarial relationship, I'll say, with education questioning our jurisdiction. Now those doors are being opened. We are being invited into schools and school divisions across the province. They want to learn about our office. They want to learn about children and youth rights. They want to learn about our mental health, and they want to learn about how we as the advocate's office can work with them to be part of the solution. And I believe they are part of the solution.

So of course additional resources would always help us to be more proactive and preventative in nature. With the overarching goal of reducing the number of kids coming into care, of reducing the number of children dying and being critically injured in care, I believe, as we go into education and as we look deeper into the mental health system, those are going to be the results of that.

So we've only begun really to explore the epidemic, that we've been calling it, of the mental health system and the challenges that our children and our youth are facing. I've had conversations with our Ministry of Health and we decided that, you know, it is an epidemic because our kids are dying; they're attempting suicide every day. And our report mentions all of those things and the calls to action that they're bringing forward.

So our mental health system is really challenged to meet the needs of our children and youth, and as a result, without help they're most vulnerable and they are most in need.

So I like to say when your child, you know, breaks their arm, you take them to emergency room. You get it fixed and set, and you're ready, and that's fixed. But if your child is challenged with their mental health, we take them to that same emergency room, and if there is somebody there to see them, they might see them. If not, they will get turned away or you'll sit there for 10 to 12 hours and you won't be able to access those supports. A simple number is there's a two-year wait to see a child psychiatrist in this province of ours. It's a tragedy, you know. We can fix a broken arm, but literally our children are dying as they wait to receive these professional services that can help them fix their mind.

So we are committed to doing a thorough and fulsome review of this system. I believe that that aligns with our preventative and proactive solutions-based approach in reducing those numbers moving forward. So the area of mental health is something that we will be specifically focusing on.

So in addition to those things, we continue to do the day-to-day operations of our office, which is individual and group advocacy with children and youth. We do child death and critical injury investigations. So every time a child dies or is critically injured in the care of government, we are notified and we do investigations into those. We do public education and awareness activities. Those have taken off in the last year in a way that we never have, particularly in our school system. And we continue to do research on issues affecting children and youth.

In conclusion, while this year's budget proposal is a status quo request, to fully actualize the vision and strategic plan and implement meaningful change for children and youth in a proactive, preventative manner, a request for more staff and resources will be forthcoming, because I believe that we, in order for these numbers to go down, we have to work with our partners and bring solutions to the table.

So for 2018 and '19 we've taken into consideration treasury board's approach to executive government budget development and are planning to manage our projected costs for 2018-19 within our existing allocation. Now should a cost of living allowance increase be announced in 2018-19, a subsequent request for additional resources would be brought forward to the board's consideration.

So I respectfully request that the Board of Internal Economy recommend to the Legislative Assembly an appropriation for the Advocate for Children and Youth, vote 076, \$2.684 million for 2018-19, which reflects a zero per cent increase over the 2017-18 allocation. Thank you for your time and if you have any questions, Bernie will be happy to answer them.

The Deputy Speaker: — Thank you, Mr. O'Soup, for your presentation. Members, questions? David? Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Just one, and thank you very much for the good work you've been doing. The report was really well done, and it looks like you've got a lot of work ahead of you.

I've just got a question, and this may come up later for the minister in estimates. But the federal minister has announced that the federal government will be paying for all First Nations children, and I'm not sure of the technical term, but in care or programs, even the legal bills. And it seems quite far ranging and reaching. What impact does that have for you? And how will you be watching how that rolls out over the next year?

Mr. O'Soup: — Thank you for the question. It will affect us in a couple of different ways. First of all we do support the federal government and also we support the First Nations and Métis people in their request to, I guess, take back over control of parenting, disciplining, caring for their own children and youth. So when that does happen there will be a couple of effects to our office.

Right now we perform those duties on our First Nations through delegated agreements with child and family services, on-reserve have those agreements with our Ministry of Social Services. So that gives us the authority to go into those First Nations and to do investigations as needed. We've changed our direction in that. We're building relationships and we're working alongside them to support them instead of the confrontational relationship we may have had in the past.

If and when that does happen I know there's been a request from our First Nations, particularly at the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations], to have their own advocate working underneath their own jurisdiction. If that does happen, I've offered my support and saying, you don't have to start from ground zero. We have legislation; we have policies; we have different things we can share with you to help you get off the ground.

So effectually that would take us off of reserve if they got their own advocate. That may be beyond my term if and when that does happen. So that would effectually take us off of reserve. Now but as we know, those kids are transient. They go back and forth constantly, probably on a daily basis. So we would have to work closely with that type of an agency.

So I would say right now if they take it over they will have to have some sort of agreement, you know, for accountability over that system which is the same accountability that we provide. So in the interim I would hope that we would be able to work out an agreement with them until they actually had their own advocate. And then when that happens I guess we'll have to deal with that, but I would be more than happy to support them moving forward.

The Deputy Speaker: — Any other questions or comments? If not, I'd like to thank Mr. O'Soup for his presentation. Obviously he did a very thorough job and we will be dealing with the approval of budgets later today, is my hopes. Thank you.

Conflict of Interest Commissioner Registrar of Lobbyists

The Deputy Speaker: — With that, we will move on to item 11 and that is the estimates of the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the office of the lobbyists registrar. And Mr. Barclay is unable to be with us today, and so I

understand he has asked Ms. McFadyen to do his presentation. So I welcome Ms. McFadyen, and you have a new official with you, so if you would introduce your official and proceed with your presentation.

Ms. McFadyen: — Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chair and members of the board. Yes, I am not Mr. Barclay but I am of Scottish heritage, like he reminds us every year when he comes here. Sandra Arberry, the deputy registrar of lobbyists, is here with me today, and I can say that, even for myself personally, she has been of great assistance to Mr. Barclay under both of his mandates.

As Mr. Barclay expressed in his latest annual report, he is very grateful for her advice and her candour, as well as her insights, her professionalism, and sensibility. And any achievements his office has made could not have been possible without her dedication, and she has made a great contribution to his office. Mr. Barclay also wishes to acknowledge the major assistance he has received from Brad Gurash, who has left LAS [Legislative Assembly Service], but his staff at LAS for their contributions and assistance they've provided to him in all of his financial matters.

So the mandate of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner is to coordinate and disclose the disclosure of assets by members of the Legislative Assembly and provide advice on conflict of interest issues. The commissioner also conducts inquiries and provides opinions on compliance with *The Members' Conflict of Interest Act* if requested by a member, the President of the Executive Council, or the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Barclay also wishes to express his appreciation to Ron Samways who assists him in those responsibilities concerning the filing by members of their private disclosure statement and the preparation of the public disclosure statements. Mr. Samways's contributions are immense, and Mr. Barclay advises that his achievements could not have been possible without Mr. Samways's assistance.

The Conflict of Interest Commissioner also serves as the Registrar of Lobbyists for the province. The lobbyists registry was successfully launched on August 23rd, 2016 to coincide with the coming into force of *The Lobbyists Act*.

The Saskatchewan Registrar of Lobbyists website was launched on June the 1st, 2016. The main focus of the website is to provide education and information to the three main stakeholders affected by *The Lobbyists Act* — that is the citizens, the public office holders, and the lobbyists. Under each of these respective sections, there is information that will help in understanding the legislation and how it applies to each stakeholder group. One of the interesting by-products that the registry provides is a summary of issues that are currently topical in the province and Saskatchewan's business environment.

Under the resource library section of the lobbyist registry website, you will find a registry reports button. You can generate a number of reports that are linked to the registry, so provide real-time data on a number of sections on which lobbyists are required to report. Specifically you can run a report on the ministers, the MLAs, and the government

institutions being lobbied, the subject matters as well as the number of active registrations and lobbyists.

During the planning and development stage it was estimated that the registry would see approximately 200 active lobbyists with 400 active registrations over the next five years. That number was derived using existing lobbyist numbers from Manitoba and Alberta and considering our population, economic factors, and potential stakeholders. If you look at these reports today, you will see there are 166 active registrations and around 578 active lobbyists.

With respect to the 2018-19 budget submission, the commissioner submits that he has made every attempt to significantly lower the operating costs under both of his mandates. There is a reduction of approximately 15,000 for contractual services. This is primarily due to the reduced consulting and contractual fees for the lobbyist registry. The only significant change in the budget was the necessary review and reclassification for the deputy registrar of lobbyists position. The deputy registrar has taken on an increasing role and added responsibilities and duties in connection with the commissioner's conflict of interest mandate. The commissioner has advised that he was able to absorb most of the increase in costs which are connected with the reclassification of the position.

[11:30]

In closing, I request on behalf of the commissioner that the board approve the budget request for the 2018-19 fiscal year as is set out on page 7 of his budget proposal. He is asking for an increase of \$5,000 from last fiscal year which, as Mr. Barclay notes in his submission, is almost status quo.

Thank you very much, and we'd be pleased to answer any questions anybody would have.

The Deputy Speaker: — Thank you, Ms. McFadyen. Questions? Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Has Mr. Samways now fully retired and riding his motorcycle?

Ms. McFadyen: — Yes, he has. I think he's enjoying himself immensely.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — I'm just wondering about the equipment and assets going from, if I read this right, 10,000 to 21,000, and what would be that increase.

Ms. McFadyen: — I think the 10,000 is pro-rated for the website costs. Is that correct? And the request for this year, it's the software and licensing and the website fees for the equipment and assets. And Sandra, anything else to add?

Ms. Arberry: — Yes, that's correct. So the estimates that we requested last year were mistakenly based on the pro-rated 2016 fees. And so now, because we've been in operation for one full year, this is an actual cost based on actual fees that we had to pay into it in 2017. That's what the upgrade is for, or the

increase.

The Deputy Speaker: — Any other questions? If not, I'd like to thank Ms. McFadyen for making the presentation on behalf of Mr. Barclay.

Members, I see that lunch is arriving as we speak. We are ahead of our time but I think what I would propose is that we break for lunch and that we would reconvene at 12:15 if that's agreeable to members of the committee.

And before we break I would ask at this time, does the committee anticipate a need for an in camera session? Because, as I had stated at the beginning of the meeting, I propose to move after lunch to items 13 through to 17, which would be the approval of the budgets. And there is provision for an in camera session prior to moving to those events. So I mean we could do that. If at this time there is no need . . . Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Is there going to be an in camera part, like before we make decisions?

The Deputy Speaker: — Well it would happen then right after lunch if we needed to have an in camera . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay. No, we can. Okay.

A Member: — A brief one.

The Deputy Speaker: — A brief one. The reason why I raised that is for the benefit of individuals that need to be here after lunch and so on. Okay, we're recessed till 12:15.

[The board recessed from 11:33 until 12:20.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I'll call the committee to order. As I'd indicated, I propose to move forward with items 13 through to 17, the approval of the legislative officers' budgets. But prior to that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, we're going to leave item 12 till after. We'll come back to item 12. We'll skip over item 12 and move on to item 13. Is there a request to go in camera?

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Well usually we do.

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay. Well then, let's go in camera. I'm guessing it'll be relatively short. Okay. Mr. Merriman moves that the board goes in camera at this time. Do we have a seconder? Mr. Forbes. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

[The board continued in camera from 12:21 until 12:37.]

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay, we will now call the committee back to order, move into open session. We will move forward with items 13 to 17, and we'll do them one at a time. And seeing that we have a complete team of rookies on this end of the table, we may take our time when we're moving through these.

So we will move to item 13, the approval of the 2018-19 budget

for the Office of the Ombudsman. We have a motion that reads as follows, and I will read the motion and then ask for someone to move the motion:

That the 2018-19 expenditure estimates for vote 056, the Ombudsman be approved in the amount of \$3,981,000. Budgetary to be voted, 3,753,000; and statutory, 228,000. That such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

So I will ask a member to move.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — It's moved by Mr. Brkich, seconded by Mr. Forbes. Are the members ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — Are the members agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. So we'll do the paperwork before we proceed to the next one.

Okay, we're good to go. There we go. Item 14, approval of the 2018-19 budget for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The motion that I have before me is:

That the 2018-19 expenditure estimates for vote 055, Information and Privacy Commissioner be approved in the amount of 1,828,500 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$1,600,500; and statutory, 228,000. That such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Is there a member prepared to move that motion?

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'll move.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. D'Autremont, seconded by Mr. Forbes. While the members are signing, are members ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — Are the members in favour of the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. Okay. Members, we'll move to item 15, the approval of the 2018-19 budget of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. I would propose that that would be item 15(a) and then we'll have item 15(b), another motion dealing with this request for supplementary funding. So the first motion, 15, dealing with the . . . it reads as follows:

That the 2018-19 expenditure estimates for vote 034, Chief Electoral Officer be approved in the amount of \$4,720,000 as follows: statutory, \$4,720,000. And further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Is a member prepared to move this motion? Mr. Merriman. Do we have a seconder? Mr. Forbes. Are the members ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — Are the members agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. Okay, members, we also have a supplementary motion for supplementary funding as requested by the Chief Electoral Officer in his memorandum dated February the 5th that was tabled earlier in this meeting, a request for additional funding. Well I'll just read the motion, I guess:

That additional funding in the amount of \$1,097,000 be approved for vote 034, Chief Electoral Officer, for the 2017-18 fiscal year, and that the said amount be transmitted by the Chair to the Minister of Finance for approval as a supplementary estimate by March 1, 2018.

Is there a member prepared to move that motion? Is there a question?

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Question, Mr. Chair. In the . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Well let's . . . Maybe we should have someone move.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Sure.

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay. Is someone . . . Mr. Merriman will move. Do we have a seconder? Okay. Before I call the vote, are there some questions or comments?

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Just a question, Mr. Chair. You read out the amount of 1,097,000. Is that correct? The note that I have from Mr. Boda says 1,197,000.

The Deputy Speaker: — But Mr. Boda says if you look at the memorandum he . . . At the bottom he says that he's using \$100,000 worth of surplus, so he . . .

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Perfect. Thank you for the clarification, Mr. Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: — So are the members ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — Are the members agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[12:45]

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Okay, we'll move on to item 17, approval of the 2018-19 budget for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

and the Office of the Lobbyist Registrar . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, okay. Thank you. We'll back up and we'll do item 16 first.

Approval of the 2018-19 budget for the Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth, and the motion is as follows:

That the 2018-19 expenditure estimates for vote 076, Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth be approved in the amount of \$2,684,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, 2,456,000; statutory, 228,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Is there a member prepared to move this motion?

Mr. D'Autremont: — I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. D'Autremont. Do we have a seconder? Mr. Forbes. Are the members ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — Are the members agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. Okay, we'll now deal with item 17, approval of the 2018-19 budget for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the Office of the Lobbyist Registrar. The motion reads as follows:

That the 2018-19 expenditure estimates for vote 057, Conflict of Interest Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists be approved in the amount of \$544,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$544,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Is there a member prepared to move this motion? Mr. Brkich. Seconded by Mr. Forbes. Are the members ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — Are the members agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. Okay, members, if you want to open your books . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, certainly.

Mr. Forbes: — Just before we vote this section, the Ombudsman had asked that we change our title. And I don't know if that needs a motion or if that's just an action, that the action should be done. But I would agree that we should . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Can we leave that, passing that motion just before we adjourn for the day so that the proper documentation can be prepared?

Mr. Forbes: — Sure. I just want to make sure we get that done.

Legislative Assembly

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay. I believe that we have completed the items required up until this point in time and we will revert back to item no. 12, the review of the 2018-19 budget for the Legislative Assembly. So I'd ask Mr. Putz and his officials to take the appropriate chairs.

Okay. We have with us Mr. Putz, Clerk of the Assembly. If you would like to introduce the officials that you have here with you and go ahead and make your presentation.

Mr. Putz: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As usual we have many of our program managers with us here today, and it's an annual tradition to introduce those who are with us here. And they're here to answer any questions you might have on the various aspects of the various services that we provide to the Assembly and to members.

So in no particular order of importance, I will introduce the officials here with us. And I'll start with Ken Ring, our Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel; Iris Lang, our Principal Clerk. Dawn, who's sitting to my right, she's our executive director of member and corporate services. And since we presented last year, Dawn has come back to us from the Ministry of Education with the retirement of Lynn Jacobson, who you all knew. Lynn retired and Dawn applied for the position and she won that competition. So we were happy to welcome Dawn back with us. We also have Melissa Bennett, our Legislative Librarian. To my left is Mike Halayka, our director, member services; Cindy Hingley, who's our senior financial analyst; Darcy Hislop, our chief technology officer; Terry Quinn, our Sergeant-at-Arms; Lenni Frohman, director of parliamentary publications; and Joelle Perras, our senior communications analyst.

So I have a few brief introductory remarks that I want to outline before we get down to the details, which Dawn will follow up and present you some of the details of our budget and assumptions of how we got to our numbers.

So to begin with, I want to take you to page 14 of our budget book, and there you'll see that the Legislative Assembly budget is presented in terms of five main cost categories. The first category is the funding requirements for the members of the Legislative Assembly. They account for about 66 per cent of the budget, so of course it has the biggest influence on the overall Assembly budget.

As you are aware, the Assembly budget was cut by just over 5 per cent last year by the board and then it was further reduced by the Assembly itself through the passage of Bill 47. The estimates we have this year for 2018-19 for members is based on the expiry of the Board of Internal Economy mandated expenditure caps and the expiry of the provisions of Bill 47. The budget does not restore the funds that were eliminated by those various expenditure freezes and statutory reductions made last year and previously. So the funding estimates are based on the regular factors that are wired into the directives for us to calculate the costs of the statutory side of our budget.

The second category is the operations of the Legislative Assembly Service. So we knew again that this year, that 2018

would be another challenging year, so we found savings in our core budget to absorb the incremental and inflationary costs, resulting in a zero per cent funding request for the Legislative Assembly Service itself.

But apart from our core budget, we've identified two matters that require a funding increase. These affect the operation of legislative proceedings and security in the Legislative Building. The first is funding to address a critical infrastructure need by topping up our refurbishment fund by \$53,000. This will return the fund to the level the board actually authorized last year but was reduced by the second round of cuts.

Members will also recall that RARF [Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund] is meant to address infrastructure issues separately from the core LAS budget. Iris and Darcy, I'll ask them to provide you with the details and why we feel it's necessary to address some of these pretty significant obsolescence issues with our broadcasting system. In fact he probably experienced some of those this last fall and last spring session already.

The second is a security initiative, and this was actually started by former Speaker Tochor working in conjunction with our Sergeant-at-Arms, Terry and Law Clerk, Ken. And Terry and Ken will also present and answer any questions you have about those costs that I pointed out are on page 14.

So that concludes my brief remarks. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've held true to what you've asked me to do. I've kept it short. But I'll ask Dawn then to take you through how we arrived at some of the numbers and our assumptions.

Ms. Court: — Thank you, Greg, and good afternoon. I'm going to keep this pretty short because I know you've had a long day and you have other things that you need to get to. So the first part that I just want to talk briefly about is about the principles that we used to develop our 2018-19 budget. So as Greg already mentioned, we tried to develop a fiscally responsible budget that is in correlation with the mandate of the government to have a balanced budget by 2019-20.

And as a part of that, there are a couple of things that were related to the members and the Office of the Speaker's budget that came into effect this year. So one of the principles that we used was that the board mandated expenditure caps on member remuneration, expense provisions, caucus resources, and grants to the office of the Leader of the Opposition and of the independent members that were in place for 2017-18 have been sunsetted.

The exclusion of spending restraints on caucus resources of 10 per cent and members' indemnity of minus 3.5 per cent imposed by Bill No. 47 for the 2017-18 year has also expired. We are estimating a CPI [consumer price index] growth of 1.2 per cent, and that will be applied to the members' indemnity, additional duties, allowances, travel and living expenses, caucus resources, and constituency service expenses for 2018-19. And as Greg has already mentioned, the LAS core budget is at a zero per cent increase.

So I'm just going to take you through the highlights of the Speaker and the members' budgets, and that's on page 15 at the

very top. So as you will see, there's a couple of highlights. So we have found savings of \$58,000, and those are related to the member expense provisions, and the experienced drawdown. So what that means is that we've found over the trend analysis that we're not using all of those expenditures. So we've found savings to offset some of the increases. So a few of the increases for 2018-19 are, as I mentioned before, the 1.2 per cent consumer price index which relates to \$146,000 for MLA transition allowance. And those are for the two members that we currently know have resigned, and that relates to \$146,000. The board also approved an anti-harassment policy, and there's \$50,000 that are related to that for ongoing work. The first one is for sensitivity training for MLAs, and we've estimated that to cost about \$25,000. We're also anticipating \$25,000 to develop an anti-harassment framework.

We have an increase of \$8,000 for constituency assistant vacation leave top-up, and 160,000 for the reinstatement of the remainder of the members' office furniture and equipment term provision. That's about 160,000. And the last item is a \$5,000 increase, and that's to host the 20th anniversary of the SSTI [Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy] function.

So overall our budget came in, in total, at 2.29 per cent or \$790,000. And 427,000 of that is related to the increases for members and the Office of the Speaker. So I think I'll leave it there. If you have any questions, we'd be happy to answer those for you.

Mr. Putz: — So I'll ask members of the board, do you have questions on this portion now, or should we proceed with explaining the two items that I mentioned that relate to our broadcast system and security?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, we'll come back.

Mr. Putz: — Well I'll ask then Terry and Ken to come forward and outline what the security funding relates to.

[13:00]

Mr. Quinn: — Good afternoon. Last October, Speaker Tochor and I sat down to discuss where we were with security in the building and where we had hoped to go and what we might like to have. As a result of that, with the installation now of the metal detector, the second piece to the metal detector is the X-ray scanner. Now when people come through the metal detector with a backpack or a briefcase, we physically have to open them up and have a look at them. The X-ray scanner removes that from play, and it's just a part of the system itself. So that was the big one.

The other part to that was this building is open every day of the year except three, and to utilize the metal detector and the scanner, it was my policy that we needed somebody, an armed security in the building while that was going on. So to put an armed person, another special constable, in the building on weekends and on the holidays is asking for another position to go with that.

If we got the scanner, I had indicated to Mr. Speaker that I'd be looking for another commissionaire to assist with that, as the

position, we would require it. In the discussion it came out that there's very little difference between funding for a commissioner or an armed special constable. So he indicated that his preference was to go with another armed special constable if we're going that route. That's it, unless you have any questions.

The Deputy Speaker: — Go ahead, Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So on the weekends there will be still an armed constable here as well as another commissioner?

Mr. Quinn: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And the tour guides if it's during the daytime?

Mr. Quinn: — Yes.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. And at nights as well?

Mr. Quinn: — No, not armed at night. When the building's open at night.

Mr. D'Autremont: — When the building's open.

Mr. Quinn: — Yes, for sure.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Do you have the scanner now, or do we have to still purchase the scanner?

Mr. Quinn: — We're still going to purchase.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay. And how has the X-ray, or the system, the screening system now been accepted by the public?

Mr. Quinn: — I'm so glad you asked that question, Mr. Forbes. We've put approximately 700, over 700 people came through that since we instigated it. Nobody, because I ask the special constables every day, nobody has said, this is stupid; this is crazy. We expected this before; this is not unusual. It was surprising to me. I thought there might be some pushback. There hasn't been.

Mr. Forbes: — And I just have to say I like where it's located. And it seems to fit the entranceway and it seems to be all good, from how I perceive it anyway. So it's been good.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Doing the screening, do all members of the public get screened when they come in or is it random? And the same for government officials other than MLAs, coming say from the ministries or the Crowns, are they screened as well?

Mr. Quinn: — It's not random. It's everybody who is not on the exemption list gets screened. Any government employee with government photo ID [identification] does not get screened.

The Deputy Speaker: — Any other questions? I perhaps should add that I recently attended the annual Presiding Officers Conference in Quebec City and the security was the number one item that was on the agenda. And some of the assemblies already have a lot more in the way of security, and if the members have visited some of the other assemblies like Victoria or the British Columbia legislature, they're down to a single entry into the building.

And then some of the discussion that took place here at the end of January at that meeting was now some of the assemblies are concerned about drones, that apparently they've got these drones that are hovering over their buildings and so on. That's quite a concern.

And then the National Assembly of Quebec is undergoing a massive addition, I guess, costing tens of millions of dollars for security. And it's a one-point entry and it's . . . I didn't get the tour of it but perhaps, Mr. Putz, you could comment because you did do the tour of their construction site. So if you wouldn't mind making a few comments . . .

Mr. Putz: — Sure, yes. As Mr. Deputy Speaker is saying, Quebec over the last number of years has put a lot of money and time into planning a single point of entry into their building. It's at the front entrance and it's designed not to be a fortress-like facility with walls around the building, so they've spent \$71 million dollars putting it underground.

And it's considerably more elaborate than the plan that was developed here when Mr. D'Autremont was still the Speaker. We developed a comprehensive security review and we too had planned — because that's basically what the security expertise was telling us — that there should be a single point of entry. Well Quebec has done that in spades. And it has committee rooms, and it has screening airport-type security clearance. And there's public entry, public education, it's much more than just a security checkpoint. But at \$71 million I guess it should be that elaborate.

Just the difference between the way they budget there, the Legislative Assembly in Quebec is allowed to keep their funding from year to year, any surplus. And that's how they funded this, by basically saving up over the years in order to put this in. So that was a big emphasis, because they said that if the government had to do it, a facility like that can't compete with hospitals and roads and that sort of thing. So that was their philosophy. That's what it cost. And I think they've got extensive materials online, so if you're interested in further looking at that, maybe I'll leave it at that.

Just one point I want to make that Ken reminded me. We'd be remiss not to thank the Ministry of Central Services in assisting us in Terry's plans over the years. And it's not just the metal detector. Part of that plan that I just mentioned included other features, security features. We've done some of those that we could manage without asking, because as you know the board turned down our request which was approximately a million dollars for that security plan. But we've done things around the building that were in that plan that just were not costly things, like trimming the trees and lighting and that sort of thing.

And we did complete the camera portion of it. The board did

provide funding last year, although they then subsequently reduced it again. That's what I was saying when we talked about RARF, and we're asking to bring it back up to the normal amount. The board did approve, through that fund, \$193,000 to replace our obsolescent old analog security surveillance system with a new digital camera so we can actually see people and it just isn't a fuzzy blob. So I want to thank the Ministry of Central Services assisting us in that endeavour as well. I don't know if Terry or Ken, you want to add anything to that?

Mr. Quinn: — I'll just add, with the new security system, with the new cameras and that, it is amazingly better quality. We have laid highway traffic Act charges out front, out back in the parking lots when people are doing stupid things. We've solved a hit-and-run out back as well. So from my point of view I'm very appreciative of what we've been given lately, so it's fantastic. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — On the issue of drones, is there any restrictions on the use of drones above the Legislative Building? Would that come under the federal aviation Act or is there a need for that?

Mr. Quinn: — There is a restriction, the Capital Commission now. It was Wascana. You can't fly a drone in the Wascana area. You can't fly a drone within 9 kilometres of the airport without Transport Canada approval. I think there's two to three approvals they get that you need before you can fly a drone above us. It's happening, but it's not legal.

Mr. Putz: — As you know, being an ex-pilot, we're on the approachway for runway 26-08 here so that also involves, as Terry said, Nav Canada approval.

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay. Any other further questions with regards to . . . Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Perhaps we need conservation officers here to deal with aviation wildlife.

The Deputy Speaker: — Another helpful suggestion from the member from Cannington.

Mr. Quinn: — One comment on that one, in that reviewing the cameras lately at 4 in the morning back in the parking lot, we've noticed a couple of coyotes. So they're triggering our alarms out back.

Mr. Putz: — And I might add that maybe a former Speaker who's an avid hunter might have something at his arm or that he could volunteer his time.

A Member: — You are legislators, so you can exercise your prerogative in that regard.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'm also concerned about the fact that the legislature is a court and could deal with that as well. On your monitoring of both the cameras and the screening procedures, do you have an individual that is directed to carry

out that duty, or are they doing the screening and nobody's monitoring the cameras? Or if you have the X-ray machine to put briefcases, etc. through, who is monitoring that? Not the individual, but is there somebody there who is monitoring that while maintaining the monitoring of the cameras?

Mr. Quinn: — Yes. There's always somebody sitting monitoring the cameras. The requirement for the extra personnel, if we get the scanner, is to ensure that we always have somebody sitting in front there. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Brkich.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — On the X-ray and the scanner, would it speed things up with the scanner, then the X-ray, and then having to physically look in the briefcases? I've never, I guess, been there when people are coming through. I come through in either that exit or I come through a side exit. I know that when the school groups come with like a busload, is it taking them longer to get through, a lot longer, or not?

Mr. Quinn: — School groups are exempt. We do not bring schoolchildren through it. But it would. It would. We have one person directing the people through the metal detector. Then we have to have the other person take their bags, their goods, their purses, whatever, to another table. And we will not search them without that person standing with us, so it would slow things down. It would speed things up with the scanner, yes.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — It would speed things up, but would it also save one employee then? Because you'd only have to have one at the scanner and the X-ray, rather than having one at the X-ray and then another person going to do the bag and another person watching them.

Mr. Quinn: — No, not really. We still need that one person to take the goods from one spot to put it onto the X-ray to let it go through. But we don't have to wait while the person is going through the X-ray machine for them to come out. Whether they need to be wanded or not, we still have to wait before we will do anything with their goods. We need them watching what we're doing, so there's no questions asked. Do you understand?

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Yes, I do. I was just hoping that if we went with the scanner it would maybe need one less personnel there that would help in that end and also speeding the things up. It sounds like if we get the scanner, it's actually going to need another person, another employee with it. I was hoping it would be the other way.

Mr. Quinn: — I can't give you the answer you're looking for there. I believe we would need another employee as well.

[13:15]

The Deputy Speaker: — Any further questions on this portion of the presentation? Mr. Putz, we'll move on then. I just was asking about the security measures. Mr. Putz, if you'd care to continue.

Mr. Putz: — Okay, our next item is our Refurbishment Asset Replacement Fund request, and that's that \$250,000 fund that's meant for replacing infrastructure for the Assembly. And as I

mentioned, last year the board . . . That fund is approved on a five-year basis, and last year the board approved it for another five years. And this proposal is directed right from that fund.

And as I mentioned in my preliminary comments, it's meant to address another infrastructure issue that we have, something that we've been putting off for a few years and that has to deal with our obsolescent broadcast and audio system in the Chamber. So with that, I'll turn it over to Iris and Darcy to take you through that, what our plan is.

Ms. Lang: — Thank you, Greg. And I'll just give you a brief overview of the RARF proposal, and then any technical questions, you can ask Darcy. So the RARF proposal you have before you is for \$250,000 to address critical broadcast and IT [information technology] infrastructure needs for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. This request does consider the need for fiscal restraint and it is our view that this request cannot be deferred for another year. I'd like to make three key points as to why RARF funding should be provided and why we are at risk of failure if funding is not provided.

One, the current broadcast system is very old and has failed several times, as many of you have seen this last session where we did have a few glitches in our audio system. Two, some of the components of the system are obsolete and some are no longer available, not only from the manufacturer. We've scoured pretty much the world and cannot find them. And three, we currently have internal expertise that can design and install a new system at significant cost saving.

So with regards to my first point, we are at a critical stage and we can no longer ensure the reliability of the current broadcast and, in some cases, the IT infrastructures. Failure to provide funding for these infrastructure needs will not only impact the ability of LAS to provide critical broadcast services, but will also have an impact on my division and providing parliamentary support services to the LAS. For example, within the LAS, parliamentary publications uses the audio feeds for the transcription system to produce *Hansard*. Journals and committees use the broadcast and IT infrastructure to view and track proceedings in the Assembly in order to produce the official record and to track debates on bill times on bills and estimates. As I indicated earlier, the current system is failing and we can no longer ensure the reliability.

So to provide some background, the current audio system was installed in 2005. It contains some original hardware, and some parts are 13 years old and the manufacturer no longer has replacement components. Secondly, you'll recall as many of us indicated already, the audio system has failed several times. Short-term fixes were made and parts were cobbled together by CTS [computer and technology services] employees who, in my view, did an amazing job trying to locate and install obsolete components so the system could continue during session. It was through their ingenuity that we actually had a functioning system that we could make it through the session. So failure to approve funding puts the entire broadcast and IT infrastructure at risk, as we are at a point where there is a very high risk that the system will fail.

In addition to the audio components that we experience failures, the broadcast system itself is also obsolete, as the support and

availability of parts from the manufacturer continue to diminish as technology and industry standards change. The last upgrade to the major components of the actual broadcast system was 10 years ago. So in one part we have 13-year parts and now we have 10-year parts. So we are at risk. While the camera system and our integrated infrastructure has served the Assembly well, the technology has advanced significantly in the last 10 years. We are now at a point when the technology is obsolete and the whole system is at risk.

With regards to point 3, we currently have internal expertise with employees with over 35 years of experience that were involved in the original design in our system. In the near future, these internal resources may no longer be able to design and install a new system. Further, based on cost analysis with other jurisdictions, we estimate that by having our own employees do the work, rather than outside consultants, we can actually have a cost saving of \$100,000.

So those are my three key points. It is our view that delaying the upgrade will put the entire infrastructure at risk, and the system is failing. The system is obsolete, and we have a very short window where we may not have cost savings. We actually may have increased costs to develop a system that has failed.

So in closing, this proposal is actually a two-phase project. The total cost of the IT broadcast upgrade is \$50,000 over two years. So what we're asking for is \$250,000 in this fiscal year for RARF and an additional \$250,000 next fiscal year to complete the project. We feel that this two-fiscal-year phase approach is the most prudent option to achieve an important upgrade to this obsolescent system.

Those are my final remarks. I don't know if Darcy has anything to add or if you have any specific technical questions from Darcy.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. D'Autremont.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. With this proposal, exactly what parts are you proposing to refurbish? We did the mikes, it seems like only a couple years ago, but it might be longer than that. And does this include the switching panel up above the Speaker's chair in Hansard?

Mr. Hislop: — In the broadcast side, the audio system, would not be replacing the mikes or speakers that are located at the desk. They're still functioning; we still have parts for those. But it would be the amplifiers, the main brains of the system that take all the feeds from the 90-some microphone positions and 80-some speaker outputs and processes that. So it's the main brains of it. But the actual microphones and speakers in the Chamber would remain at this point.

The console panel, we've had some preliminary discussions and that's really something that we would pursue further with Hansard. To date, they've shown some love for the existing hard panel. But that system is also getting up in age and depending on what the final configurations would be there, I'd also have to address compatibility with the new systems.

Regarding the panel, there is one consideration to it. Originally the system was designed with 44 positions on either side. As the

government side grew, we added initially four more and because it's actually a hard button, those four buttons are actually coming off the other side of the panel. So it's a little bit of a challenge for Hansard but like I say, they've shown some love for the panel.

On the broadcast, on the production side, on the camera system, it is a fairly significant replacement. It would be cameras. It would be lenses. It's the video switcher. It's the character generator system and a whole bunch of distribution amps and conversion equipment, video servers, and it all pretty much has to go both upstairs and down at the same time. The version of high-def we're proposing moving to it, high-def . . . Everybody's seen widescreen TVs as opposed to the older screen TVs. The aspect ratio is different, and so when we go to do this we'll have to do both at the same time because we'll be changing from that 4 by 3 to a 16 by 9 ratio.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well the aspect ratio with real life is expanding as well, so I'm hoping your cameras will help correct that.

The cameras in this room and up in the Chamber are . . . Again time moves on, but they don't seem to be that old. Are you actually going to replace the entire camera system or just a few components in it?

Mr. Hislop: — Unfortunately the existing cameras are SD [standard definition] and in particular, the lenses are SD. Ten years ago when we moved from analog to digital SDI [serial digital interface] upstairs, we actually retained the camera lenses from the old analog. They worked fine with the SD. We have looked and tested HD [high definition] cameras with the existing lenses and it's not good. So they will have to change out.

The cameras in both here and upstairs, the quality of them is quite good. Where we're really running into some of the issues is some of the components downstream. If I had to think of the most critical things we're looking at right now, our character generators which put the graphics, your name or the bill we're considering or the proceeding action, those systems we've managed to get two used spares and we've been stealing parts out of them for a couple of years. And we can't find any more. So at some point in time, something's going to happen and it's not going to be there.

I'd like to think we're very prudent and very resourceful in our approaches, but some of those things are getting to the point where, if it goes, it might not be coming back. Cameras, they're not too bad. There's probably some salvage value and we would dispose of those in accordance with government policy, so I don't know if an educational institute would be interested or not.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Or maybe we could use them for the fourth floor?

Mr. Hislop: — There's different concerns on the fourth floor.

Mr. Putz: — If I could just add to the comment made by jest by the former Speaker, it was . . . Speaker Kowalsky was still the Speaker at the time and we thought the fourth floor was going

ahead and he suggested with some year-end savings that we buy some broadcast equipment. And thankfully we didn't take him up on that offer because it would still be in the box 15 years later.

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay. Have you further comments in your presentation?

Mr. Putz: — That concludes our presentation.

The Deputy Speaker: — All right. Members, any further questions or comments?

Mr. Forbes: — Yes, I have one.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — I'm just wondering about the . . . Let me just find it. The reinstatement of the remainder of the members' office furniture and equipment term provision, 160,000. How does that break out? What does it mean, remainder? I don't think we've had any for this term, have we . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . At the very beginning?

Mr. Halayka: — So for the past . . . Every member for the four years of the legislature has a \$10,000 provision. That's been suspended for the last two fiscal years. So we've reinstated it for this year, so now it's \$5,000 for the remainder of the two years. We budgeted for 160,000 which is slightly more than half, just because the members haven't had access to that for the last two years that we anticipate it may be greater.

Mr. Forbes: — It's not currently available, is it?

Mr. Halayka: — No, not . . . This is for the '18-19.

Mr. Forbes: — '18-19, yes. So you're saying that you're making it a 5,000 . . .

Mr. Halayka: — It is . . . Now it's \$5,000, yes, for the remainder of the twenty-eighth legislature.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay.

The Deputy Speaker: — Any further comments? Questions?

Mr. Forbes: — I would just say, I appreciate the marking for the anti-harassment policy and framework. I think it's very important. We see it every day on the news, and we certainly don't want to be seen as laggards in that. So I appreciate that, and that it's there.

Mr. Putz: — If I could just add one comment to what you said, Mr. Forbes, is that this was something that you well know because you're one of the board members that initiated this. This was something the board asked us to do at the end of November. And very soon we will be approaching the members with a proposal on how to accomplish this. This is the funding to make it happen. But we still have to, we're still developing the plan and we will be consulting members in both caucuses on how to accomplish this task.

[13:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — Any other questions or comments for Mr. Putz and his officials? If not, members, what I would propose to do is . . . There are two motions required for the budget for the Legislative Assembly. I would propose that we would deal with the motion of approval of the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund, and perhaps defer a decision on the latter. Is that agreeable? Okay. Then I do have a motion prepared and it reads as follows: [The board adjourned at 13:33.]

That for the 2018-19 fiscal year, the following Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund project be approved as follows: Obsolete and critical broadcast and information technology infrastructure in the amount of \$250,000.

Is there a member prepared to move that motion? Mr. Brkich. Seconded by Mr. Forbes. While we are having the paperwork done, are the members ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — Are the members agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. Also there is one other motion that was required, and thank you, Mr. Forbes, for reminding me of that. I have a motion here . . . Mr. Forbes, would you care to move this motion? Why don't you just . . .

Mr. Forbes: — Yes, here we go. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move:

That mandate title in vote 56 in the Estimates book reads as follows: Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner.

The Deputy Speaker: — Mr. Forbes so moves. Is there a seconder? Mr. D'Autremont. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Okay, members, is there any other comments or items that we need to deal with? We've concluded the agenda except for the one item that was by agreement. So if there is nothing else I would simply like to thank the members for their participation today. I'd like to thank Mr. Putz and his officials for their presentation. And I would especially like to thank the two young and younger people that I've had assisting me today. As I mentioned earlier, we are a team of rookies and we're trying to make sure that everything is done in accordance with established procedure, and so to Hayley and Sandra, thank you very much.

And I believe . . . Order for a motion of adjournment. And Mr. Brkich moves that the committee adjourns. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This committee stands adjourned.