



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
2004**

Ms. Judy Junor, Chair
Saskatoon Eastview

Mr. Ken Cheveldayoff
Saskatoon Silver Springs

Ms. Brenda Bakken
Weyburn-Big Muddy

Mr. Lon Borgerson
Saskatchewan Rivers

Hon. Joanne Crofford
Regina Rosemont

Mr. Glenn Hagel
Moose Jaw North

Mr. Don Morgan
Saskatoon Southeast

The committee met at 15:30.

The Chair: — The item of business before the committee is the estimates for the Department of Corrections and Public Safety found on page 43 of the Saskatchewan Estimates book. I would ask the minister to introduce the officials present with you today.

**General Revenue Fund
Corrections and Public Safety
Vote 73**

Subvote (CP01)

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I am happy to first of all introduce Terry Lang, to my left, who is the deputy minister of Corrections and Public Safety. To my immediate right is Mae Boa who is the executive director of management services in the department. Behind me, just starting immediately behind me and to the right is Maureen Lloyd, who is acting assistant deputy minister, responsible for adult corrections. And, next to Maureen is Nick Surtees who is responsible for the areas of licensing and inspection. He is the executive director with the responsibilities there.

Also behind me is Ron Simpson, and Ron is acting executive director for the young offenders' program in the province of Saskatchewan. And also with us today is Tom Young, who has responsibility for the area of protection and emergency services.

And finally, we are joined by Duane McKay, who is on your far right. And Duane is responsible for protection and emergency services, including 911. I thought members of the committee may have some specific questions on 911 because I know that's an area of interest for members and for the public. And Duane has a significant amount of technical expertise in this and has been providing the leadership in the province to kind of move this file forward for us.

So, Madam Chair, those are the officials that are present here today, and I want to express appreciation to all my officials for accompanying me here this afternoon.

The Chair: — Thank you. The first item of business is vote no. 73, subvote (CP01), administration. And the minister may . . . Did you want to make an opening statement?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — I'll just make some brief opening remarks, Madam Chair. It's obviously a priority of the Government of Saskatchewan to ensure public safety in the province. And this is essentially what these budget estimates and the work of the department are all about.

The budget for the department this year is \$118.8 million. That's an increase of \$277,000 over last year's estimates, Madam Chair, so just a small increase to the work of the department. And it reflects an effort that's being made by our government right across the board to try to hold the line on spending outside of health and education and agriculture.

Just so that you have a sense for the number of staff who are

working in the department, there's 1,664 full-time equivalents. In other words the number of staff is larger than that, but if you're looking at the number of people who'd be working on a full-time basis or their equivalent, there's funding here in this year's budget for 1,664 positions.

In terms of how the money is spent, broadly speaking it breaks down with 60, a little over \$63 million being spent in the area of adult corrections. We're spending just over \$40 million on our young offender programs across the province, and that includes all our alternative measures programs and community-based programs for young offenders as well as the youth custody facilities, both open and closed custody.

And then two other important areas of spending, we spent a little over \$2 million a year in the area of protection and . . . sorry, we spent a little over \$2 million a year in the area of licensing and inspections. And that department also generates significant revenue, so a lot of those costs are covered through the revenues that are generated. And then in the very important area of protection and emergency service, we spent \$3.8 million.

So that just gives you a sense of the breakdown from a spending point of view.

In terms of where our staff are working, in the area of, for instance, of adult corrections, there's just over 1,000 people employed, 1,001 full-time equivalent positions. And in terms of full-time equivalent positions in the area of young offenders, we have 578. There is a much smaller number of people working in the area of protection and emergency servicing and licensing and inspections. In total there's 64 full-time equivalent positions there.

The department values the partnerships that we have with many other organizations across the province in terms of doing this important work. And as we've developed our planning over the last two to three years, partnerships have become a more and more important part of the work that we do. We have for instance contractual relationships with about 30 community-based organizations around the province who deliver important services, especially in the area of support for young offenders, restitution programs, alternative measure programs. And so that's a very, very important piece for us.

We also have important working relationships with our local police services across the province and with many community-based organizations that are concerned about employment opportunities for young people. And we've been using these partnerships to build our crime prevention strategies in the province. And we've taken the approach over the last couple of years of trying to target in on some key areas for crime prevention which local municipalities are interested in.

And for instance here in the city of Regina, there's been, I think, a very effective relationship between Corrections and Public Safety and the Department of Justice at the provincial level and the city of Regina and the Regina Police Service and then a number of community-based partners here in the city of Regina to try to tackle the problem of auto theft. And through that working partnership, we've reduced auto theft in the city of

Regina by about a third over the last two years. So that's been an important piece of work.

And there are similar partnerships that are underway in communities like Meadow Lake and North Battleford, and work being done in Saskatoon to again develop targeted crime prevention strategies there. And in each community, the focus is a little different. In Meadow Lake for instance there's a significant focus on youth, including youth . . . well in both North Battleford and Meadow Lake an important focus on youth even as young as 10 or 11 years of age, and so that . . . But the specifics will vary from community to community. In Saskatoon there is an interest in seeing a focus on break and enter, and they're not in quite as advanced stage in terms of developing a crime prevention strategy, but we're hoping to have sort of a final strategy developed over the course of the next two to three months.

We've similarly taken this sort of same approach in terms of working with community partners in terms of developing an overall government strategy around tackling FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder), fetal alcohol syndrome disorder, and that is also an important piece of our work. We have a part of that in the Department of Corrections and Public Safety in the sense that we are working in Saskatoon at Kilburn Hall at piloting a process in which we more effectively identify youth who have been remanded or sentenced, to have FASD and can then ensure appropriate programming for those youth.

Similarly in the area of emergency services and protection, we have very important working relationships with the fire chiefs across the province and with dozens of communities who have implemented very effective local emergency plans. We work with communities in terms of both helping them develop their emergency plans and also training for community leaders who are interested in emergency planning and a more effective response for their local community. And we've got three people allocated in the department who essentially work full-time with local communities in that important area.

So these are just three examples of what an array of partnerships that we have with community-based groups. And we think this is, you know, an important direction to be taking the department in the future as we work more and more in this area.

I think I'll stop there, Madam Chair, and just say that we're very happy to answer any questions that members have. We'll do our very best to do that. And we look forward to this opportunity to be accountable through you and the members of this committee to the people of the province. Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you. I'll now open the floor to questions by the members. Mr. Morgan.

Mr. Morgan: — I'm wondering about the current commercial industries that are taking place in the correctional centre and how those fit in with rehabilitation and training.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Morgan, I think you're referring to Prism Industries which is in effect a series of vocational shops that were set up to provide opportunities both for inmate

employment and rehabilitation, but were clearly intended to operate on a commercial basis, or at least a break-even basis. And there were . . . so Prism Industries has had up until this time . . . I believe it's nine shops that were operating in the correctional facilities in the province.

We have worked over the course of the last several years to try to bring these shops at least to a point where they would operate on a break-even basis. We've also been monitoring inmate utilization of the shops, in other words the involvement of inmates in the various shops. What we have decided to do in this area, because a number of the shops were a long way away from breaking even, is phase out those shops, but keep the ones where there was significant involvement by inmates and where the shops were at least in the range of being able to operate on a break-even basis. So as of July we'll have three shops that will continue to operate under the Prism Industries program in the province.

Mr. Morgan: — What are the ones that were closed?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — The ones that were closed . . . First of all I should tell you the ones that will stay open. There'll be, there's a shop in Regina and Saskatoon and at Pine Grove that will stay open. And there will be two shops closing in Regina, at least one shop closing in Saskatoon, and at least . . . and there'll be two shops closing in Prince Albert.

I think I'm missing one. I'm just going to . . . sorry, there'll be three closing in Regina, Mr. Morgan. I apologize. So there'll be a woodwork shop that will be closing at Saskatoon Correctional Centre. There'll be a woodwork and a multi-purpose shop that will be closing at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre. And there'll be a welding and metalwork shop, that'll be three of them, that'll be closing at the Regina correctional facility.

Mr. Morgan: — This I take it was done solely for financial reasons?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — It was done, I would say, primarily for financial reasons. That would be fair to say, Mr. Morgan. We're estimating that there'll be a saving to taxpayers of about \$420,000, just over that — 422,000 to be precise.

Mr. Morgan: — Where does that appear in the Estimates booklet?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — I think I'm going to refer that question over to Mrs. Boa to give you a precise answer on that.

Ms. Boa: — Mae Boa, management services. And the reduction in the adult corrections area for the revolving fund . . . it's partly in the revolving fund; it's partly in the adult corrections division. So in the Estimates book it will show up as a reduction in the adult corrections division.

Mr. Morgan: — Is that page 44?

Ms. Boa: — Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Morgan: — What troubles me about this and where I'm going is in . . . if I'm looking in the right line and perhaps I'm not, it shows revolving fund . . . I'm trying to look at the

difference between '03 and '04 and decide which way the income is going on it. And it appears that we're not talking in the neighbourhood of 400,000. We're talking in far smaller dollars unless it shows up somewhere else as well.

Ms. Boa: — The two amounts that you referred to in terms of the revolving fund — the \$77,000 and the \$142,000 — that's the change in the subsidy that's provided to the revolving fund. Some of the positions were actually part of the adult corrections facilities budget, and so the reduction would be captured there.

Mr. Morgan: — How do you assess, other than just on the dollars recovered, how do you assess the success of that type of program with regard to training and rehabilitation of an inmate? What type of research or what type of analysis is to determine the effect of those programs?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — One of the things that we considered when we made what was a difficult decision — by the way, with respect to deciding to close these shops — was that we looked at inmate utilization of the various shops. And basically anywhere where there were . . . we closed shops where on average, when we last did an evaluation of the shops a few months ago, we found an inmate utilization rate of less than three inmates per day who were actually utilizing the shop. And so that was a consideration as well as whether or not the shops were breaking even. And anything that was, you know . . . I mean, the shops that were closed were not coming close to break-even.

Mr. Morgan: — What incentives are given to inmates to participate in the program or are there any?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — There is a payment made to an inmate on a daily basis. I'll maybe let Deputy Minister Lang go into more detail on that, but there is pay rates of . . . for instance in the range of about \$3 a day that would be paid to inmates who participate in the program. I'll just ask Mr. Lang to give you a little bit more detail on that.

Mr. Lang: — Terry Lang, the deputy minister. Yes, there's a basic wage that people would be paid for while they're in Prism Industries, but there's also a bonus pay incentive that went along with it, depending on their productivity levels. And it was a formula, and I don't have the information to explain it here. So there was some incentive where they could earn additional money depending on how productive they were.

Mr. Morgan: — Was there an incentive given by way of earlier release or changing the release dates or how they might integrate through a halfway house or a community residence?

Mr. Lang: — Well that wasn't officially part of the prison program, but it would be part of the consideration when . . . in the overall case management, you know, depending on how well the person performed in the prison shop, they would give, you know, considerable . . . favourable attention to whether or not they could then go to a community training residence, for example.

Mr. Morgan: — Okay. Was there any thought given to what other types of commercial operations might take place that would give inmates the opportunity to work?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — We're going to be looking at that, Mr. Morgan. We're also going to be looking at the question of ensuring that there is still vocational training opportunities for inmates in the correctional facilities. You know, we'll . . . So these are . . . I think these . . . This is an important question that you raise.

I think that vocational training has an important role to play in inmate rehabilitation. There are limitations on this which are important to keep in mind. One of them is, of course, that you have to have inmates in the shops who are not an undue security risk and this does place some limitations on the program. In other words, some of your medium-risk offenders and certainly your high-risk offenders are generally not suitable for working in the shops in either a commercial or a vocational training context.

Mr. Morgan: — My sense always has been that if you want to reduce the recidivism rate, you have to deal with the health and addiction problems that inmates often bring with them. You have to deal with education and employment skills. And so I find it troubling that the employment programs that exist are not being expanded or we're not looking at options real aggressively.

I understand there's a significant amount of produce and food raised at some of the correctional . . . Is that done all the way through the province or just at some?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — It's done at some. And again, I'll maybe get Mr. Lang to give you more details on at which facilities that's being done.

Mr. Lang: — I guess one of . . . The primary focus in terms of providing offender programs for adult and youth corrections has been focusing on those criminogenic or those sort of factors that actually lead to offending behaviour. And as you mentioned, substance abuse, for example, is one of them.

So we have been focusing on trying to develop and deliver offender substance abuse programs within the facilities that are based on good, effective corrections research, most of which has occurred actually in Canada. And so that's been a primary focus.

We do have some of the . . . The Regina Correctional Centre is pretty much the only facility that has some. It has a greenhouse; they produce their own tomatoes, for example, and potatoes, not in the greenhouse, but so that they're able to supply their own potatoes for the year.

It's a small, you know, a small portion, but it is good work activity for the inmates. But we want to combine those kind of work experiences with the other effective corrections interventions to basically get at their criminogenic needs.

Mr. Morgan: — What type of educational programs are being offered? And where I'm going is specifically the success we've had in having inmates obtain either a grade 12 or an equivalency. I know we're dealing with relatively short periods of incarceration because it's a provincial institute. But I'm just wondering what the success rate we've had, what percentage of inmates obtain another a year or a GED (General Educational

Development) or a grade 12, and how many of them are able to complete.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — We have opportunities at all the correctional facilities for inmates to work at their grade level in terms of completing programs, just as we do in our youth facilities. In fact in our youth facilities of course it's a requirement to attend school. And you'll see, Mr. Morgan, in the youth facilities, you know, if you go into a typical classroom, there you'll see a classroom of four to five, six students with a teacher. So it's a very good student/teacher ratio, and those teachers are working with students basically at their grade level.

There's also a significant effort being made when they leave a youth correctional facility to try to ensure that those students stay in school, and increasingly our staff are working with local schools to ensure a transition — a good transition — for youth out of a correctional facility and into a school-based program.

In the adult facilities, again there is opportunities for people to complete high school, to do . . . complete their GED, and there are also, as Mr. Lang has made reference to already, a host of programs that are available that are designed to address the behaviours that need to change if inmates are to avoid criminal activity again upon release. So these vary from substance abuse and anger management all the way through to important programs designed to achieve cognitive changes on the part of inmates' behaviour.

Now I realize in the course of answering your question I haven't fully answered it, because part of your question was not just with respect to what programs there are but with respect to what success has been achieved in terms of completion of grade 12 or GED. So I'll maybe ask either Mr. Lang or Ms. Lloyd to respond to that.

Mr. Morgan: — What I'm looking for is a number of, a percentage of inmates that participate and a number of, the percentage of inmates that actually are successful in completing a program.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Yes. That's a good question. And I'll ask one of the two officials that I just mentioned to respond to that question and give you the details.

Mr. Morgan, the youth system, the level of youth participation would be 100 per cent. I'm not sure that we have . . . We will get this for you, by the way. We don't have the exact stats today with respect to completion.

Mr. Morgan: — It was the adult one that I was specifically interested in. I would appreciate and even hope that it would be at 100 per cent.

But it's the adult one that I'm interested in, is the percentage that are participating. And my next question would flow from that is, do we have the right incentives if it's a low number? And obviously that depends on what it is. And then, whether we're giving them the right tools to ensure that there's a reasonably high completion rate or a reasonably high success rate, given the relatively short period of incarceration.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well I think this is a very important question and I'll give you assurance today that we'll answer it fully. But I'll let Maureen Lloyd respond with an interim answer at the present time.

Ms. Lloyd: — Maureen Lloyd, adult corrections program. I guess the answer around the adult system would be . . . I mean, certainly there is some of the 5-10 upgrading. Some of those programs exist in the centres. We don't have the exact numbers with us today, but we can provide those.

It's an area that we're building on in terms of education of offenders. And I think the basis that we have for it is in the young offender system where we're working on closer partnerships with school divisions, with the Department of Learning.

And I mean, given some of those young people move on in some cases to adult correctional centres . . . They are 18, 19 years old. So we're working on some planning that will follow them in terms of their educational achievement as they move along, with the hope that, as they achieve in the educational system or a stream of vocational training, I mean depending on what kind of training they'd like to get, that that experience of success will build toward them moving on into the community.

So in our centres, we do have some short-order cook training. We do have . . . that is offered. It's through SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) so they could come out, for example, with a certificate in short-order cooking, out of youth facilities. Certainly the Paul Dojack Centre is an example where young people have come out and gone directly into cooking jobs.

So there is a variety of programs that are offered. So when I say 100 per cent of young offenders are in school, that's some form of educational programming. So it could be vocational, it could be actual classroom, or a blend of the two.

Mr. Morgan: — If you can give me the statistics on the adult side. And I'm assuming that we're doing everything possible at the young offender level and would be troubled if we weren't, so I'm assuming that's taking place. But it's the adult ones that I was specifically asking about.

And my last question or my last series of questions deal with the condition of the Regina facility, and I'm wondering what provisions are being made to fund for the replacement or redevelopment of that facility.

Over the last 10 or 12 years I think I've been in every correctional facility — federal and provincial — in the province, and clearly that's one that's well past its shelf life. And we're sort of wondering what plans the province has for funding either a replacement or a major revamp of that facility. I actually think it's rapidly approaching the point where it becomes an occupational health and safety factor for the people that are working in there, if not a serious safety issue for the inmates.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well with respect to the Regina correctional facility, let me just say this first of all, just so all members are clear on this. I know you know this, Mr. Morgan,

already, but there are basically three dimensions to that facility.

There's a relatively modern part of the facility with about 120 units that were built in 1988 that I, as minister, consider to be in good physical condition and suitable for inmate programming and rehabilitation. Then there's a part of the facility that was built basically in the 1950s and 1960s that includes the kitchen and includes the gymnasium and includes, of course, inmate cells. That is in what I would call fair condition. And then there's the 1913 part that is definitely not adequate in terms of today's standards for occupational health and safety and with respect to inmate rehabilitation, you know; it's not ideal.

We recognize that this part of the facility ultimately needs to be replaced. It's our plan to move forward this year with . . . basically \$150,000 is in this year's budget to ensure that the detailed planning work gets done to replace the 1913 portion of the facility, and specifically to deal with a lot of the demands the facility faces with respect to remand. So you can expect over the next few months very detailed planning work to be done with respect to a proposal that we go to cabinet on the replacement of the oldest part of the building.

Mr. Morgan: — My question for you, is there . . . You know, I've read in the media some huge figures that it could be 80 to \$100 million to do a proper replacement or upgrade on that facility. And there's, you know, several aspects. One is the health and safety of our employees that work there. Another one is trying to ensure an appropriate environment that we have that the inmates can be rehabilitated and safely returned to society.

And the third — and the most troubling thing is — I worry that some, there will be either some kind of an episode or occurrence there, or a federal inspector will come by and say, this institute is closed right now. And I'm wondering if there is a contingency plan made in case it does have to be closed because of structural collapse or something else, and what budget numbers the government is contemplating now to deal with that.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well first of all we've made a decision that, you know, full replacement cost of the facility would be \$95 million. And we have looked at, you know, the other facilities, new facilities across the province, whether it be schools or health care facilities or many, many other demands that there are on the public purse for the expenditure of dollars for new capital facilities. And we've made a decision that we are not going to spend \$95 million replacing the Regina Correctional Centre.

But we are certainly conscious of the need to replace the oldest parts of the structure, and so that's what we're focusing on. And I can't tell you exactly what the capital cost of that will end up being, but, you know, a rough guess would be — and this is just, you know, don't hold me to these numbers with precision, but it would be I think in the 30, \$35 million range that we'd be looking at as a possible cost.

So this is basically the planning work that will now get underway in a very serious manner because I share your interest in seeing the 1913 part of the building ultimately being replaced.

Mr. Morgan: — Yes. I want to point out for the benefit of the government that the people that reside there don't do so by their own choice. Those of us that are in other government institutions, we have a choice whether we go there; those people have no choice. And those that are in the oldest part of the facility, it's beyond being an embarrassment; it's a life safety issue. And what I don't see in this budget, in the budget estimates is any real amount of money being allocated for that, so that's certainly a . . .

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well bear in mind that, you know, I mean there are the government . . . It's not as though government has done nothing to ensure that basic codes and safety standards are to be met in that facility. Over the last five years, for instance, there's been \$1.2 million spent on the Regina Correctional Centre, basically upgrading it. And I think . . . And I mean I think this is important that the Ombudsman has looked at the facility and has made a number of recommendations and has raised some of the same concerns that you have raised, and that I share, with respect to work that needs to be done there. But there has been significant progress on many of the Ombudsman's recommendations.

So I think staff are doing a good job in that facility in what are less than ideal circumstances. And you're right about the fact that we do need to move forward with a plan on replacement. And it's my intention as minister to make sure that the planning work is done this year so that cabinet can give this matter very serious consideration.

The Chair: — Mr. Dearborn.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. And welcome to your officials. Thank you for being here today. My questions will focus around the staffing of the department.

Of the 1,664 positions that you put forth to the committee, would you be able to identify how many persons are in scope and how many are out of scope?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — The vast majority of positions in this department, Mr. Dearborn, are in-scope positions. If my memory serves me right, approximately 4 per cent of the positions in the department would be out of scope.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Of the in-scope positions, how many unions are present, and how many collective bargaining agreements would there be serving all the various facilities that the department is responsible for?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — The predominant union in the workplace is Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union. I'm going to let Mr. Lang give you details in terms of exactly how many employees are there. I'll maybe just confer with him for a moment.

I just wanted to double-check this, Mr. Dearborn, before I told you so there's no inaccuracy here on my part, but all of the employees are members of Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union. So that would cover all in-scope personnel.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you. How many of the department's

present contracts with SGEU (Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union) for delivery of service are up for renegotiation in the current fiscal year and how many are . . . Well how many contracts are there to start with, and then how many are being fulfilled and how many have expired?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — There's one, basically one collective agreement that exists. And I mean these employees, because they're all part of SGEU, you know SGEU has of course an overall collective agreement with the province of Saskatchewan and that . . . the term of that collective agreement has expired and negotiations are now underway with SGEU in terms of a renewal of that collective agreement.

Mr. Dearborn: — So SGEU is bargaining on behalf of the 1,664 individuals but in a collective with other department individuals as well. The bargaining is not done separate for this particular department?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — That's correct. It's not done department by department. Now of course corrections workers on the union side have significant representation in the SGEU bargaining unit and so they play an important role in the negotiations. But the negotiations that are taking place would be for a collective agreement that applies to all employees in executive government.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you. I don't expect that the minister will be able to answer this next question that I have immediately, but perhaps the information could be forthcoming and provided. I just wonder, around the classifications of the 1,664 positions, how many individuals last year applied . . . well first of all, the basis of how many classifications, how many demarcations are there that are being served in the department? Is it the standard of the, you know the 13 for management and the 16 . . . or is it different? Are all of them being employed, and then from that how many relative to this department requests were there, and grants for reclassification through the last year and the year before that?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Dearborn, I'm going to refer that to my officials as you've implied would be likely, so that you can get a more precise answer than I could give you.

Mr. Lang: — Well in terms of levels, the majority of our 1,600 staff are within the adult and youth facilities. And most of those would fall between the levels 5 and 10 in the in-scope levels. But I can't tell you offhand how many would have applied and been successful in being granted reclassifications in this past year. We would, we would have to get back to you with that specific information.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you. That's a sufficient answer. I have concerns with the current position the government's gone forth on, the 0, 1, and 1, and the bargaining not yet being finished, with whether there's going to be major shifts in classification. And so if the minister could just provide an answer in the most generic of terms, is there an expectation that there will be a significant shift in classifications this budget year from what's occurred previous? And aside from that question, I really don't have anything further, and would thank the minister and the minister's officials for providing that other information that I've requested. Thanks.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — That information, Jason, will be provided. And with respect to the question that you have just asked, it's really the Public Service Commission that makes a determination of this.

You know, I should say that what will happen of course is that in-range increments that would normally be paid based on years of service, basically in other words in-range increments, will continue under the 0, 1, 1. So there will be some people who move up on the salary scale by virtue of their years of service, whether it be for the Department of Corrections or the same would apply in other departments right across government. But it will be the Public Service Commission who makes a decision about reclassification and that is something that I can't answer more fully right now. Although again we could, maybe that is something that could be pursued when Public Service Commission estimates are under consideration.

The Chair: — Thank you. Could I just ask the minister, if you are supplying information will you supply 15 copies of that to the committee?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Madam Chair, we'll make sure that 15 copies are provided, including obviously to all committee members, but also to other officials of the legislature that would require them.

The Chair: — Thank you. Mr. Hagel.

Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Madam Chair, and minister and officials.

I want to ask a bit about a comment that you made in your opening remarks, Minister, that is leading to, I heard you say, strategies being looked at in communities in addition to Regina flowing out of the auto theft strategy.

About a year and a half ago I recall there was a pretty high level of attention being given to the auto theft incidents here in the city of Regina. And the strategy was announced with much skepticism, as I recall. I think we are all . . . all of us are bona fide relieved to see that there has been some measure of success in the reduction of auto theft here in the city of Regina. And obviously this is encouraging enough that some other communities that you referred to are looking at similar strategies, it sounds like, although not necessarily for exactly the same kind of criminal activity.

I'd just welcome a little more information about the criminal activities that are being looked at in other communities and, secondly — you may want to tie these together — I think it's important for us to understand and I would certainly like to understand after the fact in assessing what has caused some success to be achieved. I don't know that anyone is suggesting this has been 100 per cent successful, because 100 per cent successful means that auto theft is completely eliminated and we know that's not the case.

However, we do know there has been, I think, what most would say, a dramatic improvement and it got a lot of attention. There were . . . We heard any number of very simplistic approaches being championed. And as I recall at the time, in following the approach to it, the claim was being made that this was not a

simple cause and therefore it . . . that was leading to the criminal activity by young people, and therefore the solution would also not be simple.

I don't know that we've seen evidence of the results in terms of numbers. I don't know that I've seen any description about what it is that's made the process work, that has helped to make the connect with young people that's had the outcome of reduction of criminal activity. And I would appreciate if you would be able to enlighten us a bit on that.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well I think that two of the important factors in the success of the Regina auto theft reduction strategy . . . well I say three. One has been the partnerships that have existed between the department and the city of Regina and the Regina Police Service and then the community-based groups that have been part of this work. So I think that partnership's been critical.

Secondly, I think intensive supervision of the youth who have been repeat offenders has been key.

In the case of the Regina auto theft strategy, what was done is a particular focus on youth repeat offenders and with alternative measures being taken for, you know, for first offenders — and then, in the case of repeat offenders, very intensive supervision.

So once youth offenders were released from custody, if they were placed in custody in the first place, they would have been checked upon on a very regular basis, including curfew checks at night to ensure that they were not out on the streets and engaged in criminal activity but, in fact, were at home where they were supposed to be.

So another very, very important part of the program was that many of the young people who were part of this initiative received support in terms of readiness for employment and then opportunities for work, and I think that's been key in terms of the success of the program.

I should just add, Mr. Hagel, that one of the struggles when you're doing this kind of work — and certainly the department has faced this — is that the offenders change over time and over not all that long a period of time. We're only talking about a couple of years here. So while I think we've been very successful in terms of our collective efforts at reducing the involvement of young people, it's become clear in the last six or seven months that we've got, you know, an increase in the number of adult offenders who are engaged in car theft in the city of Regina. And with that in mind, the strategy has needed to adapt itself to take account of the fact that we also need more intensive supervision of some of those chronic repeat offenders as well. We're also doing a little bit of experimenting with electronic monitoring in this area.

But I think the things that have really made a difference in terms of success have been the partnerships, the intensive supervision, and the work that's been done with youth to prepare them for training and then opportunities for work. And I think that's been the combination.

To answer the second part of your question — which was, you know, what's the focus in other communities in terms of their

interest? — one of the communities of course that's a priority for this work is Saskatoon. They're in an earlier stage of developing a strategy. They've been working quite hard at it over the last few months. There the focus is on break and enter, and that's again something that the local municipality and the police have identified as their priority. And I'm hoping that we'll have some initiatives to announce there within a matter of a few months.

Mr. Hagel: — Minister, I'm aware that when the strategy was first announced as well, that one of the factors that you've referred to that was seen to be essential was what you referred here as working together, some clear lines of communication that required I think a pretty intense level of consistent focus, ensuring that all of those actors who come in contact with — and just to stay tuned for a moment on the young offenders' circumstance — that they were all on the same page and making decisions based on common expectations, common criteria, that sort of thing.

Would it be accurate to say, as a year and a half or so has now passed, that that intensity has relaxed? Or is that a working relationship that got established and has been consistently maintained or it's been enhanced? What would be . . . And I'm talking specifically about Regina.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — I think the working relationship has actually strengthened over a period of time. There's a . . . You know, there were some very significant gains made in year one. And then in year two, we hit more of a bump, and in part that was because of the increased involvement of adults in auto theft in the city of Regina. But what you saw happening towards the end of 2003 was some really significant reductions in the months of September, October, November, for auto theft in the city of Regina because I think there was an effort at strengthening the relationships that existed between the department and the Regina City Police and community-based organizations and the courts around this file.

And it will . . . The committee has set itself a target — it's a pretty ambitious target — of 50 per cent. So that's what we're working towards. I'm not sure whether we'll achieve that target but that, you know, that's what we're going to try to achieve. That would really be substantial progress.

But the key is definitely the nature of the working relationship between the partners. And we've noticed that if there's a significant change in one of the partners and the personnel that may be providing leadership in that area, that often you'll see some bumps in the road until that person has been in the saddle for a little while. So the partnership's pretty key to making this successful.

Mr. Hagel: — I think what I hear you saying too is then there's a combination here of initiatives to prevent involvement in criminal activity, and then consistency in follow-up when young people have found themselves coming into the system and probably most significantly in incarceration and out.

One of the things that's been referred to, I think, is key to it as well is the supervision of young people when they've been let out of incarceration. As I recall, one of the local public editorialists referred to social workers as, in his words I think,

high-priced babysitters, I think was the accusation. That was easily expressed and part of a guffaw reaction by some to dealing with the matter of supervision.

And I wonder, Mr. Minister, what is your view? What is the view of your department in dealing with this, as to whether social workers have been effective partners in the supervision? Has that . . . or is it accurate, as has been accused, that they are in effect high-priced babysitters?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well we've seen some very high quality work done by social workers in this area, Mr. Hagel. So when you look at the Regina auto theft strategy, social workers of course have simply been one of the partners in the strategy. But I think they've done an effective job in terms of working with youth that are not in custody but are at high risk of repeat offending.

In terms of the curfew . . . well in terms of the issue you raise of intensive supervision, to just give a bit more detail on that — as part of the Regina auto theft strategy, there's been about 150 curfew checks a week done on average with youth. And I think those are very important in terms of helping to ensure that they don't reoffend and that they don't become part of the . . . We don't want to see these young people ending up in a custody facility if we can avoid it. That is not in their best interests or in society's best interests, so I think the curfew checks are very, very important.

I think this is one of the areas where we've, you know, where we can honestly say that we've had some success. That's very notable, but there's also a significant distance to go.

Mr. Hagel: — Just one final question, who is doing the curfew checks then? Is it only social workers or are police involved in that?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Primarily the curfew checks themselves are done primarily by Regina city police.

Mr. Hagel: — Thanks.

The Chair: — Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — And I'm told that there are youth workers with Corrections and Public Safety that are also involved in that work.

The Chair: — Mr. Cheveldayoff.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Minister, welcome. Your officials, welcome to the legislature today. I had some questions regarding the 911 services in Saskatchewan. And recently there have been several reports of the 911 system not working properly, I guess. We've heard about concerns around the Pound-Maker Adventures, concerns around the Lloydminster area and recently in Bladworth as well.

There in Bladworth there seemed to be a 911 operator that didn't know how to contact the appropriate fire department, resulting in a delayed response. Just wanted to ask if the department has had a chance to investigate that situation and what were the findings of that investigation.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — We have investigated that situation, and I'll get Mr. McKay to comment on it in a lot of detail.

But I should give you the overview first, Mr. Cheveldayoff. And that is that we found upon reviewing the situation, that first of all the initial call that was made by the caller in Bladworth came into the Regina public service answering point. So in other words, when he called 911, the call came into the Regina public service answering point, and there the call operator transferred him to the . . . There's 11 dispatch agencies in the province. And in the case of the municipality of Bladworth they contact with the Prince Albert Fire Department for dispatch services. And so the call was then relayed to — very quickly, within seconds — to the Prince Albert Fire Department.

There was a new trainee on, taking calls for the Prince Albert Fire Department. That's one of the reasons why there was then a mistake made. The trainee then forwarded the request for help to the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police). That was clearly a mistake because obviously the call should have been forwarded to the fire department in Davidson. But that was not done. The call was forwarded to the RCMP.

What happened meanwhile in Regina, the call operator who'd taken the initial call had stayed on the line and had caught the mistake and immediately called back to the Prince Albert dispatch agency to forewarn them of their mistake and had also taken down the number of the cell phone that the gentleman in Bladworth who was calling . . . So the Prince Albert dispatch agency was informed of the gentleman's cell phone number and was asked by the 911 operator in Regina to please immediately call that gentleman back. Meanwhile that gentleman was understandably contacting the fire department in Bladworth directly.

But there were a number of calls that the Prince Albert Fire Department was attempting to make to the gentleman. Meanwhile they were also contacting the fire department in Davidson directly, realizing the mistake that they had made. So this was clearly a mistake at the dispatch level.

Technically speaking, the 911 system ends with the relaying of the message to the dispatch organization that the municipality has contracted with. But I think the public expects that 911 operates to the point where, you know, the first responder knows about the need to respond.

What we have I think really advanced in a significant way is that on average the time for . . . from the time someone first calls into the system to the time that the dispatch agency that the municipality has contracted with has the information is in the range of about seven seconds on average. Now obviously that wasn't the case here. And there was unfortunately a delay of in excess of 15 minutes before the fire department had all the information that they needed to be able to respond to in the case of Davidson.

And so we have to, I think, keep working to improve the communications between dispatch agencies and first responders in the province.

Now I'm going to invite Mr. McKay to give you additional details that I may not have covered off here. So I'm just going

to turn it over to him for a moment.

Mr. McKay: — Duane McKay, project manager, Sask 911. Actually the minister has given an excellent overview of the details concerning that call. And typically what we find is, with the number of 911 calls now that the system is up and running . . . I think last year we took about 221,000 calls. During that same period of time, we investigated approximately 20 or so concerns from the public. And what we've typically found is that the errors generally occur at the dispatch level. Because we have a very large geographic area and in terms of . . . and a large number of response agencies, there tends to be some confusion at that level.

911 does track a lot of information, which makes our investigations fairly easy to do in terms of detail. We record the time that the calls are made, when they . . . which public safety answering point that they are delivered to, which telephone within that centre it's delivered to, who's operating that telephone, when they answered it, when they transferred it. And we keep all of that detail down to the one-hundredths of a second. So in terms of individuals who claim that they've had some difficulty while dialing 911, we can go back and see exactly what our system is doing.

At the dispatch level however, we do not have that level of technology. And so it does create a bit of an issue for the public who have some difficulty in terms of identifying the difference between 911 and dispatch.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you for those answers. You know, it's understandable; some human errors were made, and it sounds like we're working to learn from those mistakes and to constantly improve the system.

What areas of the province presently don't have access yet to 911?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Basically now, Mr. Cheveldayoff, large portions of northern Saskatchewan that don't have access. La Ronge does, but the majority of northern communities do not. And we're working right now, for instance, to try within the next year to have the communities on the, you know, the west side of northern Saskatchewan — I'm thinking of communities like Buffalo Narrows, Ile-a-la-Crosse just as examples, to have them included in the 911 system. At the present time, those communities are not included.

So our target is to try to get a large, large part of the North covered over the course of the next 18 months. As you can imagine, there's some challenges in doing that but we have good staff working on this and it's certainly interest among the northern communities in being included in the system.

If you like I can turn it over to Mr. McKay to give you some maybe more precise timelines in terms of when communities are targets, for when communities would come on, if you'd like that.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Sure.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Sure. I'll turn it over to Mr. McKay to give you more details.

Mr. McKay: — Thank you. What we've done for an implementation strategy in the North is to identify communities and their preparedness for 911 services. And some of the things that we've asked them to do is to identify obviously what type of emergency response capability that they have with respect to ambulance, law enforcements, and fire protection.

Once we've identified that, then we obviously take a step in terms of, you know, what 911 is going to do with those calls once they've received them. And we asked them to identify a dispatch agency in which we can transfer those calls and they can then look after the local response.

Because of the . . . somewhat of the isolation that occurs in the North, we don't see going in and doing an implementation based on geographic regions but rather based on community preparedness. So we've already sent out information in the past couple of months to most of the communities there, and we'll be meeting with them in the next month and a half to identify where they're at. And then obviously once the things are in place we'll be turning those systems on in those communities.

So we won't see sort of a gradual from the south to the north; it may be a little bit blotchy in terms of where it goes but it will be largely dependent upon the communities' preparedness.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Okay. With the advent of the GPS (Global Positioning System) technology and other technological advances I guess generally, I'd just like to know what you see happening in the future in maybe the incorporation of GPS. My understanding is that more and more cellphones are GPS compatible and able. Do you see the day when eventually the 911 system will operate in tandem with a GPS system?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well basically what we've got right now, Mr. Cheveldayoff, is a circumstance in which we have good mapping systems in place for the public service answering points, of which there's four in the province.

So when the call operator takes the 911 call right now, if we're operating from . . . if the caller is calling from a land line phone, the call operator in the dispatch centre can immediately see the telephone number that the caller is calling from and the address that the caller is calling from and can quickly analyze basically where the call is coming from even if the caller isn't able to speak.

We don't have that capacity if the call is coming from a cellphone and this is, of course, something we wish we had and that we're working on. My understanding is that SaskTel . . . we're obviously working with SaskTel on this. And we're hoping that, over the course of the next year, we can at least get to the point where we'll know the number of the cellphone and the tower number. That doesn't give you the exact address, but it gives you some general idea in the province of where the call is being placed.

We're some distance away though from actually being able to capture the precise location of the caller based on a cellphone call without the caller actually giving that information to the call operator.

We don't have . . . At this point, the dispatch agencies

themselves aren't operating with this mapping system. So in other words, they don't have the same level of detail about location that the call operators do and, in an ideal world, we'd get to the point where they do. And it's my objective as minister to move us in that direction because I think that would, you know, that would be very, very helpful. But there's a number of hurdles to go through to get there.

So there's a . . . I think it's fair to say that relative to where we were, you know, five years ago, we've made a lot of headway in terms of call operators being able to tell where the vast majority of people who are calling into the 911 system are actually located. And they can obviously relay that information very quickly to the dispatch agencies. But when it comes to cellphone calls — which are pretty critical in lots of circumstances including, obviously, highway accidents — we don't have that capacity yet.

And the caller isn't always certain where they're located. This certainly applies to people who are visiting in the province and may be travelling through and will tell the call operator that they're somewhere between Saskatoon and Regina. And, you know, this obviously . . . the quicker we can move towards getting cellphone number identification and at least a tower identification, that would be very, very helpful. And our officials are working on that very hard, and Mr. McKay is working on that very hard.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well that's encouraging to hear, and I'm sure the volume of cellphone calls that you're getting is probably increasing every year, which makes it very critical. That completes my questioning, Madam Chair.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thanks, Mr. Cheveldayoff.

The Chair: — Ms. Bakken.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you. I still have a few short questions that I'd like to ask you, Mr. Minister, and it pertains to an issue in my constituency that I was called about last week. And I will not say the names of the actual individuals. And I'd appreciate maybe following this exchange if you are willing to follow up on this, I would provide you with the actual names involved.

I had a mother of a young man phone me last week, very concerned about the treatment that he has received in the corrections system. He was in court in Estevan for charges of assault and was . . . the judge ordered that he be sent to North Battleford psychiatric centre for assessment, a 30-day assessment.

Since that happened, he was brought back to Estevan to court. He was left in the general population in the psychiatric centre, did reoffend, was then ordered to go to court in North Battleford. After he did attend court in Estevan, he was brought back to Regina for reasons unknown to the family.

He was held in Regina in remand for four days and was not returned to North Battleford until the legal aid lawyer from Estevan intervened and asked why he was being held in Regina when he was supposed to be in North Battleford and under assessment.

I guess my questions are . . . There's about three or four questions I'd like to ask. First of all, if a court order is — a 30-day court order — is given by a judge that medical and psychiatric assessment should occur, would it be normal for the person then to not be held for those 30 days and given the proper time to have assessment — medical and psychiatric assessment — without interruption?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Just for clarification, is this gentlemen over 18?

Ms. Bakken: — Yes he is.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — He's over 18, so he was . . . And I take it . . .

Ms. Bakken: — He's actually 22.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — He's 22, and when he was . . . I obviously don't want to know his name but when he was in the, when he was in Regina, was he placed in the Regina Correctional Centre?

Ms. Bakken: — Yes he was.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — For a four-day period. Yes.

Ms. Bakken: — Right. When he was transported from Estevan with the belief by his family that he was returning to North Battleford, he was held in Regina for four days. They've had no explanation of why that happened.

Their concern is that he does need medical and psychiatric assessment and treatment and that he, of course in the time since this happened, which has been over a period of over two weeks, he's had very little time where he actually has been receiving any kind of help or assessment because he's been on the road either going to or from court, being held in court, and then held in Regina for four days for no reason that they have been made aware of, and . . .

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — You know, I'll give you an undertaking, Ms. Bakken, to get the details of this case from you privately and to look into exactly what happened with respect to this young man.

I'll also maybe just ask Terry Lang to respond to your broader comment about the processes that were involved here.

Mr. Lang: — Yes. The North Battleford forensic unit is an adult forensic unit, operated under the Department of Health, but we have an agreement in terms of sending individuals there for assessments.

Courts often make those 30-day assessments. And what they do is basically adjourn it for 30 days and we would have the RCMP transport those individuals to the forensic unit as soon as possible. So part of it depends on the RCMP's ability or availability to transport that individual within a number of days.

But the other piece, just in terms of the 30 days, it doesn't mean they would actually be at the forensic unit for 30 days, because oftentimes we would take the offender to the forensic unit, they

would go through the assessment and the assessment would be done within three weeks, for example. They would be transferred back to whichever the home correctional centre would be and held in remand until the court appearance.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you. That clarifies that for me. And the other issue is around the actual concern of the family and of the individual himself about the treatment that he received at the hands of the law enforcement, and wondering what avenue that they can take. They believe that his human rights were certainly violated and they have serious concerns about that and wondering where they can go to have this addressed and what might . . . what possible outcome there would be if they did take action.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Maybe that's something we could explore together, you know, when we discuss this case privately.

In terms of what happens to someone like this while they're in the hands of law enforcement officers, that's beyond the purview of the Department of Corrections but is certainly of interest obviously, to the Department of Corrections. So I mean, obviously I'm concerned about this as minister. But it wouldn't actually . . . Well I don't know whether it was staff in Corrections and Public Safety who were accompanying this person or not, or whether it was police accompanying them to the facility. So we need to look into all the details of this, Ms. Bakken. And I give you an undertaking that we can talk about it privately within the next very short time.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you very much. I will make an appointment to meet with you.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Sure.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Mr. Kerpan.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Madam Chairman. I want to thank the minister for coming today and also thank his officials for being here as well. And I like to also go on record before this committee to thank publicly Mr. Lang, who has made himself available to me on a number of occasions throughout these last few months to both show me some of the facilities that we have here in Saskatchewan, but also to enlighten me on some of the policies and procedures that we undertake in this department.

I also find this a bit of a different kind of situation for me. And in my prior political life, former political life, we used to sit on a committee and we would try like the dickens to get the minister to come, and that would be very rare that the minister would come. But when they did come — and I want to relate one time that this did happen; a minister that shall go unnamed — he spoke for about an hour and 45 minutes of the two-hour allotted time, and the first question was asked by a member of the government party and he finished the rest of the 15 minutes answering that question. So we in opposition never got a chance to ask a question, let alone hear the answer.

So this is fairly unique. It's quite a concept for me — we ask questions and we actually get an answer. Thank you. I

appreciate it. It's appreciated; it really is appreciated.

I want to just jump around very quickly because our time left is short and I have a number of questions I'd kind of like to touch on, if I could.

In the estimates — and I would like to just spend a couple of minutes on the numbers — we're really showing a budget, a total budget that's fairly static, which by the way, is a good thing I think given the conditions in Saskatchewan that we see every day. We're seeing an increase in some areas though of about \$3.9 million in spending, two of those areas being accommodation and central services and also adult corrections. So if we are increasing spending 3.9 million we are also . . . we obviously have to be cutting back someplace else.

And I do know of one area for sure, the Concord House, that's about a \$750,000 expenditure that we will not have next year. But could we have a little information on what else is being cut back on as we go through this?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Absolutely, Mr. Kerpan. Let me just . . . The major area of budget reduction, other than the one we noted already which is Prism Industries on the adult correction side, the major area of reduction is with respect to youth custody facilities. And we have closed a number of facilities.

You make reference to the House of Concord, so you're right. We have indicated to them that as of the end of June our . . . we are, you know, we wanted to give them some lead time obviously, but our contract with them for custody services is coming to an end. And we had 12 custody spaces there, so those will no longer be operating. So that's with respect to Regina.

The Kenosee Youth Camp, which was an open custody facility in the southeastern part of the province is also being wound down, and there's 14 youth spaces there. And then the other facility that is being wound down is the Nisbet Youth Centre in the Prince Albert area, and there's 16 spaces there.

Now what I should say with respect to all these facilities is, I've given you the number of spaces, but that doesn't mean that that was the number of youth who were occupying those spaces. We made a decision to close these facilities down. And again this was a difficult decision, especially from the point of view of the employees involved. But we made a decision to close these facilities down because the average utilization rate was in the range of 50 to 60 per cent.

So typically at the House of Concord, for instance, you'd have about somewhere between seven and eight youth on average there. And by that I don't mean there weren't peak times when there were more. But I just mean on average you have about 60 per cent occupancy. And similarly at Kenosee we were looking at occupancy that was in the range of about 50 to 60 per cent. And we were seeing a similar pattern of about 50 per cent occupancy at Nisbet and we, you know, we basically felt that we could close those facilities and save the taxpayer pretty significant dollars — in excess of \$3 million on those closures — and not impact negatively on the services that were being provided to the community from a security point of view and also the rehabilitation services to the young people, by undertaking these closures.

So that is the . . . These youth are obviously all being . . . the youth that were in these facilities will all be transferred into other facilities with existing spaces in them in the youth correctional system.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you. When we talk about numbers, if you look at the cost per diem of keeping an inmate in Saskatchewan, in fact it's quite a bit higher than if you look at either Manitoba or Alberta. Saskatchewan is at about \$127 a day as compared to \$94 for Alberta and \$120 for Manitoba, both of our neighbouring provinces. It begs the question, the obvious question is why would we be \$35 a day higher than Alberta and \$7 a day higher than Manitoba? What's the justification for that?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — I'm going to ask Maureen Lloyd if she could respond to that and Ron Simpson in terms of the cost comparisons. They may be able to shed more light on this than I could, Mr. Kerpan.

I'll make sure, one way or another, that you get a full answer to that question.

Mr. Lang: — Okay. I'll take this one. Yes. Our average cost is actually \$123, so you're very, very close. Part of it depends on what's all included in those costs.

And so, I mean I'm not . . . I can't say for sure exactly what Alberta's including, whether they include, for example, their central office administration costs which are included in ours, you know. So there's different ways of . . . You know, it depends on what's included and what isn't.

But the cost also is determined based on the number of inmates. So in some respects, the fuller you are and if you're actually in an overcrowding situation, your per diem costs will come down because you have the same number of cooks, for example, just producing more meals. And so, I mean, we have seen a decrease in the adult count in this past year of around 40 inmates per day. So that's had some impact in terms of, you know, where our costs are at.

We also, you know, compare our per diem rates to the Federal Correctional Service of Canada, and theirs is somewhere around \$165 a day. So, you know, we're somewhere in the middle of the pack.

Mr. Kerpan: — Yes. Certainly I agree that we are better than Corrections Canada as far as if we look at a national figure. We're better by a long shot. But I just . . . I don't understand why we could be that much out of whack with our neighbouring provinces. That's my question, and I have a hard time to get . . .

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — I don't think we're . . .

Mr. Kerpan: — . . . my mind around that.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt. I mean, I don't think we're significantly out of whack with Manitoba.

We will look into the question of how Alberta does their costing because, as Mr. Lang says, they may be using somewhat different assumptions about what's included in the costs. I

mean, the other important thing obviously is the quality of the programming.

So anyway, we'll examine this Alberta situation and get back to you in terms of the cost differences.

Mr. Kerpan: — We're talking about dollars and cents, and this was talked about a bit before, the Prism Industries. I'm a big fan and a big strong believer in industry inside correctional facilities for a lot of reasons — for a lot of reasons. And I know there are cutbacks being undertaken in prison because of a loss of revenue. And I wanted to throw out a challenge to you, Mr. Minister, and to the department.

I was just . . . spent some time in Utah State Prison in February. This was my second trip down there, as I wanted to study what they do with regards to their industry out of their facility. Now arguably and understandably, they have certainly a larger population and a much larger population in their entire state. But out of their prison industry's program that they run, they had a \$1.3 million profit last year. They've been running a profit for the last good number of years.

And I would suggest — strongly urge and suggest and challenge — that the Government of Saskatchewan ought to study that kind of pilot project as well as others within North America to determine ways in which we could make a prison industry far stronger because I think that there's lots of upside to doing that for lots of reasons, without going into them obviously as time permits. But certainly be willing . . . and I would be willing to offer any help I could in that respect.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you for that offer. I think, you know, a lot here depends on the local leadership that we're getting, you know, by whoever's heading up the local shop.

And a very good example is the success of Prism Industries in this province in Pine Grove, where there has been just exceptional leadership in terms of the shop itself. And the shop has operated at a good profit. And when you walk in there every, you know, every sewing machine is being utilized. And that's, I think . . . If we could replicate that kind of an example throughout the correctional facility system, we'd be in good shape. But thank you for your offer in that regard.

Mr. Kerpan: — I'm aware of what's going on in Pine Grove; I was there to see it firsthand. And I think it's a great thing. It's a great operation and I'm excited. That's the kind of thing we need to see more of. And I think we can do it without it costing the taxpayers of this province one red cent. I think it can be at least self-sufficient, if not make a profit.

I wanted to just switch gears just very quickly, because we're almost out of time as I can see by the clock. Two of the issues that I hear quite a bit when I go through the correctional facilities here in Saskatchewan are gang activities inside prison walls and contraband. They're not the same issue, but I wanted to talk about both of them together. And again I learned some valuable things from visiting facilities outside the province.

With respect to contraband, some jurisdictions have gone to closed visits and have eliminated therefore the contraband problem, where people aren't allowed to physically touch each

other during a visit. And the second one, I want to talk about gang activity, is that when I ask some people about gang activity in other jurisdictions they throw their hands up and say, well why, we don't have that problem. The problem does not exist.

And one of things that Alberta has done that's been very interesting is that they've put every inmate into the same clothing. They've put them all into coveralls that are all non-gang descriptive. And that sounds like a small thing, but when I think you take steps like that to eliminate the possibilities of gang colours and being inside the walls of a facility, I think it's a great step forward.

You just mentioned, Mr. Minister, the success of the Prism Industries sewing shop in Pine Grove and that's an operation that we could use to supply everybody in the province with those kind of needed clothing. I know that's a big question but . . .

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Yes, I mean we haven't gone to standardized clothing both for reasons of cost and also reasons for just wanting to, you know, respect people's personal identity. But I think with respect to the point you make about gang colours, that this is very important. And, you know, we have basically said we don't want gang colours being worn in our institutions. And I think we need to look at . . . I mean I share your concern about the presence of gangs in some of our facilities and obviously this is of a concern for the public and for staff who are working inside the institutions.

So I think that we need to have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to gang colours in our institutions so that they're not being displayed. And we may have to look at the question of visitors in this regard as well, you know. So I think this is a pertinent issue that you raise.

Mr. Kerpan: — Do I have time for another one, Madam Chair?

The Chair: — Sure.

Mr. Kerpan: — Okay, I'll be really quick. My last question, that I know we'll have time for today, is that I know that you're talking and doing some studying on replacing at least a portion of the Regina correctional facility. My question then to you is, does it have to be in Regina?

And the reason I ask you that question is that I know that a percentage of inmates are brought in from other areas to the Regina facility, and one that comes to my mind is the northwest part of the province, perhaps North Battleford. I don't know if that's workable. I'm just throwing it out as a suggestion that perhaps the government may want to look at.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well thank you for that suggestion. In terms of . . . Well first of all I think the answer is it's very likely that Regina will end up being the best location for it for an array of reasons that I'd be happy to go into when we meet next. But it doesn't absolutely have to be in Regina. But you know, when you look at where the offenders live and where you look at where the court proceedings take place and more importantly when you look at the economies of scale for the, you know, for the facility, I think there's a lot to be said for, you know, for the

Regina location.

That having been said, I wouldn't rule out the possibility of it being elsewhere, but the logic would normally be in Regina. I mean one of the things that one, you know, has to bear in mind when one's planning facilities is that you want to . . . I mean, I think we can establish facilities that will be quite cost effective to operate in terms of, you know, staffing arrangements and good visibility. And in order to get some of those economies of scale, you know, you need to have a reasonable size of facility to work with.

The other thing that I just might add is that, you know, we do have a small correctional facility for instance in the Battlefords already and also in Buffalo Narrows. So I mean, we've certainly got . . . on the youth side we've got our facilities, you know, very significantly spread around the province. You've got facilities in Yorkton. You've got facilities in North Battleford. You've got facilities in Prince Albert and Regina. And then you've got, you know, some limited facilities in the North.

So we've attempted on the youth side to really have a quite decentralized system. We've obviously done that in part to keep youth close to home. I think that's a very important consideration. We want there to be contact with families, and that becomes a lot more difficult when you centralize the system. And of course in that regard if we went with that policy on the adult side, I mean, the one benefit we would have is that you'd have the ability for people to be closer to their home communities.

So this is something I think that merits discussion, but I think we'll find that the economies, the economics of operating facilities are such that, you know, we'll probably end up looking at Regina as the most sensible location for the facility at the end of the day. This is certainly something that merits examination.

Thank you very much for your questions.

The Chair: — We will now entertain a motion to adjourn our consideration of the estimates. Mr. Hagel.

Mr. Hagel: — Madam Chair, I move that the committee adjourn its consideration of the estimates for the Department of Corrections and Public Safety.

The Chair: — Thank you. Agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — All in favour? Then it now being 5 o'clock, the committee stands adjourned to the call of the Chair.

The committee adjourned at 17:03.

