



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSE SERVICES

Hansard Verbatim Report

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSE SERVICES

Hon. Corey Tochor, Chair
Saskatoon Eastview

Mr. Warren McCall, Deputy Chair
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

Mr. David Forbes
Saskatoon Centre

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Meadow Lake

Mr. Greg Lawrence
Moose Jaw Wakamow

Hon. Paul Merriman
Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland

Mr. Kevin Phillips
Melfort

Mr. Doyle Vermette
Cumberland

[The committee met at 09:00.]

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — November
Information and Privacy Commissioner
Vote 55**

Subvote (IP01)

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you very much, colleagues. I'd like to call to order the Standing Committee on House Services for consideration of November supplementary estimates for the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We are joined by Minister Harrison, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Merriman, Mr. Lawrence, and Mr. Forbes. And today for witnesses we've the Speaker with the . . . Mr. Speaker, if you could introduce your witnesses, and we'll proceed forthwith.

The Speaker: — Ron, I'll pass it on to you.

Mr. Kruzeniski: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Ron Kruzeniski, Information and Privacy Commissioner, and with me to my left is the director of operations and looks after the budget is Ms. Pam Scott.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Commissioner, Ms. Scott, if you have any comments accompanying the matter that we're here to consider today.

Mr. Kruzeniski: — Mr. Chair, and Mr. Speaker, thank you for hearing us this morning. I will be brief. We appeared in front of the Board of Internal Economy and made a similar presentation, and I was reluctant to appear in front of the board and to some extent in front of this committee, but we've sort of been involved in an item that has taken a considerable amount of time and thus additional cost.

Last year we opened 236 files, and that was the highest that the commissioner's office had ever opened since it's been in operation. This year we are currently at 277 files and forecasting that we will be 300-plus files, so it's about a 30 per cent increase. Eighty-six of those files involve land acquisition and involve about four or five different government institutions where requests for information has been made and then appealed to our office. We don't know exactly whether the 86 will increase but we expect it will and it potentially could increase some 25 or 30 files more.

So these reviews are somewhat complicated. They usually involve third parties, businesses or corporations that deal with the various government institutions. They involve multiple exemptions, and sometimes they involve a considerable number of records, or pages of a record. So some of them are extremely large, and my recollection was we've issued five reports on this single issue so far and one of them, my recollection was that it involved some 900 pages that had to be gone through. There was another report that involved some 240 records, so they're all not necessarily that large, but you never know until the file is in front of you.

So it is on that basis that I asked the board, and my rough estimate was, and this is always difficult to predict exactly, but

my rough estimate was that probably we had a workload that would involve a year. Because March is our fiscal year-end, we requested five months of funding in this current fiscal year, and indicated to the board that we would report back to them. I said in January, but I think, Mr. Speaker, it's now next week. And it will probably give us a similar set of numbers as to how long, you know, how long this will go into the next fiscal year. And I think my latest estimate is it could go six or eight months into the next year before we deal with those 86 files and the possible other files that will be added.

We don't have a contingency fund or a special issues fund. And I guess the only way we do this is when something totally unexpected occurs, we go to the Board of Internal Economy first, appear in front of them and hopefully get their approval, and then of course it moves through the system and that's why I'm here today.

So, Mr. Chair, pleased to answer any questions that the committee may have.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you very much, Mr. Commissioner. Colleagues, any questions or comments for the commissioner at this time? Seeing none, thank you very much for the presentation.

We'll proceed to the vote on vote 55, Information and Privacy Commissioner, which can be found on page 14 of the Supplementary Estimates. So Information and Privacy Commissioner, subvote (IP01) in the amount of \$38,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — I will now ask a member to move the following resolution:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2017, the following sums for Information and Privacy Commissioner in the amount of \$38,000.

Mr. Merriman.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — I so move.

The Deputy Chair: — Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — Thank you. Okay.

Colleagues, I believe you have before you a draft of the fifth report of the Standing Committee on House Services. We require a member to move the following motion:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on House Services be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

Mr. Lawrence: — I so move.

The Deputy Chair: — Mr. Lawrence. You've got to get up

pretty early in the motion to get ahead of Mr. Lawrence. So, Mr. Lawrence. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — All right. Motion is carried. I don't want to quite call it but I will now entertain a motion to adjourn.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — So moved.

The Deputy Chair: — Mr. Harrison, thank you very much. Agreed.

[The committee adjourned at 09:07.]