



# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES**

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES  
2007**

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Regina Walsh Acres

Mr. Dan D'Autremont, Deputy Chair  
Cannington

Hon. Graham Addley  
Saskatoon Sutherland

Mr. Dustin Duncan  
Weyburn-Big Muddy

Ms. Donna Harpauer  
Humboldt

Hon. Warren McCall  
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

Hon. Mark Wartman  
Regina Qu'Appelle Valley

[The committee met at 20:43.]

**The Chair:** — Welcome everyone, to this session of Crown and Central Agencies Committee meeting. The Bill before us this evening is Bill No. 24. And on the government side representing us this evening we have Minister Mark Wartman, Minister Graham Addley, and Minister Warren McCall. On the opposition we have Mr. Dan D'Autremont, Mr. Dustin Duncan, Ms. Donna Harpauer. My name is Sandra Morin and I'm the Chair of this committee.

**Bill No. 24 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation  
Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 modifiant  
la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation  
des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard**

**Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — Bill 24 is An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997 and to make related amendments to The Regional Parks Act, 1979. The minister responsible is the Hon. Deb Higgins. And perhaps at this time you'd like to introduce your officials.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. To my right, I'm joined with Jim Engel, VP [vice-president] of policy and planning at SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority]. On my left is Dave Phillips, who is the assistant deputy minister of Environment. And joining us at the table is Lynnette Skaalrud from SLGA.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Did you have any opening remarks that you'd like to make this evening?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — I wouldn't mind making a couple of comments. This evening we're looking at The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act. And people will know that The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997 provides the statutory basis upon which Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority regulates gaming and the distribution and consumption of alcohol in the province.

This Bill that we're dealing with this evening will provide SLGA with the legislative authority to make grant payments to eligible charitable gaming licensees. And it will also provide a mechanism for the Department of Environment to implement future alcohol bans in provincial and regional park campgrounds.

Throughout Saskatchewan, we have more than 2,600 groups and organizations that raise important dollars through licensed charitable gaming. And historically, charitable gaming includes bingos, break-open tickets, and break-open ticket sales and raffles. These groups and organizations are made up of people who care about their communities that they live in. They work hard to raise money to make their community stronger, and the list of beneficiaries to this grant program include friendship centres, cadets, Scouts, Girl Guides, 4-H clubs, community associations, service clubs, hospital foundations, volunteer fire departments, and many more.

So this review of charitable gaming was done in the fall of '04,

and we heard from many of our licensees who stressed that their charitable gaming dollars have dwindled during the past decade and something needed to be done to help revitalize their gaming-related fundraising activities.

So there was a number of things that were put in place at the time — the opportunity for Texas hold'em and monte carlo fundraising events — but also we announced the new 25 cent grant for every dollar that groups and organizations raise through licensed bingos, break-open ticket sales, raffles, monte carlo, Texas hold'em poker events.

So tonight that Bill, the Bill that we are dealing with, will allow SLGA to immediately begin issuing those grants, and grants will be based on charitable gaming activities that take place on or after April 1, 2006. And once the first grant payments are made, charities will receive grants every quarter in which they report their net gaming proceeds.

And also this evening, we are looking at the amendments that will affect The Parks Act and The Regional Parks Act. The proposed amendments in this Bill will also make it an offence to possess or consume beverage alcohol in a designated campground that has an alcohol ban in effect.

So the intent overall of this Bill is to provide SLGA with the legislative authority to make grant payments to eligible charitable gaming licensees, and also it formalizes the policies into legislation that will continue to allow for temporary alcohol bans in provincial and regional parks.

So with that, we'll answer whatever questions there are.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. So Bill No. 24 clause 1, are there any questions? Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you. I'd like to welcome the minister and her officials here tonight. I'm not sure we can make it as exciting as the last committee but we'll do our best.

I'd like to deal with the gaming section first, the grants that you're talking about distributing. We've gone through this before. I remember when the province first moved into gaming that there was a promise at that time that 10 per cent of the revenues would be distributed to the communities. It didn't happen. That was later changed to financial support for the 911 telephone service which may have benefited people indirectly by providing 911. But one would have thought that would be either a safety concern through public safety or a service provided by the telephone company and funded through that, through the telephone bill which is where it's funded through now on the phone bills.

So since the government is moving into this new grant structure of 25 cents for every dollar that the organizations collect — and we'll get into who can qualify — but what kind of long-term commitment is there in place from this government that that will indeed carry on beyond the next election, and this isn't just a ploy as was the 10 per cent to communities and the 911 program previously?

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. D'Autremont, being your

corporate memory and you have been here much, much longer than I have, I will turn this over to Jim who has a better understanding of the history of some of these projects.

**Mr. Engel:** — Thank you, Minister. I guess it's just my clarification, my understanding — and again the minister may want to speak to the government's commitment more broadly — but my understanding is that the commitment around providing revenue to communities was specific to electronic gaming and the advent of the VLT [video lottery terminal] program and the opening of casinos.

And the focus of this Bill and this grant program is very much on the organizations that benefit from non-electronic forms of gaming — bingo, break-open, and so on. So it's actually an entirely different focus with respect to this particular commitment versus others that may have been made in the past.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well certainly the location that the money is coming from and how the communities are going to participate in raising it is different. They don't have access to electronic gaming and the VLTs. But when the VLTs came in there was a recognizable drop in the contribution to the local communities through the kind of fundraisings that this Bill anticipates.

The local bingo hall suffered. The legion with their break-open tickets, just the ordinary raffle tickets. There was a diminishment of support within the communities because of the government's move into VLTs in the local communities.

And at that time, the government had promised that there would be a 10 per cent return to the communities. And I know that the debate went back and forth — what about a community that opted out of VLTs? Would they be allowed to get a percentage of the return? And at the end of the day no money was ever distributed by the government to the communities. That commitment was dropped.

And then the commitment was made that the 10 per cent share of the VLTs would go for the cost of starting up and operating 911. That cost is now borne on the telephone bill.

So I think there's a natural skepticism that commitments such as these, returns from gaming going back into the communities, have been made in the past and never seem to come to fruition, at least as far as the local community organizations are concerned. They never seem to benefit and they're still behind the eight ball in providing support for the Girl Guides and the Scouts and the local sports teams, etc.

So I'm looking for some sort of an assurance from the government that this is not just simply an election promise for the next year — that the government is making a serious, long-term commitment to match these grants at 25 cents on the dollar to the community organizations.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. D'Autremont, this proposal was put forward beginning with the review in '04, I believe. We made the announcement last spring, almost a year ago. The legislation was tabled, so the grants will be retroactive to April 1, '06. There's been a fair bit of work that has gone into this, not only with the review but coming forward with a proposal

that would meet the needs of community organizations and not just a flat out grant but also, but it matches 25 cents for every dollar that the licensee raises through their organization. So we're not taking over any of the community activity. We're just adding to it, which we feel is appropriate.

Now when you say that the commitment's early . . . And I guess I can't get into a debate with you on what happened 15 years ago at the legislature or in the legislature because I wasn't here at that point in time and wouldn't know the details. But I will tell you that 25 per cent of SGC's [Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation] revenue is distributed to the community through the Community Initiatives Fund. And that program has been quite successful. So there is, there is avenues for that money to go back to the communities through different avenues. Now you're asking about the long term of this commitment. This commitment, it was announced last spring, and I mean as far as I'm concerned, it's a commitment that we have made and we stand by.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — When you look at the organizations that this grant may go to, it says that the grants will be given to charitable or religious organizations that have been issued a licence. What kind of a licence are you looking at? What does this licence entitle them to do?

**Mr. Engel:** — Thank you for the question. These are licences that already exist under the Criminal Code of Canada. I guess the starting place is that most forms of gambling in Canada are illegal unless there are specific exemptions in the Criminal Code that allow them to take place. One of the exemptions that does exist allows a province to issue licences to organizations that have a charitable or religious object or purpose, and they are allowed to undertake gaming to raise funds that promote and further their religious or charitable objects and purposes.

So these licences already exist in that in order for these organizations to hold their raffles, to hold their bingos, to sell break-open tickets, they are already required to — at least to conduct that gaming legally — they're required to obtain a licence from SLGA on behalf the Crown, which under the Criminal Code gives them permission to conduct the gaming. So the licensing requirement isn't new, and nothing related to the licensing requirement will change. It's a status quo from that point of view. These organizations have historically been getting licences, and they'll continue to get the same licence that they have in the past.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you. So are only organizations or endeavours that involve gaming eligible for the grants?

**Mr. Engel:** — That is correct. Yes, the grant is directly linked to charitable or religious organizations that obtain a licence that we issue pursuant to the Criminal Code that allow them to undertake different gaming activities to raise revenue.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Does that only involve the gaming portion of revenues that they may have raised? Or does it involve the entire, let's say, an evening's activities?

**Mr. Engel:** — The gaming portion. That is the only part that the grant would apply to.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay let me give you a hypothetical. An organization is going to have a supper. Normally they charged \$50 a plate, and they had some kind of a raffle at it. Let's say the raffle was \$10 a ticket. What if they charge you \$60 for the raffle and throw in a free supper?

**Mr. Engel:** — Normally, again depending on the circumstances, but typically that type of arrangement is actually in breach of the Criminal Code. So if in that particular circumstance of an organization is going under . . . Take those two types of fundraising. So they're going to have a supper, and then they're also going to do some sort of . . . like a 50/50 draw or they're going to raffle off prizes that have been donated, those sorts of things. Generally speaking those have to be conducted as two separate events because the Criminal Code requires that the gaming activity be carried out in isolation and that it's readily identifiable.

So you, generally speaking, can't commingle a \$100 entry fee that includes a supper, that includes a show, that includes a raffle or a 50/50 draw. Generally speaking those . . . The gaming portion of that activity has to be separated out so we can clearly identify the revenue that was raised through ticket sales for that particular activity and that those revenues can be separately identified and accounted for.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Thank you. How do you break down which would be the value for supper and which would be the value for the ticket? Let's say normally they were charging \$50 a plate, \$10 for a raffle ticket. They change it now to \$50 for the raffle ticket and \$10 a plate.

**Mr. Engel:** — Again if people are willing to pay \$50 for the raffling of whatever products are being raffled, that's fine. There's no condition that the . . . sort of the raffle or the gaming enterprise has to make sense, if you will, from a person's perspective. If they can get people to pay \$50 for a raffle ticket for what many people would perceive as to be inconsequential prizes and if people are willing to buy that ticket, that's perfectly all right.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well from my point of view, gaming doesn't make rational sense so . . . People buy and utilize gaming all the time. It doesn't necessarily make any sense.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. D'Autremont, if you've ever applied for a raffle licence it can be . . . not a real burden, but it does take a little bit of effort to apply for a licence. Plus you are answering many questions on the licence — types of things you will be raffling, what expectations of what you will be making. Also there's limits on the amount of money. So if someone was trying to move something in under the licence, you also have restrictions on the money you make from that after as to what you can use it for and the flexibility. It's quite clear that to be considered charitable or religious, the organization must be providing the following purposes: relief of poverty, advancement of religion, advancement of education, or purposes that are of broad community benefit. So there are some restrictions that the money can be used for.

So I mean it's not . . . It's something, you want to have as much money as you possibly can underneath. It's . . . I guess, just don't do it at your constituency office, okay, or we'll have to

send someone out. Or for a constituency fundraiser, it doesn't work.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well I know that people across Saskatchewan are very ingenious when it comes to fundraising, you know, legally. But if there is a grant going to be available that they can take advantage — not advantage in the negative sense, but make use of — they're going to find the means by which to do it to maximize their return. And not, again, in an illegal sense but to support their community.

You talk to any community with a skating rink and they're struggling every winter to operate that. And so if they can increase . . . If they're having a fundraiser that they could pick up another 2 or \$3,000, they're going to try and do that to keep their rink operating. And if that means . . . And small communities, it doesn't take long for word to get around that the supper ticket this year is only \$10 versus 25, but the raffle ticket is going to be \$25 versus \$5. And it's all going to the same pot, and everybody will buy one ticket because they bought one ticket last year, and they'll buy one ticket this year. But that means that there's a greater return from the grant process, and they're going to do that.

And so that's why I was asking about the controls that are in place to deal with this particular grant. What do you do in the case of a community that has a fundraiser to support the local community hall, and they sell \$1,000 worth of tickets and so they get a grant for \$250? And then the Lions Club holds another raffle. And they take the \$1,000 that they had raised for their first and buy \$1,000 worth of tickets from the Lions, who now have sold, let's say \$2,000, so they get a grant for \$500, and then it goes on to the next organization. And pretty soon the government has paid for whatever project it is that they're looking for, even though they've held four raffles.

**Mr. Engel:** — Yes. Just trying to follow the math in the example. The practical issues that . . . When an organization gets a charitable gaming licence, they have to include in that charitable gaming licence a budget which demonstrates how much revenue they're going to take in from the tickets and what they're going to use that revenue for. And they have to use 100 per cent of the revenue for their charitable or religious object or purpose.

So in the example you cited, if the first charity has sold \$1,000 worth of tickets, they cannot take their \$1,000 and use that to buy other raffle tickets or other gaming products. That's not a charitable or religious object or purpose. They have to use that money and demonstrate to us that they've used that money for a purpose that is consistent with the aims of their organization, and clearly buying someone else's supper tickets or someone else's raffle tickets would not be an acceptable use of that funding.

Similarly if an organization — just maybe to speak to the earlier example you cited — if an organization were going to try to skew the value of its tickets and say now that the dinner ticket is \$10 and the raffle ticket is \$40, theoretically that's possible. But again, they have to take all of the money they raised from selling those gaming tickets of \$40, and that all has to be used for their charitable object or purpose. They cannot use some of that money to then subsidize the supper that they're now losing

money on because they're only charging \$10 a plate for it.

So again there's no question they could monkey around with the value of the tickets a little bit but again only to an extent that's sort of logically reasonable because again every penny that they raise through the sale of those tickets, they can deduct the basic costs. If they have to have tickets printed for the raffle that they're having or the 50/50 draw or if they purchased prizes to give out for the raffle, those are eligible expenses. But subsidizing the dinner associated with the event would not be a qualifying use of the proceeds. So again they have to account for all the money they've raised, and they have to use all of that money for their charitable or religious object or purpose.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Thank you. Although I have to say that perhaps in Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw suppers are more than \$10. But across most of rural Saskatchewan if you get a plate, a wedding at the community hall, it's 8 to \$10. And so that covers the cost of the meal because people have donated a good many of the products that they're using to serve the meal.

So it works in my example if they wanted to do that. So I think that's an area that we need to be aware of. If it doesn't meet the cost of the meal, then certainly you've got an argument there on that particular issue. But I think people are ingenious, and they'll find ways to maximize the returns for their communities.

Further on in that clause it talks about the Hospitals of Regina Foundation, Royal University Hospital, St. Paul's Foundation, the Saskatoon City Hospital. Why are they identified specifically in the Act?

**Mr. Engel:** — Those specific . . . Minister, if I may? Those specific organizations, there's an existing program in place to help support them, and it's called the Hotels Helping Hospitals program which is the sale of break-open tickets in licensed taverns and restaurants. This is sort of a . . . not a quirk. This is, I guess, a reality of the way that particular program is structured and that those organizations do not get a licence for that break-open ticket program. That program is operated by SLGA on their behalf.

So we, again using the terminology of the Criminal Code, SLGA is responsible for the conduct and management of that break-open ticket program. And we, in turn, turn all of the proceeds of that program over to the hospital foundations.

The feeling when we were developing the grant program is that we were wanting to include the hospital foundations in this grant program, recognizing the work they do on behalf of everyone in the province, and also because the type of gaming from which they benefit is consistent with the type of gaming that this grant program otherwise applies to. So there was a broadening of the scope of this to include only those for specific hospital foundations because they are the recipients of this break-open ticket program that they don't otherwise receive a licence under the Criminal Code to operate.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay thank you. In the licensing in clause (a) of the Bill, it talks about a licence to either by the authority being SLGA or First Nations gaming. Does First Nations gaming have any other requirements in this Act other

than to be a licence provider?

**Mr. Engel:** — The concept here is that at some point in the future the intention under the gaming framework agreement that the province signed with the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] back in 1995 contemplates the idea of a First Nations gaming regulator being delegated authority to regulate charitable gaming on-reserve.

And what we're wanting to clarify or what the Bill is attempting to clarify here is that organizations that in the future might be licensed by a First Nations gaming regulator, those organizations will be eligible to receive the grant so they won't be penalized, if you will, in terms of not being able to receive the grant simply because they received their charitable gaming licence from a First Nations gaming regulator as opposed to SLGA.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So the First Nations gaming authority has no financial responsibilities though.

**Mr. Engel:** — That's correct. They're responsible only to issue the licence, and I imagine the First Nations gaming regulator would be making their clients or their licensees aware that the grant program exists. But it will be SLGA issuing the grant to those licensees.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay thank you. In the announcement, in the minister's speech, he talked about the Texas hold'em and Monte Carlo fundraising events. What has been the uptake on those kind of events since they've been allowed — what is it? — like six months or something along that line or a year maybe now?

**Mr. Engel:** — Licensing regime has been in place since early July of last year, of 2006. Now the most current numbers I have would probably be to about the end of January, early February, so I can't give you numbers right up to date. But at that point in time we had licensed, if memory serves correctly, about 230 of these events, almost all of which were Texas hold'em poker tournaments. I think there might have been one or two of the mock casino, Monte Carlo events, but the vast majority were poker tournaments.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — On the Texas hold'em or the Monte Carlo ones, are there designated providers of the equipment for that or can anyone provide that? Can each establishment . . . I believe these have to operate out of the hotels, or you can correct me if I don't understand this. But out of the hotels, can the hotel provide their own equipment, or is there a designated provider that provides the equipment?

**Mr. Engel:** — The events do not have to take place in a licensed premise. There's an eligibility that they can. That's acceptable. They can take place in a tavern or in a restaurant lounge or what have you. There are no designated providers.

Again under the Criminal Code and the licensing provisions, when we issue a licence to the charitable organization, that organization is responsible to conduct and manage the event, which means they have to be the operating mind behind the event and fundamentally in control of it. So the organization, if it chooses to, can go and rent equipment from any place that's

going to rent the types of equipment that they'll need — tables or what have you.

We do have requirements that the gaming-specific material that's procured, so decks of cards for example, those have to be obtained from a registered gaming supplier. But the sort of non-gaming-specific components — tables, chairs, those sorts of things — could be obtained from anyone or provided by the group itself if it has them, for example if it's a legion hall as one example.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Thank you. Move on to the liquor ban and provincial parks. Since you're bringing in this legislation now, amending the Act, what about the legality of the ban in both the provincial parks and the regional parks last spring?

**Mr. Phillips:** — The advice that we operated under from Saskatchewan Justice was that there was authority in the provincial parks Act to control the possession and consumption of alcohol as a condition of permit, on the campground permit, and that there were general authorities in The Regional Park Act that would allow for an alcohol control order by the regional park. This movement into the liquor and gaming Act is to provide a more selective control designating the campground within a regional park as the area where the ban ... in a regional park where the ban would apply and would be, you know, a more permanent measure than the condition of permit approach that was used in 2006 in the provincial parks.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So if I understand you correctly, last year when the ban was put in place, and more so in the regional parks but perhaps in the provincial parks, that if an alcohol ban was in place — and I'm thinking of the regional park at Oxbow where there's a number of cabins and permanent residences there — legally they would have been banned from having alcohol in their homes because the whole park would have been banned and now this allows you to designate only the camping area as such.

**Mr. Phillips:** — That's correct.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — And would that be the same in the provincial parks as well? At Moose Mountain Provincial Park there's a residential area.

**Mr. Phillips:** — Yes and in fact the alcohol ban last year was just a condition of the camping permit. It was only within the campgrounds. That would be the intention to continue that approach and also only for the Victoria Day weekend. There's no indication at this time that other weekends are a sufficient problem.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — What consultation did the department do with the operators within the provincial parks and perhaps the regional parks? I don't know if there are any commercial operators in any regional parks, but within the provincial parks certainly.

**Mr. Phillips:** — Most of our consultation centred around Moose Mountain. Historically Moose Mountain, Echo Valley, and Emma Lake were the areas where we'd experience the most disturbance. In 2004 there was a particularly severe problem of

vandalism.

There was a committee struck for the 2005 season that included the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], the village of Kenosee, the business operators in that park. There were a number of recommendations from that committee that were implemented, all of which stopped short of an alcohol ban — things like limiting the occupancy of the campground site to four, 18 years of age to register for a site, ban on glass bottles. It did have some benefits we found at Moose Mountain, but it did displace the problem to other park locations, and we had a specific request from the RCMP following an assault at Battlefords to implement a system-wide ban for the '06 season. I should also say the operators, the business operators in the Moose Mountain park area, were not supportive of an alcohol ban. They preferred these other less drastic measures.

For the '06 season, with the decision to proceed with the alcohol ban, there were early discussions with the operators in the area about a good three weeks before the Victoria Day weekend. And a number of family-oriented activities were organized to try and, you know, replace what would otherwise be visitation by typically young people that were the major users in past years.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Yes I know. The Victoria Day weekend at Kenosee became the third largest city in Saskatchewan, so it was a large number of people there. There was a number of problems in 2004 as you indicated. What was the result in 2005? I believe that there was a number of changes put in place without the ban actually being put in place, and the ban came into place for 2006.

**Mr. Phillips:** — In Moose Mountain Park specifically there was some reduction in vandalism and broken glass, but we still had large concentrations of intoxicated people under conditions of darkness, and a number of arrests, evictions, and charges were laid. In the '06 season across the park system, there was over a 90 per cent reduction in vandalism, complaints, and damages within the park system. It was quite striking.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — You may or may not ... this will be anecdotal evidence if you do have this. For the 2006 year when there was a ban in all the provincial parks — and I believe in some of the regional parks; I don't know if it was all of them — did you receive any reports from law officers, officials, that the problem moved out of the park to someplace else?

**Mr. Phillips:** — No.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — A long weekend in May, I don't think people's habits changed dramatically just the location they went to to participate in whatever activity it was they were participating in.

**Mr. Phillips:** — No sir, we didn't receive that type of report but we did ... You know, we were aware of other disturbances elsewhere in the province notably in the Regina Beach area. There was a particularly bad occurrence outside of the park system in a private campground area.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So while it resolved your problem, it became somebody else's.

**Mr. Phillips:** — It would be our hope that we can manage both the provincial and regional park issues that we have direct liability for. Our greatest fear was that there was going to be an injury or a fatality under the, you know, the growing conditions of intoxicated crowds under conditions of darkness.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Which happened though at Regina Beach later on, which is unfortunate. How many of the regional parks were the ban in place in?

**Mr. Phillips:** — I'm only aware of . . . Wakaw regional park has had a ban in place for two or three years. I don't have that information across the system for '06. We could find out though and report it back.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — The reason I ask is I remember seeing a news report on TV about a campground east of Regina — now I don't know where that was — that their usage that weekend had dropped off dramatically. And maybe it was just a misconception that people thought all the parks were being banned and so didn't go to the parks. But there was a news report that there was a dramatic drop at some regional park, I believe east of Regina but I don't know where.

**Mr. Phillips:** — The statistics for the provincial parks system, across the system it was about a 10 per cent decrease in '06 for that weekend compared to '05. The decline was most significant at Emma Lake. There was a 77 per cent decrease at Emma and a 60 per cent decrease at Moose Mountain.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you. When a camper pulls up at a provincial park now, or a regional park, how do the park officials go about ensuring that the ban remains in place? Do they do vehicle searches or are they simply waiting until there's an observation or a complaint later on to make a determination as to whether alcohol is there or not?

**Mr. Phillips:** — The enforcement approach last year was to post notices and also run advertisements prior to so that people would be generally aware. And then as people registered for their campsites, they were also notified. There wasn't vehicle searches. If a person was encountered with alcohol or if there was a complaint, a notice of violation was recorded on the campground permit, and the alcohol was disposed of. If a problem was encountered later with the same party, then their camping permit was cancelled and they would be evicted.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Were charges laid for having alcohol in the parks when it was banned, when it was prohibited?

**Mr. Phillips:** — In total last year we had 37 alcohol charges compared to 296 the year before. Now my breakdown doesn't indicate whether that's alcohol in a public place or . . . But it would not have been a specific offence, the breaking the condition of the camping permit. Like it wouldn't be a charge; it would be an eviction. So the per cent decrease on alcohol charges was 88 per cent from '05 to '06.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So there's no financial penalty for contravening the ban. It's simply a removal from the park.

**Mr. Phillips:** — That was the circumstance last year, yes.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — A person has a motorhome or a trailer and they refuse to move it, do you have the authority to tow it?

**Mr. Phillips:** — Yes, I believe we do.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So do you know if that happened last year?

**Mr. Phillips:** — Not to my knowledge.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So anyone who was requested to leave did leave?

**Mr. Phillips:** — There may have been an occurrence I'm not personally aware of, but the general report from our enforcement program was that it was a very quiet and successful weekend so . . .

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Thank you. On The Regional Parks Act, it allows the regional park to request the minister or the department to put into place the ban and a number of other bylaws. In particular, I'm thinking about the provide ". . . for fire protection within the regional park." What do you mean by that? Are you looking at the campers have to provide fire protection in some manner or does the regional park have to provide fire protection or who is responsible for providing for fire protection? Number 9(2)(e).

**Mr. Engel:** — Yes. If I can jump in here. If I understand correctly, the only change to this particular section was actually the provision which is subclause (c) which is the designation of an area as a campground. I believe all of the other provisions that are listed here are currently in The Regional Parks Act. So again the only change here is that one item, (c).

And I'm speculating that the reason that the entire section is listed here is because, from a drafting perspective, there was some interest in inserting that particular point in clause (c) which then necessitated a relabelling all of the subsequent clauses. So they, rather than getting into a very complicated description, they simply repealed the entire section and replaced it with a new one with that one additional clause inserted.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Thank you.

**Mr. Engel:** — I'm being told that is correct.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — That's good. So on clause 9(2)(h), there is no change there, "preventing the possession or use of firearms, poisons or other dangerous articles or materials within the regional park."

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — No, that's existing.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So how does the regional park go about doing that? Like poisons as an example. If people have a camper or a motorhome in all likelihood they have household cleaners in there that are poisonous.

**Mr. Engel:** — I would be speculating here, but I suspect in most instances this would apply to the application of poisons outside of the camper unit. So for example if a regional park, if some of the patrons of a regional park are deciding that they



want to lay out poison for gophers or other rodents, that the regional park might want to control that and not allow that practice to take place since other people are bringing dogs and cats and other pets to their campsite. So I suspect . . . Again, Dave might be able to clarify this but I would think in most circumstances that this would be the application or use of poisons or perhaps pesticides or herbicides outside of the camping unit. I don't know there'd be much interest in trying to control what goes on inside an individual camper's unit that they might have onsite.

**Mr. Phillips:** — Maybe if I could just add. Generally the regional parks operate much like a small municipality. So these bylaws would be to, you know, manage the affairs within the regional park. So for things like firefighting, to that question, it's not a service that our department provides to the regional parks. It would be more like a small municipality with a volunteer fire department or a caretaker with a small pumper unit.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Thank you. On the possession or use of firearms. Provincial parks allow the possession and use of firearms within the provincial parks in designated areas or basically the entire park area is being designated that you can't utilize them. Would the regional parks possess the same authorities to ban them or to restrict the use in a particular area such as they can designate the camping area and utilize them in other areas? And I don't know if there's any regional parks that are big enough to have that for a consideration, but . . .

**Mr. Phillips:** — The answer is yes, but they're very small. Things like provincial game seasons would have application and any other restrictions provincially on, you know, what a firearm could be used for or not used for would have application. But if a season was open and a regional park chose to close, you know, one area for use of firearms, it presumably would be open in the rest.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Thank you. I have two other questions which are not specifically relevant to this Bill but they're non-controversial — I believe — that you may or may not be able to answer. And if you can, I'd appreciate it. Liquor consumption tax, to whom does that apply? If you can't answer it, that's fine. But . . .

**Mr. Engel:** — The liquor consumption tax applies to the purchase for retail consumption of beverage alcohol anywhere in the province. So it applies and is paid by anyone on the retail price of liquor when it's purchased for consumption — be it on table or if it's purchased for consumption at a different location.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So that would include a liquor store, Liquor Board store?

**Mr. Engel:** — Yes, that's correct.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. There are some changes happening with the designation of agricultural societies. How does that deal with the gaming industry? Again, I'll ask it someplace else if you . . .

**Mr. Engel:** — I'm not familiar with the changes that you're referring to. So without having more information, I couldn't

begin to speculate on what impact that might have.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Thank you. That's all the questions I have.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. D'Autremont, if you can give us a bit more information or pass it along to my office, we will find out for you if it's in our area or not.

**The Chair:** — Are there any other questions? No? Are you sure?

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Oh, I've got one comment.

**The Chair:** — Okay.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I would just like to thank the minister for clarifying the reason why only part of the Act was being translated and not the entire Act. Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. D'Autremont, I know you would have loved to show off with your new French skills. You're doing great at it. You've improved over the last couple of years, but we'll have to see if we can accommodate you at some other Bill instead of this one.

**The Chair:** — So that leaves us then with Bill No. 24, An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997 and to make related amendments to The Regional Parks Act, 1979. Clause 1, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 8 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — So Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2006. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Can I have someone move a motion that this Bill be moved without amendment.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Minister Wartman, thank you. All those agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. Carried.

Can I have someone move a motion to adjourn this evening?  
Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Before we adjourn I'd like to thank the minister and her officials for coming in and I know my communities are looking forward to the cheque in the mail.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Madam Chair, I actually would

like to thank the members of the committee for allowing us to move ahead with this Bill in a timely fashion so that we can get the grants out to the charities right across the province. So look forward to having that done. So thank you very much to everyone on the committee.

**The Chair:** — The committee would like to express its — how should I say — excitement for the Bill moving forward as well. So thank you for appearing before the committee this evening, Minister Higgins, and the officials. And I wish everyone a good evening. Adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 21:31.]