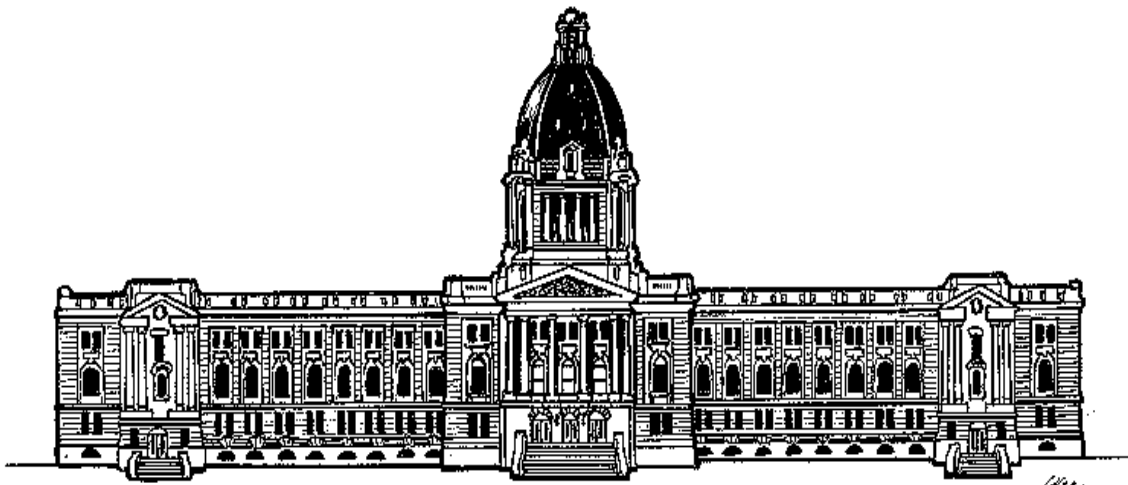




STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Hansard Verbatim Report

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Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Twenty-fifth Legislature

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
2005**

Ms. Judy Junor, Chair
Saskatoon Eastview

Mr. Wayne Elhard, Deputy Chair
Cypress Hills

Mr. Lon Borgerson
Saskatchewan Rivers

Hon. Joanne Crofford
Regina Rosemont

Mr. Glenn Hagel
Moose Jaw North

Mr. Don Toth
Moosomin

Mr. Milton Wakefield
Lloydminster

[The committee met at 18:00.]

The Chair: — Good evening. The Human Services Committee will now come to order. Before we begin with our first estimates, consideration of our first estimates, I'd like to ask someone to move:

That we amend the agenda and add into it:

after "consideration of supplementary estimates for Department of Corrections and Public Safety," a discussion on a letter that we have from the Children's Advocate [which I will table at this moment] and have that discussion about what the committee will do with this letter at the end of the consideration of estimates.

Will someone move that please? Mr. Elhard. We have the motion then to amend the agenda by adding that item at the end. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed? That's carried.

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — November
Learning
Vote 5**

Subvotes (LR11), (LR03), (LR12), (LR13), and (LR14)

The Chair: — Okay then our first item up for business is consideration of supplementary estimates for the Department of Learning found on page 15 of your Supplementary Estimates book.

I ask the minister to introduce himself and his officials which look the same as they were last week, but perhaps there are new ones. If you have anything to add to what you had to say last week, you can say it again.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Well thank you very much, Madam Chair. It is a pleasure to be here with the committee tonight. I am joined by a number of officials. Perhaps what I'll do is the same as I undertook at the last meeting, which is to introduce them as they join us at the table. Tonight I am joined by the deputy minister, Bonnie Durnford. And I have no additional opening statement, but I do welcome questions from the members.

The Chair: — Mr. Cheveldayoff.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Minister, Deputy, thank you for allowing me to join you this evening. I've got in front of me the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] major capital request list from 2005 to 2009, and I just had some questions regarding the priority 2 category for requests. Does the minister have that information handy?

There's several projects on the critical space shortage list. Item number one is the northeast elementary school, which is in my constituency. Item number two is the Prince Albert St. Anne

addition. Number three is the Humboldt regional high school. Number four is the Qu'Appelle Valley, Lumsden Elementary. And number five is the Saskatoon public school, again in my constituency of Saskatoon Silver Springs in the Arbor Creek area.

I guess, generally to begin with, to the minister, where are we at with those five projects? Can you just update me on what's happened since this list has come out?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I'm advised that we have provided planning money for all of these projects and that they are currently in that planning stage. We'll leave it at that for now.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Specifically on the northeast elementary school with St. Paul's division and also the Arbor Creek with the Saskatoon Public School Division, have you had ongoing correspondence with the boards? And can you give me any more specific information on how the planning is coming along?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I think we all recognize that given the growth in Saskatoon, particularly in the northeast part of the community that there is a need for at least an elementary school of some nature. And I'm not sure that the planning has advanced in terms of whether that's a K to 3 or a K to 5. My understanding is that there's a fair amount of thinking around a K to 5 school at this point.

The two projects that have been identified are the northeast elementary school for St. Paul's Catholic division and the Arbor Creek Saskatoon public. These two are essentially in the same area. And what we'll need to now work with the two boards on is what the potential project will look like and what areas for co-operation we can find between the two boards.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I'm glad to hear that, Mr. Minister. Yes you're correct; they're in two very close areas. Arbor Creek is an area that is almost fully developed now with some 600 children under six years old. Willowgrove is an area that is rapidly developing in Saskatoon. It would have been further along than it is now if the city was able to service more lots this fall which, because of the wet fall, they weren't able to do. But I understand that there's going to be record construction taking place in the Willowgrove area of Saskatoon. So I'm glad to hear that work is being done on both of these schools.

Would the minister care to comment on the likelihood of seeing funding for these schools in the upcoming budget in light of where we're at with the financial situation in the province.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I'm sorry; could you just repeat the last part of your question?

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Would the Minister care to comment of the likelihood of these two requests or these top five or six requests receiving funding in the upcoming budget in light of the financial situation of the province.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — This is a very good question that you ask. I'm not sure at this point as to how much of the list we'll be able to work through. In terms of these projects, they're still

very much in a planning state, and so we need to actually get these costs enumerated and get a good understanding of what the projects are.

As you know, we are currently working through with the two boards in Saskatoon with the west side high school projects and are continuing to make progress on that. I would like to see the planning move forward in terms of both these east side elementary schools because I think, as the member's identified, there's a fairly significant need in terms of the growth of the community. But the boards will need to work together on that, and at this point the funding that's in place is what's required to move the project forward.

I'm not in a position to really articulate what additional funds may be available in the budget this spring. And I'm not sure that putting money into the budget this spring would significantly advance the projects. And so that's what we'll need to work through.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Is there any information that you're waiting for from either of the two Saskatoon boards? Is there anything that, you know, I could as a member for that area encourage the boards to pass along to you? Or are you receiving all information in a timely manner?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — As I understand, the planning process is proceeding fairly well, and both boards are looking at their projects and trying to determine what the right fix and mix of facilities is.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — A couple more short questions, Mr. Minister. Thank you for your indulgence. In late October you received a report from the Saskatoon Public as well as the Saskatoon Catholic and the two Regina boards on the foundation operating grant as I recall. I read the brief, and it was very well done. And I'm just wondering if you have any comments at this time or if you've formally responded to receiving that brief.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I have not formally responded except by meeting with the four boards involved. The brief, as the member will know and I think most members will know, focuses around the disparity in the foundation operating grant as it deals with the largest of our urban boards — the four largest urban boards — and a number of measures that have been taken in the foundation operating grant in the last probably decade or so to build in supports essentially for rural education.

The argument that the urban boards is putting forward is that those supports have created a disparity in terms of the way the urban boards are treated. Undoubtedly there is now a differential on the base per-pupil grant of about \$144 between the rate that the four largest urban boards receive and that which is paid to all other boards in the province. That is a number that we have been able to move down from last year because we were able to take a fairly significant bite out of that differential.

I have told the boards that I am interested in eliminating the differential. I do believe that we should have a basic per-pupil grant system that is the same across the province.

What we are working on with the foundation operating grant

reform however is a complete restructuring of the formula. The formula has been amended and amended and amended over the last 30, 35 years it has been in place to the point now that it's extremely complex. It's not particularly transparent. And boards are having a difficult time understanding as the province puts money in, where it in fact moves through to.

So we are working with not only the urban public boards and the urban Catholic boards, but indeed with all the school boards across the province to try and establish a new foundation operating grant system.

It's my hope that in this budget coming up that we will make some significant progress on dealing with the differential as it's outlined and that for the '07-08 year we'll be in fact able to identify a new foundation operating grant program in consultation with the restructured boards.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm glad to hear that you have indeed met with the boards and are meeting with all boards and look forward to further discussions on this matter.

One final question, Mr. Minister, and Madam Chair, regarding a letter sent to you from the Saskatoon public elementary principals' professional association executive. Many of the members of this body are constituents of Saskatoon Silver Springs, and I received a copy of the letter as the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for the area. It expresses some concerns about the local accountability and partnership panel, and I would just . . . I know the letter was only sent November 21, just over a week ago. And I just would like to hear your comments on the contents of the letter and if you've had a chance to respond at all.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — There have been, as we went through the work with the local accountability panel, there have been a number of issues that have arisen. The panel was, as the members will know, established to make sure that there is a new mechanism in place for the much larger restructured school divisions, a mechanism that allows the local communities to be involved.

For rural members they will be probably more familiar and more comfortable with the mechanism that's been outlined by Craig Melvin and his panel if only because they have had the experience of working with local boards.

What the model recommends is that we establish a community school council — a school community council, well something like this; we haven't quite settled on the name — a council around the community and the school that will have a more direct say in some of the work that goes on in the schools and will help provide a new mechanism to involve parents more directly in.

The work that Craig Melvin had undertaken recommends that there be a role for principals, for parents, for community representatives, and students. In reviewing the work and some of the discussions that we've had with groups across the province, the cabinet has made a few changes to the recommendations of the panel in terms of our response. I don't have the response here to table, but I can certainly make that

available.

The changes that we made were to identify that the principals and a teacher would serve as permanent members of the council. We wanted to make sure that there was a strong academic component on this.

Second of all we wanted to . . . The second, sorry, the second . . . I don't have the paper in front of me, so I'm going by memory. If this doesn't match up with what I said in the House, we'll stick with what I said in the House. But it was in fact to provide a new role for the principals, to add a teacher on to this. We changed the mechanism for selecting the parent representatives because the parents had indicated that they thought the initial recommendation from the Melvin report was too cumbersome. On reviewing and reflecting on that, we agreed that it would be better to do this through a general meeting process which parents seem more comfortable with.

The third issue was to reject the recommendation of the panel which was to abolish all additional organizations associated with the school. What we felt is that the — and there are a number of these different structures across the province, whether it's school councils, whether it's home and school associations, parent-teacher associations — that those should continue to exist and parents should be encouraged to be active in the schools as they see fit.

Those were three main changes that we made to the report that we think will help deal with some of the concerns that we heard not just from principals but also from parents. We are just in the process now of going back to communicate the government's response on this. I should advise members that it's our intention this spring to introduce legislation to enact these changes, and so we'll actually have a full legislative package available for members, I would anticipate certainly, early at the start of the House so that we have an opportunity this spring to review it.

One of the key issues that will be contained in that is the decision, based on the panel's report, to wind down the local boards in rural communities and replace them instead with the community school councils.

I should just indicate that there's one other issue that I have just remembered that we did make a change to, and that was the issue about allowing some flexibility in larger urban communities for grouping of councils. There was some concern particularly in the largest cities that perhaps we would not be well served by having a board attached to every school but perhaps they should be established by neighbourhood. And what we want to be able to do is work with the boards to make sure we've got an appropriate configuration.

The principals, the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], parent organizations I think are generally supportive of the approach outlined in the panel, and I think that we have been able to address many of the concerns that they had outlined.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. That's all, Madam Chair.

The Chair: — Mr. Elhard.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Minister, in the few minutes we have left I would like to ask you about another initiative that is being undertaken by the Department of Learning. If I remember correct, as part of the budget speech presented in the House last spring there was an indication that the department would be conducting a review of student financial assistance, and it was my understanding as of October that the terms of reference for that particular initiative had not been delineated as yet. And there was some concern among student groups that there was some delay in this initiative. Can you give us an indication tonight where your department is at with that particular review.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — We are in fact moving forward with the student financial assistance review and I have embarked on several months now of consultation. I met with the student leadership two weeks ago now. I had to talk about some of the issues that they were interested in addressing, and I am hopeful that we will have in place for the upcoming budget a proposed set of changes to deal with the issues outlined by the students.

There was some hope, indeed I had some hope that we'd be able to have out an interim report. That has not been able to happen for a couple of reasons, not the least of which that we have been caught up in this difficulty around what this \$120 million is from the Layton-Martin money that we have been trying to negotiate with the feds and have not been able to actually get any agreement to move forward on — a promise made certainly by the federal Liberals to commit 120 to student financial assistance and tuition relief over five years.

We have not been able to secure from the feds an agreement to make good on that, for them to make good on that promise. And so that has changed a bit of the dynamic in terms of how we are looking at dealing with the report because it changes some of our fiscal flexibility.

We are still working with the student associations, with our own internal groups to try and model out what some of the changes may look like. And I'm hopeful by January, February to be able to get into a somewhat more detailed discussion with the student leadership about what those changes might look like.

Sorry. If I might just also add, I've also met with the university presidents on this matter.

Mr. Elhard: — I assume, Mr. Minister, that given the fact that the federal government no longer exists and we won't have an election until January 23, that's going to even further exacerbate the \$120 million question. So how are you planning to meet these timelines, these objectives, not knowing whether or not that money will even be available no sooner than January 23, and quite conceivably quite some time after that.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — It's our intention now to essentially move on without much consideration to the 120 million. We'll need to be mindful of how we can incorporate that into the structure after the fact. We have not yet had any negotiation with the federal government about what parameters they want to see on that, and indeed I can tell members that there was a fairly significant discussion among the council of ministers about exactly what the feds were likely to do with this money. There's a fairly significant dispute about what percentage

should be left to provincial . . . should be provided to the provinces in terms of transfer, even targeted transfer versus what should be used by the federal government for spending in their own existing initiatives.

I am not optimistic that we are going to see that money in this fiscal year, and as such my view is that we should simply proceed with the review of student financial assistance as we had initially envisioned it.

Mr. Elhard: — Is there some possibility you could give us an indication of, you know, what types of directions you hope to take this review? Are you looking at providing greater, broader parameters in terms of applications for assistance? Are you maybe looking at increasing the amount of funding? Do you have priorities that you've already established as part of this ongoing consideration?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — There are a number of priority areas that we have considered. I want to be very clear that one of the difficulties in the student financial assistance realm — and I think all members know this from the casework that they're called on to do in their offices — are the parameters of the existing Canada student loan program.

What we are trying to work with is that program as it exists because it is very hard to get amendments to this program. So we'll work with it as it exists. Overtop of that though, what we are trying to figure out is, how is it Saskatchewan's money should interact with this?

Our priorities in the last several years have been to deal with debt relief issues, to make sure we've got additional money targeted to students in high financial need, to deal with accessibility concerns, and to deal with the issue of tuition relief. Those remain our priorities.

As members will know, it's about 10 years ago now that the NDP [New Democratic Party] government restored bursaries to the student financial assistance program. Up to that point, it was entirely a loan-based program. And we have added back in — incrementally as we've put money into the system — more money into the debt reduction scholarship and bursary approach.

Those areas remain our areas of focus and, I think, line up fairly nicely with what both the students and the universities are advocating in terms of changes to the program.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have no further questions.

The Chair: — Are there any more questions of the minister or the estimates of Learning? Seeing none, then Learning, vote 5, post-secondary education (LR11), the sum of 114,600,000.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. K to 12 education (LR03), 1,700,000.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Training programs (LR12), 500,000.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Student support program (LR13), 500,000.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Early learning and child care (LR14), 3,122,000.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — The total of 120,422,000. I need a motion that:

Be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2006, the following sums for Learning, 120,422,000.

Mr. Hagel moves. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Okay then. We are:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2006, 120,422,000 for Learning.

[Vote 5 agreed to.]

The Chair: — I thank the minister and his officials.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to thank the officials for coming out tonight and thank the members for their questions.

General Revenue Fund Supplementary Estimates — November Justice Vote 3

Subvotes (JU04), (JU05), and (JU08)

The Chair: — The next item up for business before the committee are the supplementary estimates for the Department of Justice, found on page 15 of the Supplementary Estimates book.

I invite the minister to introduce himself and his officials.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Madam Chair. At the table with me to my right is Doug Moen, deputy minister of Justice and deputy Attorney General; to his right is Keith Laxdal, associate deputy minister of finance and administration division. To my left is Murray Sawatsky, executive director, law enforcement services.

And at the table behind me is Gord Sisson, director, administrative services. And in the back, Murray Brown, executive director, public prosecutions; Rod Crook, assistant deputy minister, courts and civil justice; Jan Turner, executive director, community justice division; Don McKillop, Crown solicitor, civil law; Darcy McGovern, Crown solicitor, public law; and David Gullickson, senior policy analyst, policy,

planning and evaluation.

The Chair: — Unless the minister has any opening comments, we'll move to questions.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — No, I made them when we were here before.

The Chair: — And very well then. Questions then. Mr. Morgan.

Mr. Morgan: — Minister, when we last met we had discussed some of the initiatives you are taking and you had indicated that there was going to be a number of new police officers. And we have the ongoing debate and discussion about the number of actual police officers that are there. So I will ask sort of all the questions I have and if that makes it easier for your officials to put it.

I would like, from the years 1999 to the present, the number of police officers that were employed and paid for by the Department of Justice, including full-time equivalents. And the number of vacancies in each of the . . . wherever the vacancies might exist. And hopefully that will give us an actual number of numbers in showing the increase year by year.

In addition to that if we knew the dollar expenditure in aggregate for that and what the aggregate expenditure would've been had all vacancies been filled, hopefully with that information we should be able to reconcile it with the numbers used by the Federation of Police Officers.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Well I'll start. Pre police promise, so the budget of 1998-1999, the province funded 13 municipal police officers at a cost of \$1.2 million. That would be 13 positions.

The police promise and I'll break this down another way but just quickly, into 2006. And as I've advised the legislature, we don't expect all these officers to be on the street until about October 2006 because of the time it will take to train and deploy them. But there are 54 municipal police officers, 136 RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], 10 safer communities and neighbourhoods, for a total of 200, and at funding of \$14.348 million.

As well, announced during this sitting of the legislature are police officers for the gang suppression strategy: 1 municipal officer that's to Prince Albert, 13 RCMP for a total of 14. And 8 police officers to the missing persons initiative: 2 municipal, that would be Regina and Saskatoon; 6 RCMP, as again as I said, for a total of 8. Project Hope has 6 RCMP officers. That's around the area of drug enforcement

And that takes provincially funded positions from 1999, because it's 1998-99 budget, to 2006-2007 to 241, at a cost of . . . or funding of approximately \$18 million.

Now it might help at some point if members of the opposition advised which of those officers that come to an aggregate cost \$18 million they're not counting. But I'll go through it in a different way and this will cover the police promise. It won't cover the 13 officers that were pre the promise.

For the RCMP. In 2000-2001 there were 16 new positions at a cost of \$1.280 million. In the 2001-2002 there were 4 new positions and that's directly to the violent crime analysis section and 5 other positions for a total of 9 at a cost of \$720,000.

In 2002-2003 there were 6 positions for First Nations policing and I believe there'd be some cost sharing there with the federal government, and 6 other RCMP positions for 12 positions for a cost to the province of \$880,000.

There were 61 positions funded in 2002-2003 to the RCMP that were filled in 2001-2002 at a cost of \$3.680 million; 2003-2004, 5 new positions to the RCMP at a cost of \$450,000; 2004-2005, new First Nations policing positions at a cost of \$500,000 — 5 positions; 2005-2006, 9 RCMP officers in northern communities, 1 officer assigned to recruiting and that would be particularly recruiting and retention of Aboriginal police officers, and 1 officer assigned to the cadet corps, which is a program that we'd be quite willing to discuss if the committee has time. That's 11 officers in total for a cost of \$800,000.

And the 2006-2007, and that's part of the 29 that has been announced mid-term to the RCMP; 17 of those 29 are being attributed; 9 First Nations; again 8 provincial policing, half-year funding is \$750,000.

So the total increase to the RCMP . . . These are new positions. These are not filling vacancies. They are not filling retirement positions. And I'm not sure that that's the argument of the Saskatchewan police federation in any case. The total increase to the RCMP is 136 positions, slightly over \$9 million. And some of the positions are more expensive for the province than others because some of those positions are partially federally funded.

Now in respect to municipal police officers. In 2000-2001 grants to Regina, Saskatoon, and North Battleford: 9 officers at a cost of \$720,000.

2001-2002 grants to Regina, Saskatoon, North Battleford, for 5 positions, grants for SHOW. Now that's serious habitual offenders program. Regina and Saskatoon, 1 each; that's 2 positions. Grants for serious crime to P.A., Moose Jaw, Estevan, and Weyburn — I'm sorry, P.A. is Prince Albert of course — 4 positions, 1 each to Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Estevan, and Weyburn. That's 11 positions, municipal positions, in 2001-2002, a cost of \$880,000.

2002-2003 grants for 14 municipal officers at a cost of \$1.120 million; 2003-2004 grants for 5 municipal officers, 2 to Regina, 2 to Saskatoon, 1 to Prince Albert — that's 5 positions, \$450,000. 2005-2006 grants for municipal officers, 2 to Regina, 2 to Saskatoon, and 1 to Prince Albert — 5 positions in total, \$450,000.

And then 2006-2007 grants to municipal officers, that's 4 for Regina, 6 to Saskatoon — that's part of the 29 recently announced — half-year funding, \$450,000. Now that's 10 officers. And I know that 17 RCMP and the 10 municipal only take you to 27, but we're coming to that. So that's 54 municipal officers since the 1999 commitment at a cost to the province of \$4.070 million a year.

In 2004-2005 we began funding the safer communities initiatives, 4 officers in that year, at a cost of \$323,000. 2005-2006 an additional 2 officers at \$215,000; 2 officers or investigators added as additions to the Premier's . . . or part of the Premier's Project Hope, \$200,000. And then as part of the 29 police officers announced at mid-term to safer communities and neighbourhoods investigators at a cost of \$90,000, half year funding again. So total increase in police officers since 1999-2000, 200 at a cost of approximately \$14 million.

Now of those officers since the last election, I believe there's been 80 out of that . . . well and that 80 takes you up to 222 because on the police commitment in the 2004-2005 budget there were 9. And the 2005-2006 budget, there were 18. Two added in Project Hope. Twenty-nine added mid-year this fall for a subtotal of 58. And then of course the 8 for the missing women initiative, the 14 for the gang suppression — that makes 80 officers since the last election, since the government was re-elected.

Mr. Morgan: — Minister, the municipalities in the province that have RCMP detachments, how are those officers paid for?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Some would be municipal officers. Some would be provincial officers that are stationed in the community. So we'd need the community that you're interested in; we could tell you how many were municipal and how many were provincial.

Mr. Morgan: — If we had a provincial officer in one of those, who would pay that individual's salary?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — The province and the federal government.

Mr. Morgan: — And then the municipal officers would be paid for 100 per cent by the municipality?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — It might be clearer if, after considerable discussion here at the table with officials, if the member restated the question and if Mr. Sawatsky, who is executive director of law enforcement services, try to provide the answer.

Mr. Morgan: — This isn't really difficult. This is something I've been asking for two years, and I don't care how many times I have to ask. I want to know how many police officers there were in the province before '98-99, and I want to know how many there are now, and how many were vacant. And 13 isn't an answer. I mean there is probably 13 in Rosetown alone. I mean we've got police officers that are paid by this province all over the province. And that's what the federation of police officers is saying is that when you hired this hundred and some thousand new . . . hundred and some whatever officers, that they're going to backfill vacancies that were in the police force across the province.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — The member asked a different question than the one I was referring to Mr. Sawatsky, and it was a question that we went through in depth last year when he asked it. It was quite a long, in my opinion, answer. And I want to update numbers from that year.

When this question was asked last year, Madam Chair, I

provided . . . and I'll try to do it shorter and quicker this year than last year because it's obviously on the record already. The utilization of police positions funded by Saskatchewan Justice in 1999-2000 were 755 RCMP, 13 municipal police services. Now those would have been the 13 pre-police commitment, okay, for a total of 768.

2005-2006, and we've made considerable progress since . . . 2005-2006 as I've reported, 858 RCMP positions being funded by Saskatchewan Justice, 57 municipal police services being funded, 6 conversion of police officers from provost duty — that would be court duty, I think — and 6 safer communities investigation unit, for a total of 927, which made 159 new police officers.

Since 2005-2006 we've announced 29 more police officers towards police commitment specifically, 4 more safer communities and neighbourhoods investigators, and 22 officers, 8 towards missing persons initiative and 14 towards the gang suppression strategy, for a total of 55 — which takes the number of officers funded by the province over 1999 to 214, which is 14 in excess of the commitment.

Mr. Morgan: — Of the 768 were there, in addition to that, positions that were vacant anywhere in the province? By that I'm meaning positions that had funds budgeted for them but for people that had quit, been terminated, retired, that had not yet been filled. What I'm talking about is a vacant position that had funds allocated for it.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — The 768 positions, as I understand it, were funded positions in 1999-2000. If there were vacancies there, I mean they were being funded. Those positions were being funded. The 920 . . . well the 159 as of 2005-2006, the 214, if you calculate it this way, as of 2006-2007, those aren't . . . That's new funding for new positions.

Mr. Morgan: — Okay. Well I'd like to go back to the '98-99 numbers again. At any given time when you've got a workforce of several hundred people like that, you have people that have quit, resigned, retired, whatever. So I'm wondering how many of the 768 were vacant or whether the 768, whether that was the payroll amount.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Well I don't think we know exactly how many vacancies there would have been. As the member points out, because of retirements and leaves, there's always vacancies. I don't know if we can determine how many vacancies there were at any given time or on average over a fiscal year. The new positions I've talked about, the funding I've talked about, it's all been incremental funding — new funding.

Mr. Morgan: — I appreciate that those are people that have been hired that have been added to the police force. Our concern is that in . . . when at the starting point there may well have been a large number or significant . . . [inaudible] . . . number of those 768 that might have been vacant. And then in each given year there would have been, of the 768 starting number, there would have been some that would have retired, quit, terminated, whatever else through the course of that year, and we don't know how many of these are backfilling the positions that are there.

So what I'm trying to establish is a global number. And it's important for the starting point whether we know that the 768 is what was being paid or what was authorized and then what the vacancies were. Because the concern the police federation has is that a significant number of the new forces, the new hires — and we're appreciative of the new hires, of course — but has gone to backfill either existing vacancies or vacancies that have occurred during this six- or seven-year period.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — And again I guess the best I can . . . Well first of all I again pose the question: which officers that I've given the funding for does the member think don't actually exist?

The fact of the situation is that in 1999-2000 the province funded 768 officers, and I've given a breakdown.

There were no cutbacks. And then backfilling to that, there's been incremental increase. And I've gone through and provided, I think, the number, the amount for the cost of the officers in each of those years, both by RCMP and by municipal.

Mr. Morgan: — I wonder if it might be appropriate for you to have some discussion with the ministers and maybe give us a written response on this because I will get to the bottom of this eventually.

And it doesn't matter to me if I have to come in and spend a week of evenings going through it detachment by detachment, municipality by municipality, and go into the actual names or numbers of the positions that are in each one which I don't want to do. But I need to be able to reconcile the minister's numbers with the numbers given to us by the police federation.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Well I welcome the member to undergo or undertake whatever research he wants to undertake.

When he's referring to detachments, he has to appreciate that the RCMP manage their money in a global way. And when we discuss budget with them and provide them with funds and we provide them with new funding for new officers, we have a record of what new funding we've provided for new officers. But they manage the budget that they negotiated with the province for provincial policing as they see most appropriate.

Mr. Morgan: — So what you're saying now is that you give the money to the RCMP, and you don't know if those officers really exist. We don't verify that there is, for each of those positions that the province pays for, an actual body there that's doing the work.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — As we've gone through today and previously — in every year from the budget year of 2000-2001 immediately following the 1999 commitment, up to 2006-2007 — funding has been provided for additional officers to the RCMP.

Now some of these are designated to particular positions. I mentioned as examples of that the ViCLAS positions, the violent crime analysis positions, the recruitment officer, perhaps some of the First Nations positions are properly in that category. Certainly the officer in respect to the cadet corps is in that category.

The other funding is more global funding. And how the RCMP fulfills its contract with the province to provide policing across the province is to a certain extent, to a certain large extent up to the RCMP as long as they fulfill that contract.

Mr. Morgan: — And the Department of Justice has no method of monitoring what's done with those funds. It's a global payment to them. And if they choose not to hire officers, to buy police cars or whatever else with them, that's something that the province doesn't review, monitor, audit, and . . .

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — This is a provincial police force, part of a national police service as the member is aware. It is commanded by an assistant commissioner out of Regina. And no, we don't micromanage how they spend money on police cars or personnel.

Mr. Morgan: — So you've stood up every year that you've been Justice minister and your predecessors have stood up and made announcements about the number of officers and new officers that you've hired, but you have never gone back and confirmed with the RCMP that they actually hired that number of officers. That your answer is, well there's a commissioner there, and that's good enough.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — We do get from the RCMP a global utilization rate. The numbers that I gave the member — well I gave the committee — in respect to the 755 officers in 1999-2000 and the 858 officers again funded by the province in 2005-2006 reflects that globalization report. So we're confident that the additional funding for additional police officers has been spent on that.

Mr. Morgan: — Is that something that the department is prepared to provide going back to that year?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — We can send you a note on the utilization rates.

Mr. Morgan: — Are you prepared to provide us with a copy of the information you get from the RCMP on each of those years?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — We can provide the same kind of detail that we provided last year in this respect.

Mr. Morgan: — Minister, I can do a freedom of information request, and you can decide whether you want to provide that or not, and you can take whatever criticism there is. If there is information that comes from the RCMP as to how they utilize their funds, I can't imagine where you would decide or have the right to say that that's not something that should be available to the public. It's taxpayers' dollars. The public should know. The police federation should know. And I would have real difficulty in accepting that that's not something that you're going to provide readily.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Okay. Well we will undertake to see what we can provide in respect to the utilization rates over those relevant years.

The Chair: — Excuse me, Mr. Morgan. To the minister, if you are going to provide reports to the committee, would you give 15 copies through the Chair to the Clerk of the committee.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Yes.

The Chair: — Thanks.

Mr. Morgan: — I want to be clear that I do have an undertaking that you will provide copies of the information provided to you by the RCMP for each of those years back to '98. You referred to it as a globalization summary or some words to that effect.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — We'll provide the summaries we do have.

Mr. Morgan: — This would be the information that you have received from the RCMP?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — If we have the original RCMP reports, we'll provide them.

Mr. Morgan: — Okay so we have your undertaking that you will look for them and provide us with the copies of the information you've received from the RCMP going back to 1998-1999 as far as utilization and staffing. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Okay the officials think they can do that. The information has been provided in a more, I don't know, specific way in recent years.

Mr. Morgan: — Minister, I think you can understand the frustration that the opposition and the federation of police officers is having in trying to get this information. This is something that I would think your department would want to be forthright with and would want to be able to say, this is the number of officers that we've got, that we're paying for. We pay for them by whatever the cost-sharing agreement is in total and that this is the number of vacancies that we have.

It would make abundant sense if you were able to provide a spreadsheet of what's happened to it. Now that, I realize, is not something that your department is obliged to do. But you can certainly understand the frustration that's there with, you know . . . when you watch how long we've been tonight to get to somewhere where we've got an undertaking to provide some particulars of what the RCMP is doing with those funds.

And having said all of that, we are grateful that there has been a significant increase in the number of police officers that have been hired and paid for by the province. We as an opposition party recognize the importance of having police officers on the street. And we know that everywhere we have seen a significant increase in a number of officers on the street, we note that there is a marked reduction in crime. We feel that having front-line officers is one of the best ways to reduce crime in our province. So we want to encourage the province to do that.

But we will want to hold the government to task to make sure that the numbers that they're using are accurate numbers and that we're not getting some kind of a shell game, that this is how many we hired because we're replacing somebody that retired, moved on, or whatever else, or the people that came out of the police college.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Madam Chair, I do want to return to

what new funding has been provided and over what period of time. Again in 1998-1999, \$1.2 million for 13 positions. From 1999 . . . or from 2000-2001 more accurately, that budget year, to the 2006-2007 budget year, 200 positions at \$14.348 million.

In respect to gang suppression, 14 positions. In respect to missing persons, 8 positions. In respect to Project Hope, 6 positions. And the total cost of the 241 new positions funded by the province is almost \$18 million. These are not, the \$18 million is not to fill positions for retirees. This is new provincial funding. It's resulted in new police officers. And however you calculate it — and we've calculated it a couple of different ways — in excess of 200 new officers since the 1999 commitment.

Mr. Morgan: — Minister, I just want to get so that I know the number of bodies that were there. You can talk about dollars. And I don't know whether the dollars are going to build a new detachment, to buy a new police car, to pay for a cost-of-living adjustment, or whatever other things that are there, and I'm sure they're all valid things that they're doing — at least I certainly hope that they do.

What I want to do is satisfy myself and be able to satisfy the citizens of this province that whatever number of police officers we had and we had authorized for the year 1999 that we've got at least 200 more now. And I hope that I can be able to say sometime that that's a commitment that finally been met. And then probably I will be asking you to increase that commitment to a further amount because we know that it's absolutely necessary.

Mr. Minister and Madam Chair, I would like to move on to a slightly different but related issue dealing with fighting organized crime. I would like to ask about whether the minister is aware of a plan that was submitted by the Criminal Intelligence Service of Saskatchewan for fighting organized crime within the last three years and have you had an opportunity to read that report?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Madam Chair, the Criminal Intelligence Services of Saskatchewan have provided an updated plan, updated strategy in respect to gang suppression and crime suppression. And it's updated in this respect in that, earlier in this year, there was a proof of concept — what some people might call a pilot project — conducted in Regina. And it was partially funded by the province of Saskatchewan. I believe 7, \$8,000 funding came from the province of Saskatchewan.

Following that proof of concept, Criminal Intelligence Services Saskatchewan approached the government about the success of the proof of concept and what would be required to broaden and extend that strategy across the province and going onward into the future. And that is the strategy that has been announced by the government.

It involves, as I've said, 14 police positions and two designated prosecutors. So the government has responded to the submission of the Criminal Intelligence Services Saskatchewan, first of all in contributing to the funding of the proof of concept earlier this year and then implementing the strategy following the proof of concept report this fall.

Mr. Morgan: — Minister, they actually in fact have submitted more than one proposal in the last three years, and the reality of it is the proposals have been cut back. How many proposals have actually been submitted to deal with organized crime and crime suppression during the last three years?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — The plan that was submitted this fall, I understand, is a revised plan to the one that was submitted three years ago and revised in part based upon the experience in the proof of concept which, as I say, was in part funded by the province as it was a six-month initiative.

Mr. Morgan: — So the reality of it is, Minister, the proposal was initially submitted, watered down, and then watered down again so that there was actually three separate proposals. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I don't accept the member's terminology around watering down. The Criminal Intelligence Service Saskatchewan made some choices about what they thought worked coming out of the proof of concept, and that's what the government is proceeding with.

The Government of Saskatchewan will invest \$745,000 this year, with ongoing funding of more than \$2 million annually to expand suppression of gang activity in Saskatchewan. The strategy includes increased personnel in policing and prosecutions as well as operational funding for activities such as wiretap surveillance and execution of search warrants. This strategy is the province-wide implementation of an initiative piloted by Criminal Intelligence Services Saskatchewan, Regina, beginning in early 2005.

And again that's the initiative that was funded by the province to the amount of about \$78,000. During that pilot period, 50 search warrants were executed resulting in 112 persons charged with 361 Criminal Code offences. And as we've heard, more than half a million dollars in drugs, cash, and stolen property was seized.

So I think the value of the proof of concept program allowed both Criminal Intelligence Services and the provincial government to more precisely determine what resources would be needed for a province-wide gang suppression strategy.

This does not go back a matter of weeks, Madam Chair. This goes back for some period of time on the part of the provincial government. In 1988-1999 the department began funding municipal police, four positions to combat organized crime. These are called serious crime units.

Over the years, additional resources were provided, and the department is now funding 20 positions to deal with organized crime or serious crime activity in the province. Strong partnerships exist between the integrated RCMP and municipal police services in Weyburn, Estevan, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert, where both the RCMP and municipal resources work together to gather criminal intelligence and conduct enforcement activity.

So the provincial government's involvement in funding officers specifically directed to organized crime goes back now to 1998. The initiative that's been announced this fall, based on the proof

of concept, is an intensification of that program. But there has been (a) a coordinated organized crime strategy on the part of police for a number of years and (b) provincial funding for that program. As a matter of fact that's where the funding has come for these serious crime units.

Mr. Morgan: — Minister, you said you took issue with the term watered down. Actually I had a somewhat more aggressive term. I'd like you to answer the question: how much was the first proposal going to cost, and how much was the final proposal funded for?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I don't have the original proposal from the police, but that certainly would have been before the proof of concept which again, as I say, was funded in part by the province of Saskatchewan. After that proof of concept in determining what worked within the selected area and within the selected time period, the police came back to the province with a proposal as to what would be needed to implement that success . . . have that kind of success across the province that they had with the proof of concept. That's the strategy that the provincial government has decided to fund.

I know from my discussions with the police leadership — and I think particularly Deputy Chief Weighill volunteered at the announcement of the proclamations of one of the pieces of legislation — the enthusiasm that police leadership have with the gang suppression strategy.

Mr. Morgan: — Minister, I think anybody that's receiving something will always say thank you, and they would be shabby if they didn't. The issue that I'm trying to raise is how much the plan was cut back because people were told that it was too rich. And perhaps you'd ask your officials . . . The original proposal was 13 and a half million dollars. Perhaps if you want to ask your officials whether that appears to be a correct number.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Given the success of the proof of concept proposal then . . .

Mr. Morgan: — I didn't ask that. All I wanted to know was whether the original . . .

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Madam Chair, I wasn't done answering the question.

Mr. Morgan: — . . . CISS [Criminal Intelligence Service Saskatchewan] proposal was 13 and a half million dollars.

The Chair: — Mr. Morgan.

Mr. Morgan: — It's a question that can be answered with a yes or a no.

The Chair: — Please allow the minister to finish his answer before you interrupt with another question. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Madam Chair, government is about making choices. And if the government chooses not to spend \$13 million on a gang suppression strategy, that's not a cutback. That's a government choice. The government has chosen to add 14 police officers and specifically trained police officers, specific types of police officers, and two designated Crown

prosecutors to the problem of organized crime. And that is a significant commitment to the problem.

Mr. Morgan: — I would like your confirmation, Minister, that the original proposal was \$13.5 million.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — \$13 million isn't quite right, Madam Chair. There was \$5 million already being funded by the provincial government that fell within the proposal or within the plan. So the new funding requested would be about \$8 million in that plan.

Mr. Morgan: — So the total that they were looking for was 13.5, and you're saying that 5 was existing money, 8.5 was new money? Is that a fair. . .

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — No that's not what I said. What I said there was \$5 million already being provided, so the new money that would have been \$8 million.

Mr. Morgan: — Okay. And that original proposal and the subsequent ones I take it the department is not willing to share?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — We had these concerns, Madam Chair, with that suggestion. These are confidential documents prepared by the police, and there is some expectation on their part that they were confidential and to be read by the people they were prepared for.

And secondly the proposals go into more detail about surveillance and gang suppression than the announcements that either the police or the government have made about this strategy . . . and don't necessarily want them, the police don't necessarily want them circulated.

Mr. Morgan: — I appreciate the need for protecting ongoing investigations and police methodology. Is your department willing to provide copies of the documents that would show dollar amounts and with some sections deleted? Would they be willing to vet the document? And my question will be the same for each of the three successive ones that are there.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — As opposed to releasing sensitive material — edited as it might be — what I think I will undertake to do is provide a more exact number than my estimate of \$8 million and provide the exact number of new dollars.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Minister, it's our understanding that the police are consenting to the release. I don't want to pit you against the police officers or police departments in the province, but my understanding is that the request that it be kept confidential was from your department rather than from the police departments, so correct me if I'm wrong.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Madam Chair, we'll inquire as to the view of criminal investigation services of Saskatchewan in this respect.

Mr. Morgan: — And please understand this, if the police officers, if the chiefs feel that it's imperative that it be kept confidential, we would invite the minister to have some discussion with them as to what portions of the report could be

. . . we'd certainly want to be supportive of the initiatives that are put forward by our police officers and our police chiefs through the province.

Mr. Minister, I would like to talk about some of the issues with hiring police officers. And you'd indicated you were going to give us some numbers. And we're concerned about police officer recruitment and retention. And has the department undertaken any kind of province-wide recruitment or retention strategy? I note in particular that some of the municipal police officers are now at a point where they're advertising with bumper stickers to try and recruit. So I'm wondering if the province is giving some assistance for that.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Madam Chair, when I was going through the list of additional police funding since 1999, I mentioned specifically a recruitment officer for the RCMP. The \$50,000 in the supplementary estimates is for a recruitment officer for municipal police services. That's the funding that we wanted to spend prior to the new budget year to assist municipalities in their recruitment of the additional officers that they're receiving under the police commitment, and specifically to a system with diversity hiring and diversity recruitment.

Mr. Morgan: — Missing person task force was announced. Is the target of that to try and locate missing Aboriginal women because that's an initiative of Women of the Dawn who've been working and doing work. Or is it missing children or all missing persons?

And I'm wondering how many people that the department has targeted are missing in this province and sort of what the focus of that is.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — The focus of the missing persons initiative is on 82 cases where there's not been a resolution.

Mr. Morgan: — Eighty-two specific cases?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Eighty-two cases.

Mr. Morgan: — All adults?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — No. And I can give a break down for the RCMP . . . or that the RCMP has provided a database. First . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes it is all police because it's all 82. So the one I'm about to give you is all 82 cases and the breakdown of them.

Mr. Morgan: — Is there a list of the actual files of the names of the missing people? And I don't know whether the department is going to make that list public or not. I presume they might; I don't know.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Well I'll provide the information I have, Madam Chair. By gender, 54 of the missing people out of the 82 are male. Twenty-eight are female. Of the males, by race, 29 are Caucasian; 23 are Aboriginal, and two are unknown. Of the females, 11 are Caucasian; 17 are Aboriginal, and zero are unknown.

Under 20 — and that's the best breakdown I can give on children to the member — there are 10 males under 20, 6

females under 20 for a total of 16. Between the ages of 20 and 30: 10 males, 10 females for a total of 20. And over 30: 34 male, 12 female for a total of 46.

Foul play is suspected in 13 of the male cases and 18 of the female cases. These 82 — what we would call — historical cases are over a 60-year period leading up to 6 months ago.

Mr. Morgan: — Which organizations are participating in the task force?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — If you want to be . . . You're not talking about police organizations on the police end?

Mr. Morgan: — I'm assuming the police forces and the officers that have specifically been designated. I presume as well that you would work with some of the NGOs [non-governmental organization].

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — In respect to both the development of a policy and protocol to standardize receipt of reports and investigations of missing person cases and in respect to strengthening partnerships amongst government police agencies, communities to support families and committees, to identify and respond to missing persons cases . . . we have and will continue to be consulting with — and perhaps among others but certainly these — the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Women's Commission of Saskatchewan, Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation, Child Find Saskatchewan, Women of the Dawn, and STOPS [Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions].

Mr. Morgan: — How come you wouldn't have consulted with Child Find or Women of the Dawn before you made the announcement? I understand there was no consultation with either one of them.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I understand there was communication with them before the announcement.

Mr. Morgan: — With both those organizations?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Well between officials in my department and those organizations, yes.

Mr. Morgan: — I talked to somebody from Child Find Saskatchewan. They tell me the first they heard about it was when they heard it in the media after your announcement.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — That may be true for the person you talked to. I don't know. I would have no way of knowing that.

Mr. Morgan: — Perhaps you could just check with your officials and find out when the contact was made and who the person was because I think my information is pretty accurate.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I can confirm now that officials of my department were speaking to members of the organization of Child Find prior to the announcement.

Mr. Morgan: — You can't even give me dates or times? I'm told there was a hurry-up phone call afterward saying, oh don't worry. You'll be consulted. We'll work with you. My

expectation would have been that there would have been some more consultation to determine what their needs are, how they would participate, what their role might have been in the task force.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Madam Chair, we can provide the member or the committee both with a note as to when the communication was made and to whom in Child Find prior to the announcement.

Mr. Morgan: — If you provide that to the committee, then it's available for everyone. It forms part of the record. Madam Chair, I don't have any further questions at this time.

The Chair: — Seeing no further questions then, we'll move to vote the Justice supplementary estimates on page 15. Justice vote 3, legal and policy services (JU04), \$110,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — The community justice (JU05), 1,100,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Boards and commissions (JU08), 2,900,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — We move that we have . . .

Be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2006, the following sum, 4,111,000 for Justice.

Can I have a motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That's carried. Who moved the motion? Mr. Borgerson. Thank you, and thanks to the minister and his officials.

[Vote 3 agreed to.]

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — November
Health
Vote 32**

Subvotes (HE01) and (HE03)

The Chair: — Next item up for business is Health, the supplementary estimates for Health found on page 13 of the Supplementary Estimates book. I invite the minister to introduce himself and his officials.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Madam Chair. My name is Graham Addley, Minister for Healthy Living Services. Joining us today will be John Wright, deputy minister; to the left, Mike Shaw, associate deputy minister; Lawrence Krahn, assistant

deputy minister; Duncan Fisher, assistant deputy minister; Carla Bolen from community care branch; Ted Warawa, executive director of finance and administration; and Leslie Grob, assistant to the deputy minister.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — And I'm John Nilson, the Minister of Health.

The Chair: — Neither one of you have an opening statement, I presume.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — No we're a continuation from a previous day.

The Chair: — We'll move to questions then. Mr. Toth.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Chair, Mr. Minister, and your officials. A couple of questions, one of them regarding surgical wait lists, and some of the expenditures that you're calling for in Health. And first of all, Mr. Minister, who can call the surgical wait list to see where they are on the list? Can individuals themselves call?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well there is a place where people, if they have questions or concerns about the surgical wait list, they can call about themselves. And that person can check and explain how the system works.

But there's two things. There's the access to people who can provide information about how the system works. And then there's a website with information, or some of the brochures. Then there's a surgical registry which is run by, well, effectively the doctors and the specialists and the senior administrators. And the access to that is limited to the surgeons and the administrators. And there's more access now with some of the GPs [general practitioner] in some areas.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. The reason I ask the question, it just came into my office this afternoon, and I'll get back to you with more information tomorrow. But a gentleman has been waiting for surgery, talked to the specialist who told him to call 1-866-622-0222 to see where he was on the waiting list. And he was told never to phone there again. So that's why I'm wondering. It was my understanding with the surgical waiting list — or this waiting list — that people could call to kind of see where they're at.

So what I can do is get some more information to you tomorrow and follow up and find out what's happened here. I believe the individual was talking to the specialist who was trying . . . He's got his hands tied too. And I guess he was trying to, in this way, help him find out how they could address his needs sooner.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Okay well I'm not sure. But if you can give me the information and that number, then we'll check that out. But I assume maybe they phoned right into the scheduling people as opposed to the people who usually respond to patients about issues. And if you can have the doctor's name, that would be very helpful as well.

Mr. Toth: — Okay I'll do that. Thank you.

I have another issue. Now this is becoming a very serious issue.

And, Mr. Minister, I was just chatting earlier with some officials, and you weren't there, as well. But prior to 1982, the NDP government of Allan Blakeney actually put a moratorium on home care, heavy-care bed construction in the province of Saskatchewan. There just were no additional beds. Through the '80s we added a number.

But in the last . . . at least a year and even more recently I've had a number of calls that are coming from families who are trying to deal with aged patients. For example one, a daughter, 72 years old, dealing with her 100-year-old mother, had made application to go in the nursing home. Basically the person doing the assessment has told this 72-year-old daughter, two things that she actually told her. If you left the community, we could provide more home care. Or, she was also told, or if you don't like the care we're giving, put her into private care.

This happens to be in the community of Wolseley, and I know there are a number of beds that are not being utilized right now in the Wolseley care home. And when I chatted to the lady doing the assessment she's indicating, well whenever I've seen her she looks like she's in pretty good . . . you know, looking after herself quite well. And yet even some of the home care givers are saying that this lady needs a little more constant care than she has and which they cannot give.

Another couple had similar circumstances that finally put their aged parent in a private care bed when there are beds available. But from what I understand the regional health system is saying, we don't have the funding for it.

And then just recently another situation, and as I was told this morning, well the mother is . . . and this couple are caring for the husband's mother and the wife's mother-in-law. Physically she can get around very well, but mentally she's having problems. The one of the problems she's facing that she's got . . . this lady is already in diapers. And it just seems to me, Mr. Minister, we're at a situation where families are really becoming frustrated. They are making inquiries, and they're getting nowhere as to how they address the needs of these aging parents and the facts that there are beds available in the communities, and they're told, well there's no funding for those beds.

How do we respond to those concerns?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well there are a couple of different things here. Basically the assessment process used in the health care system deals with people where they are and assesses them as to what level of care they require. And as you know, level 3 and 4 care we provide in the long-term care facilities throughout the province. So people are, if they're assessed at level 3 or level 4 care, then they would have access to facilities. Level 1 and level 2 care is personal care homes, and people have access to those. Not every community has a personal care home or facilities like that. But those are not funded and are not part of the provincial health system.

Another point you make I think is that there are beds. Beds is one way of describing what happens in health care. But we all know that if you have a bed in a facility, that actually means staff to provide service to that bed. So really the issue is what kind of staffing is available in a particular community.

But I think the main response when people are having questions about the assessments is to go back with further information to the people who are doing the assessments, and that's where the answers are provided.

Mr. Toth: — Well I guess, Mr. Minister, and I know a number of my colleagues want in too because they could take this on much further, but I just want to wrap it up by saying it just seems to me, Mr. Minister, we've moved from . . . and not to take away from the fact that years ago there was a fair bit of care, level 1 and 2 homes were built. There were a lot of level 1 and 2.

A lot of that has been taken care now in a number of communities that put up actually some private . . . not necessarily private care, but Sask Housing has worked together with communities and put up seniors' low rental housing which is really, I think, proving beneficial in these communities because it provides home care service to these individuals in these units much more efficiently than running from home to home to home. And so that's working well.

But we are finding a great difficulty as we've moved away from 1 and 2, even the lower levels of care and for level 3 care in nursing homes. We've moved that out of there. But what I'm finding is situations where we're talking of very heavy care and yet the lack of ability to access this care.

And it seems that whether it's the assessors . . . I don't know. But I know in speaking to a couple of people who do assessments, I've been challenged . . . well if you can do my job better than I can. But I'll tell you, some of the comments they're making to individuals trying to deal with family members and having them close . . . It looks to me, Mr. Minister, that this government is basically saying you look after your own parents; we're not prepared to look after them anymore. And that's kind of, that's the impression that people are getting when they're talking to regional health districts as to how the care and accessing this care.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well that may be your opinion. I don't agree with it. I think that the assessors that we have throughout the system do a very good job of working with families and with people. And so if you have any specific questions or concerns about specific incidents, I'd be happy to take that information as I've told you before and check that out.

But I would say as a blanket statement I disagree with what you say.

Mr. Toth: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. One final comment and the fact is I've asked these individuals to write you directly, and when those letters are coming in . . . and we will be following up because . . . I agree with you; I'm not going to sit here and argue about the fact that what I've been told . . . I've asked for letters directly, so we can deal with that in that way, and hopefully we can start to resolve some of the issues out there. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I look forward to receiving the information so that we can check this out. But I think we need to applaud the good work that's done by the assessors in long-term care throughout the province. It's not an easy job,

and we have many experienced people I think who do a very good job.

The Chair: — Mr. McMorris.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a number of questions, and also we have a number of other MLAs that are going to want questions after I'm done that will take us the full hour and a half that we had allotted, even though we started a little late.

The first question, and I started with this question last week about the hearing aid . . . proclamation of The Hearing Aid Sales and Services Act. If you could just give me . . . we talked a little bit maybe even after the meeting, but if you could tell me where that Act is at. It was passed in 1999, but has not yet been proclaimed. I guess I wonder why the wait of six years and where it's at right now.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — We don't have an exact date, but I know that the final regulations are being drafted right now in conjunction with the Health department and the Justice lawyers. We have agreement with the speech and language pathologists' professional organization as well as the Saskatchewan hearing implement practitioners' association.

There has been quite a bit of discussion back and forth because one of the very interesting things about this legislation is that it includes protection like The Consumer Protection Act — which is a completely different piece of legislation around products — at the same time as it deals with professional-like legislation. And so it's been a rather complicated process to get everything right.

We have the agreements about how we should go forward. And we're just getting the final wording and anticipate that it won't be very many more months.

Mr. McMorris: — So it would be fair to say that it will be months and not years.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Exactly.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay. The other question that I just briefly mentioned last week before we went into other issues was the Butler heart transplant patient who was taken to Edmonton in a converted bus. The family had an awful lot of concerns with the way that whole process went. Has the department reviewed that whole transfer and changed any policies regarding that whole process?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — As I explained before, this was a situation where we needed something substantially bigger than our medivac planes that we use here. And normally we have access to the National Defence airplanes that are larger, the cargo planes. At the particular time that this was required, there didn't appear to be access to a National Defence plane.

And so as another measure to make sure that all the equipment and the patient made it to Edmonton for the treatment, they used their emergency bus facility. This took a number of hours. But it still took a lot less hours than it would have to have waited for a military plane.

What's happened since that time is that officials have worked closely with National Defence to get clear information as to where all their planes would be at any particular time and making sure that they understand that, when there's a request like this that comes through that's very urgent, that they need to provide us with the information as it relates to the whole country, and not just the Prairie region or this region.

Mr. McMorris: — So there is a protocol in place then, I would say, that . . . well I guess I'm asking you. Is there a protocol in place that, in the event that this happens again, that these are the steps that are going to be followed? Because there was some discrepancy I remember with the whole issue about whether the Defence department was contacted or when it was contacted, and whether the plane was available, whether they were being fixed. There was some discrepancies in a few people's stories. Certainly it was covered in the media, and some of those discrepancies were highlighted.

But one of the things that I remember most of that is that it didn't seem like there was a strict protocol that the department or health district — I guess depending on the severity of the case — had to follow in the event of this case happening again.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — My understanding is that there is a strict protocol around how to do this. But I think I'll let Mr. Duncan Fisher give you the more detailed answer on that.

Mr. Fisher: — The protocol involves first primarily the RHA [regional health authority] identifying that they need an airplane. That identification would follow their determination that the individual can't be taken by road ambulance. So once they decide that air transport is the best option or the preferred option, they would contact Saskatchewan Air Ambulance. Air ambulance would determine the needs of the patient and whether all the personnel, the physicians, the profusionists, things like that, whether they can all fit onto the Saskatchewan Air Ambulance plane along with any equipment that the patient would require during the transport.

If people and equipment fit on the Saskatchewan Air Ambulance, that aircraft would be used. If the Saskatchewan Air Ambulance cannot accommodate, then air ambulance works through the charter companies that provide air ambulance service across the West to see whether there are any planes available. If there are, that can accommodate personnel and equipment needs of the patient, those charters are brought in.

If there's no charter available, then air ambulance informs the RHA that the air ambulance and the charters are not options. And then the department becomes involved, and the province contacts National Defence. And that's where the minister said we have new procedures in place to determine not only where the Hercules aircraft are on the Prairies but where they are in the rest of Canada. And if there is one available somewhere in the country, how long would it take to get here.

So when that call goes in, the military will inform us whether or not a plane is available. If a plane is available, the RHA is put into touch directly with the people in charge of that plane, and they work out the logistics of getting it here and what needs to be done to ready to the plane to receive whatever equipment the patient would require on the transport.

Mr. McMorris: — So in this situation then, if that protocol was followed, in the Butler situation, then National Defence would have been notified, and perhaps their plane wasn't available. But there would be some record of the department notifying or requesting the Hercules from Defence.

Mr. Fisher: — In this particular case Saskatchewan Air Ambulance contacted National Defence and were advised that there weren't any immediately available.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay. Because I had a lot of other issues, we're not going spend any more time on that.

The issue regarding the hospital beds reopening, 43 beds in the Regina Qu'Appelle health district or in Regina mainly, in the Pasqua and Regina General . . . I asked a question last week about the number, just recently, of a couple of wards that were closed and how many beds were closed.

I started my question and perhaps it was too broad. I started my question by saying, how many beds were there in the health district when there was the Plains, the Pasqua, and the General operating, functioning? Maybe that is too broad. And then I narrowed it down to say — if those numbers were here, that would be great — how many do we have currently? But even more importantly then, closer to home or closer to the date of the wards that were closed at the Pasqua and the General just recently, how many beds did we lose there?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I'm not sure how much information you want about this, but when the Plains hospital beds were transferred to Pasqua and Regina General, at that point there were about 625 beds in the system, well 675 if you include the psych beds. And as you moved along, there's been about 50 or 60 psych beds included in that, and so I can give you the numbers that relate to that.

Basically they'd try to operate from '02 and on at about 100 beds less than that, about 570, 575. And that has proven . . . well they were looking to see if that would work as a new level of adequacy in the city. And the pressure has just been identified that that's not enough. And so with the new beds that are coming on board this week, I think on December 1, they'll be up to 618 beds, and that includes the 60 psych beds.

So effectively it doesn't bring them back up to the 675 that were there in March '99, but we're led to believe that this will provide quite a bit of sort of pressure-relieving bed capacity in the whole system.

Mr. McMorris: — So you say in '02 we're at 575 roughly, and then we reduced. There were two wards that were closed. I know that in the Pasqua and in the General, one each, wards that were closed within the last two years, two to three years. So then that 175 would have been brought down even further?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes I think that, at the lowest point, they were down around 525. And that was at a point when they were doing some training and making sure they had staff as, once again when you talk about bed numbers, you're really talking about staffing.

Mr. McMorris: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — And so they were in a situation where their staffing was down, and that's where the complications arise. We've got more people trained as nurses and LPNs [licensed practical nurses] and others, so we can hire back into the system. And we're still obviously wanting to make sure that they'll get the full staffing available for these new beds that are coming back on stream.

Mr. McMorris: — Yes I agree with you, Mr. Minister, that it's not beds, the physical bed. It's people around the beds that are the important part. So we're talking about opening 43 new beds. Going forward, that 43 then will take us up to 600, roughly.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Six hundred and eighteen.

Mr. McMorris: — Six hundred and eighteen. Write that down. How many full-time equivalents then is that going to take to . . . because as we said, it's not the beds.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The best estimate right now is around 20, 22 people. Now it seems to me that we can get a clearer number, but I think it's in that range.

Actually I've got some more information here. With the 43 new beds which will bring it up to 618 beds, 558 acute, 60 psych beds at the two hospital sites in Regina — there will be about 50 additional staff. So it's about 20 registered nurses, 18 licensed practical nurses, nine special care aides, and then three support staff which would be like unit clerks and assistants.

So it's about 50 more people that would be hired. And one of the issues, I think right now is that they're working together, because some people in some other units are bidding for these jobs, to get it all organized.

Mr. McMorris: — When we talk the way . . . when there was three facilities operating and now down to two, and we're shy of beds from the numbers that you gave me — 625 down to 618 — down, you know, seven beds which isn't significant. But I would say that the traffic that these hospitals, the two trauma centres in southern Saskatchewan, are receiving has increased substantially from the mid-'90s to the early '80s.

I mean they were looked at as . . . the Plains certainly from southern Saskatchewan but when you look at all the other closures that were done in the province, all the other beds that were taken out of service, the demand on the Regina General and the Pasqua has increased exponentially, and we've reduced beds, albeit maybe by seven, but the demand has got to be increased significantly.

And I think we see that. I mean that's probably almost a no-brainer when you look at the code burgundies and the emergency room backups that we're having in our two centres in Regina.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well let me respond. It's six years ago, so '99. The numbers of sort of acute . . . this is for province wide, but basically we've reduced the numbers of in-patient surgeries from 10 years ago from about 44,600 to 38,000 in 5 years, and then a further 3,000 drop in the last 5 years. So over 10 years it's gone from about 44,000 in-patient surgeries a year to about 35,000. And at the same time the numbers of day surgeries have

gone up from about 42,000 to almost 59,000. And practically what that means is that they don't require the beds, the same number of beds, given the length of some of the procedures.

But this is an ongoing process of sorting out which kinds of procedures can be done in what kinds of facilities. One of the discussions now is to even have more space designated for day surgeries for example because it appears that more and more procedures are becoming less invasive, and we'd be able to provide even more services that way.

Mr. McMorris: — Certainly there's probably many, many different ways to look at the utilization of the hospitals and surgeries, be it day surgery or whatever is only one way of looking at it, because there's certainly a number of visits in the hospital through the hospital system that don't require surgery, be it day surgery or more substantial surgery.

So that's only one part of it, I would hazard a guess. And that's what I say. When you look at the demand on the facilities, surgeries are only one part of it. Just the demand on the system in Regina right now . . . And, you know, I'm not familiar with Saskatoon as much. But it certainly has increased due to the lack of facilities in rural Saskatchewan, number that have been closed, and the number of bed decreases over the last number of years even though they are being bumped up right now.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think that you earlier made the point as well that people are getting services without necessarily using beds in same way as they used to, and that's part of the system.

Now I think what you're referring to, there are a lot of medicine patients as well as surgical patients. And often when we get the pressures in the system, it's when there's more medical people showing up — people that are very sick but don't require surgery. They just need to be monitored or basically people . . . kept track of them. And so as a result, there are pressures there in the system.

But what we continue to do is make sure that we've got the staffing and the facilities in the place where there's the biggest demand. And when something like what's happened over since August in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority comes, where the pressures are there at a demand greater than what was estimated last June for example, well then we make the changes and the adjustments, and that's part of why we're hear talking about it now because it's part of the supplementary estimates.

Mr. McMorris: — The other part of the supplementary estimates that we certainly got into quite a bit last week and I want to get back into this evening is the joint job evaluation. I found it quite interesting, the conversations that we had last week with the whole process and really, quite frankly, the explanation of how that all came about. Because you know, if a person hadn't heard how that process worked and listened to that explanation last week, you'd come away with some real skepticism on the whole process. And it would just be logical. I mean you don't have to have a political bone in your body to be skeptical of the way the process, you know, looks.

We got talking last week about a number of people that received extra pay. We don't know how many — and certainly

that was asked — and I think that information is going to be brought back tonight. We don't know how much they were overpaid, and hopefully that number is here tonight. We don't know how that money is going to be reimbursed because frankly there was no agreement in place other than a verbal agreement which, as I said last week, I'm certainly no labour lawyer, and this week I'm not either. But I do know that if there is no written agreement, it's going to be pretty tough for the government to collect.

So I'll just start there. If I can get maybe a couple of those questions answered on how many people are involved; how much was overpaid? And if the government, has given it any more thought from last week as to how that money will be repaid?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Now I think what the public needs to understand and the committee needs to understand is why we did the joint job evaluation. Now this started quite a few years before the member was in the legislature. And the decision was made to take a look at the jobs — throughout government, but especially in health care — to deal with many, many job classifications but more importantly with the fairness of compensation. And this task was entered into with a lot of good faith by everybody, and people knew that it was going to be a long and difficult job. I don't think they quite anticipated how long it would take but . . . So people were there and the basic goal was to provide fairness in the job classifications so that people were being appropriately compensated.

Some of the questions that you asked relate to the particular agreement that was entered into. And at that point the workers were told that . . . it appeared that most of them were going to get an increase based on the joint job evaluations. Some weren't. But there was a clear message to the bargaining unit from SAHO [Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations], who was the government bargaining agent, that some of these payments may not be justified. They may not be appropriate payments, and that at some stage there would have to be compensation provided.

Some people said, don't pay me the amount of money that I want; I will get it later. Others said, you know, I'll take that risk. And basically the questions you're asking relate to those people who said, well I'll take that risk.

But I think there's always an understanding from everybody — but especially the bargaining unit, the unions, and from SAHO — that people were going to make the best of the situation and that, when everything was resolved through the appropriate appeal processes and everything else, the money would be dealt with. And there are still some people who have money that they weren't entitled to, or are not entitled to, who are either in appeal processes or they're working together with their employer to figure out how they can pay this back.

As I said last week, I think the perspective of the employers is, well let's sort this out in a way that doesn't totally disrupt the lives of the employees, which is fair. But it also recognizes that this money, to which they weren't entitled, should be paid back because it is public money which we can use for other very good purposes.

Mr. McMorris: — I certainly would agree that this was a long and drawn-out process. And it needed to be. When you're dealing with 25,000 employees, it is going to be long, and it's going to be drawn out. And we respect that, and we respect the job that needed to be done because, quite frankly, it needed to be done. I mean people needed to be paid equally for the equal work regardless of which bargaining unit they were under. We have no question and no qualms with that whatsoever.

But it's a long and drawn-out process that was hastily put together on October 4. And a general election was called on October 9. Can you tell me whether there was any pressure put on SAHO by cabinet to get this thing done before we go to the polls?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think that you have a certain perspective or opinion about this. I have a different perspective based on many years being in government that there was clearly a long process where people have been working very hard at this for years — literally years.

I think that there was . . . Any time there's an opportunity to get something resolved in bargaining or labour relations, people like to do that. Clearly there was some willingness to get the conclusion to a lot of hard work completed. Now, practically, what they ended up with, was the agreement based on many, many years of work. And it basically is still being sorted out around some of the areas. But many, many of the job classifications were resolved, and basically things are proceeding well.

Mr. McMorris: — There is a dispute tribunal that was put in place that has studied this, looked at this, and they said that SAHO was not keen on pushing this agreement forward as quickly as it did. If it started in 1999 and had taken to 2003, that is four years for this agreement to be put together.

SAHO was, you know, no doubt kept abreast or following along because they were part of the whole process. And when the dispute tribunal talked to SAHO, they weren't keen about having it done that quickly. But it had to have been done in October — early October. And I think the public needs to know that. You know you say whether the public needs to know whether this was hastily put together or not — I think they do.

I think that should be public information. Like why was SAHO so, all of a sudden, pushed into making an agreement on October 4 instead of December 4? What would have two months been? I mean it just . . . I don't know how you could really describe it any other way when it was done four days before an election. And it had been taking four years to get to that point.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well you know, clearly you have your opinion. And we've discussed this many times over the last couple of years. I still have my opinion.

But let's put this into perspective. There are 16,500 full-time equivalent jobs which actually is 25,000 employees. And out of that 25,000 employees, there are 900 that have some issue around an overpayment. The total for those 900 people is about \$4.3 million. Now basically if you're using percentages, it's about, just around 3 per cent out of the total number of

employees affected by this agreement. And to develop a very complicated process and get it together over the years that we're there and have this many people with some kind of a dispute, that's not a bad record — 97 per cent. I would take that grade on many things that we do.

So you maybe have a perspective about this. I have a different perspective. And I think that we can probably talk a long time tonight about that. But I think I would stick with — on the first go-round — 97 per cent success rate. I think that's pretty good.

Mr. McMorris: — So there's 4.3 million outstanding. How does the government plan on getting that back?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well basically depending on the different situations, they'll be working with the employees as to how to do that. And I'm sure every circumstance will have a different solution.

Mr. McMorris: — So if the government had it to do again, let's say the process had gone along and there wasn't an election on October 4, hypothetically . . . there wasn't an election call on October 9 for November 6, would the government have done a different process knowing that you're owed \$4.3 million and, quite frankly, you don't know how you're going to get it back? Would you have done it differently? In other words not paid in advance for people that may not have their salaries going up so that you're not liable because, you know, yes, you can, you know, say we've done very, very well.

We're only at 4.3. It could have turned out to be 8.6 million quite easily. It could have been 2.2 million. It's 4.3 that happens to be the number. It could have been double if the process hadn't of been rushed through. So my question is, hypothetically, you would have to say that in the future we would probably do it differently.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I guess what I would say is that this has been a rather complicated process. People did a good job of working this through.

I don't think the member is suggesting that these people should keep this money to which they're not entitled. I get that impression from some of the way he asks these questions. But, practically, this is public money that all of us put together to provide services right across this province. And I think that there may be some circumstances where people will have some difficulty in making some of the payment back.

But when you have public money to which you're not entitled, I would encourage or I would expect that the member would encourage anybody that they talk to, see what kind of arrangements they can make to pay that back because as you raised before and as other of your colleagues say, there's lots of places we can spend the money.

Mr. McMorris: — I guess what I would say . . . I can certainly when I talk to these people that were overpaid, say, you know, yes, you should pay the money back. But I would say to you as the minister who talked — almost lectured me — last week about the public purse and the public money that you're entrusted with, I would say to you, Mr. Minister, that maybe

you in the hastily put together . . . before the election of 2003, could of revisited, could have looked at this and said, this wasn't the best way of going about it.

This looked more like political pressures making these decisions than anything else. And had it been, had it been any other time in the election cycle, I don't think I would be saying that. But it smacks — smacks — of politics. And you're telling me I should be telling the citizens of the province that were overpaid . . . You bet; maybe I will. But I'll tell you as a minister in charge of the public purse that you had better look at the way you did business two years ago.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well thank you for those comments. They're the same ones you made in March 2004 and in March 2005 and now this fall. This was a process that actually went through I think at least two elections, maybe more, in the sense that we started this back before 1999. And the net effect is that we have been able to do, I think, a very good job in the health system, providing the result that we intended when we initially started out in this project. And we're continuing to work to have it resolved through the various appeal processes and everything else.

I think that what we should do is recognize that it is a long process, that it is complicated, and that we'll continue to work and deal with this particular amount. I remind people that the total payroll in the health care system is rather large; probably it's over \$2 billion in each year. And so this is a lot of money, but it's money that people know they have. And we'll be working out appropriate ways to have it returned.

Mr. McMorris: — How much is it costing then, do you believe? What is your projection it's going to cost the government to recapture the overpayment? I mean you're going to have people working on this. What's the estimated administrative cost to collect an overpayment?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — My expectation would be that this is minimal. I mean you basically have the records and the transactions. The people who owe the money know that. They make arrangements as to what kind of repayment they can make. I think some people have already repaid the amount. Others said, I don't want the money till I know I've got it, so we don't have to worry about that. I think that it's something that will be ongoing, but it's not something that we're creating a whole new department to deal with.

Mr. McMorris: — So you don't foresee any legal action being taken? You don't foresee having to pursue any legal action to retrieve . . . no that's not the right word . . . to be repaid?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I don't anticipate that at this time, and that's the . . . I think people, many of them where there are some question about some of the overpayments, they're still in the process of trying to sort out through appeals and other things as well. And so let's let the whole process be completed, and we'll assess it at that point.

Mr. McMorris: — Well yes I think we're all probably looking forward to this process being swept under the carpet and completed. Frankly we've already assessed it, and I think if the general public saw what went on, they would assess it in a

certain way too.

You know I'm amazed that SAHO . . . Again what the tribunal said was, uncharacteristic process that SAHO followed to find this. And I'm surprised that SAHO wasn't directed by cabinet to make sure that this deal was done.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well we've had this discussion before. You have your opinion and I have mine. I have the facts and I'm willing to stand on that.

Mr. McMorris: — So your opinion is and your statement is that cabinet had absolutely nothing to do with directing SAHO to have this signed in a timely manner prior to the election.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — My understanding is that we had many people who had been working on this for a long time. They wanted to get an agreement in place. We know that SAHO wanted to get an agreement in place, and all of these people got together and worked out an agreement. And it was one that included resolution of many things, some things which are continuing to be sorted out.

And that's how it went. And that's how I've told you before about that, and my opinion hasn't changed.

Mr. McMorris: — I realize your opinion hasn't changed, and your answer hasn't changed. But the answer hasn't answered the question as to — and you were in cabinet at that time — did cabinet influence SAHO to sign the agreement prior to the 2003 election called on October 9?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — That's not how bargaining works. So basically the people who were working on this process, working together with SAHO, said let's put this thing together. And my understanding is that they did. They knew that it was a process that would continue because there were still many appeals and many other things that were there. And that's how it's been resolved.

Mr. McMorris: — One last comment on this and I think I'll probably turn it over to some other members then.

I know that's not . . . You started by saying that's not how the bargaining goes. And I realize that's not how the bargaining went between SAHO and the three unions involved. It was a long process and that's not what I'm asking — about the bargaining process between SAHO and the three unions involved. I realize it was a long process. It was longer than '99 you've told me, so it's been more than four years.

What I'm asking you is a direct question, and it's a simple yes or no. Did cabinet say to SAHO we've got to get this done — now — because we've got an election coming up in five days?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — How this process worked as far as cabinet was concerned is that cabinet laid out directives quite a number of years ago about how to proceed and where to go in different areas and set out roughly the parameters. And I think that SAHO took their instructions from that kind of a perspective. The people who were bargaining on behalf of the employees bargained with SAHO around that. And basically that's how it was resolved.

Mr. McMorris: — So just one last of the one lasts is then . . . So it was a coincidence according to you and the cabinet that SAHO came to an agreement with those three unions four or five days before the general election. It was only a coincidence because the parameters, as you said, were set out years in advance. So those parameters were followed, and it was simply a coincidence that that agreement came into place four days, sorry, five days, depending on the clockwork, of the general election.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I have not used the word coincidence. That's your word. What I said is that they were bargaining, and they wanted to put together an agreement and they did.

Mr. McMorris: — So they weren't instructed by the . . . One last question. So they weren't instructed by cabinet, and it wasn't a coincidence. But cabinet was involved, yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well basically the cabinet's role was to provide the resources to SAHO to work out the deal. And they set that out in a number of layers over a number of years. SAHO knew within what parameters and what resources they had to resolve the issue, and so on that basis they could resolve it. And those amounts would have been set out in various budgets or over the years prior to that.

So the kinds of questions that you ask are interesting, but we've been there before.

Mr. McMorris: — Well thank you. I'm glad that you're enjoying the line of questioning that I have. I find it quite interesting too. I find the questioning more interesting than the answers that I'm getting because I don't find the answers answering the questions that I am giving, that I'm putting to you.

You know, I mean the tribunal is saying that SAHO was influenced by cabinet. Many people are saying that. And you're saying it wasn't a coincidence, but you didn't influence SAHO.

I mean, I guess we can go around this for a long time. You're not going to commit one way or the other cabinet's involvement in this agreement.

My one last question is on the other \$80 million. The other \$80 million — and it's not about JJE [joint job evaluation] unfortunately — the other \$80 million that you've got earmarked for the 12,000 employees that are in a strike position right now, I believe, how many employees are in a strike position? You've got \$80 million earmarked for it. Apparently 0, 1, and 1 is not on anymore there.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think there are about 25,000 employees that are in . . .

Mr. McMorris: — In a strike position.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — That's correct, all of the service workers of various kinds. And so we're not going to be bargaining in this committee. Bargaining takes place over at the bargaining table.

Mr. McMorris: — I realize that we're not going to bargain

here but 0, 1, and 1 was the mandate of this government. Are you saying then that's not the mandate in bargaining with these 25,000 employees?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think the bargaining will take place within the most recent kinds of discussions that have taken place and that's appropriate.

The Chair: — Ms. Harpauer.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I actually have one question on the JJE issue. If an employee was overpaid by \$1,000 are you expecting that employee to repay that \$1,000 back?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The answer is yes.

Ms. Harpauer: — Okay the concern that was brought to my attention by one of the employees that is being asked to repay some money is they've already paid income tax and deductions on that \$1,000. So in essence they're going to be losing money on the deal.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The appropriate discussions would take place between the employer and the employee to make sure that they wouldn't be in a position where they've lost money.

Ms. Harpauer: — Okay thank you. I actually came to the committee tonight to ask about a specific constituent by the name of Kevin Grieman, and I brought this to your department's attention through letters and through estimates before. And I have also brought this particular person's situation to the department of or to the ministry of DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment] as well.

Mr. Grieman has Marfan's syndrome which is a rare disease. And due to the complications of that disease, he has had to undergo open heart surgery, and he had an artificial valve or a heart valve put in. He's had two surgeries since for cysts on his spine. And in the second surgery which was in 2002, due to the surgery he's had neurological damage. And now his bladder does not fully empty, so he is extremely susceptible to bladder infections.

At one point Mr. Grieman did get infection, and it was so severe that he lost all function of his legs and lower body, and he was hospitalized for quite a length of time. That infection caused permanent damage, and now Mr. Grieman is essentially a walking paraplegic. He has no feelings from the waist down, but he has managed to get his legs to function again so that he can actually walk.

In order to prevent future serious infections such as what he's already experienced, Mr. Grieman's doctors have told him that he must catheterize himself three times a day with a soft catheter to completely empty his bladder. The special catheter that he has to use to do this is the Tieman catheter. And it is not covered by the Department of Health, and it costs approximately \$18 per catheter. So it's costing Mr. Grieman about \$1,500 a month for his supplies.

Now not too many people can afford that type of bill. And Mr.

Grieman happens to be a farmer. He absolutely cannot afford it. So he's tried to find a program within your department and within DCRE in order to cover some of his . . . or a lot of his expenses with this. He doesn't qualify for the paraplegic program. His doctor, Dr. Huber, wrote a letter that states, and I quote, "spinal problems resulting in partial paralysis of his lower extremities and neurogenic bladder problems." And explains that issue.

But the response for that program was, this is an administrative and not a medical decision. So in essence he falls through the cracks because medically he's paralyzed, but he's not in a wheelchair. If the man was in a wheelchair he would be fully covered.

There's also other programs he's tried through DCRE but he's falling through the cracks there as well because they do an assessment of his worth. And I've got the evaluation. They take into account his yearly income. But they also take into account capital cost allowance, optional inventory adjustments, etc. So because the man owns a farm, he has assets. And that's considered to be part of his income. Now he can't sell these assets and still operate his farm. So he falls through the cracks of that program as well.

So I have a number of letters from different doctors. There's a letter to your department from Dr. Atkins and Dr. Williams. You've also received letters of support and explanation for the seriousness of Mr. Grieman's condition by Dr. Karen McClean of infectious diseases, Dr. Kurt Williams of infectious diseases, Dr. Robert Griebel of neurosurgery — all stating that this is indeed serious, and this is a legitimate case that's falling through the cracks of the various programs. What is this man supposed to do?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well the particular issue that you raise here is actually an issue that would be dealt with by the Community Resources department. And the reason for that is that in Health we operate the supplemental health benefits program, but we do not in any way assess who is qualified for that. It's done through the income assessment kind of issue that you've raised with Community Resources.

If in fact they end up saying that this person qualifies for that extra coverage which is over and above what would be the normal coverage under our health benefits, then the particular needs of the patient would be dealt with. And so it's my understanding that the particular issue is being looked at in the Department of Community Resources and Employment and that they will be responding to him around his qualifications.

And so at this stage, that's where his options are available.

Ms. Harpauer: — I don't see how . . . Okay I've already said that he's tried this. He actually did have coverage for a while, and then they re-evaluated it, and they took it away from him again. And I mean it's been a song and a dance going that route.

It is mandatory that he have or use the Tieman catheters. If he was hospitalized, the Department of Health would pay for it. If he was in a wheelchair, paraplegia program for it. But he's neither. He actually takes very good care of himself. He's fighting to still earn a living for his family, and he has a young

family. And he's being penalized for those efforts.

Now if he can no longer afford these medical supplies, it's going to cost the health system a great deal more than what these catheters are going to cost because it's been proven . . . He's had the infections; it's caused serious, permanent damage. The next one will be more damage. He will be hospitalized for longer periods of times. So the cost to the health system is going to escalate each and every time that this man gets ill.

And your department is saying you will not cover the cost of this particular catheter even though the medical professionals are saying they're absolutely necessary for him?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — All I'm saying is that the procedure that we have for providing supplemental health benefits is related to an income assessment process, and basically that process is administered and managed through the Department of Community Resources and Employment. If they certified somebody as being entitled to these benefits, then the benefits are dealt with through the appropriate service provider and paid for out of the Health budget, but we don't do the assessment part. The questions you've been asking relate to the assessment.

Ms. Harpauer: — Well then my comment and not a question is, when your government continually says that no one's left behind, this man and his family are left behind because they can't afford these expenses, so he's going to become very ill.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I encourage you and him, and I think he is in that process of making the appropriate information available to the Department of Community Resources and Employment, and they will be responding appropriately.

The Chair: — Mr. Hermanson.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Minister and officials, for this opportunity to ask a few questions. It's apparent to everyone in Saskatchewan that we've had windfall revenues come the government's way because of the spike in oil and gas prices. And I believe I've heard your Finance minister say on quite a few occasions that we shouldn't count on this money on an annual basis, that this may be a temporary windfall, and that the government should try to refrain from getting locked into expenditures that would depend on this kind of revenue on a consistent basis.

And yet when I look at the supplemental estimates, I see almost all of the additional funding for health care going into operational funds, with the exception of a new department and a new minister. But of course that is operational on the administrative side, so that too is, in effect, operational, the rest primarily going for . . . I think the note says salaries and the like. On page 13 of the Estimates it says for the collective bargaining and joint job evaluation and Project Hope of which the new minister is involved.

It makes it very difficult for people who are looking for that window of opportunity to get a new project off the ground. You probably know where I'm going here because we've talked about this before, but I am particularly concerned about senior citizens who need special care in Rosetown. They've been talking to your department for a long time about the need for a

new facility. As you know they are currently housed in a basement. I had the privilege of addressing this with your deputy a few days ago in Public Accounts, and he indicated he had been to Rosetown and was personally aware of the needs there.

The people there of course have asked your department, what do we have to do to get a new facility put in place for our, you know, most needy and most vulnerable people in our community? And of course they've been told they have to raise their portion — I think it's about 35 per cent — which they have, as a foundation, been prepared to do.

Of course then it's not in the budget. They, you know . . . A year later the project goes up in value. It'd almost be like trying to buy a car and being told, well we can't get you the model this year, but if you could get it this year it would cost you X number of dollars, and we'll try and get it for you next year. Come and talk to us. And next year of course then the price has gone up. And you say, well we can't get you the model this year either, so you'll have to come back next year. But if we did get it this year, you'd have to raise this much additional money.

Very difficult for the people in the foundation to go the community and say, you know, can we count on you to fund our portion of this project when it's needed? And quite frankly I think it's not moral not to address this type of a need.

So I'm wondering why, when the province has this windfall and the Finance minister's saying this is probably not a time to be dumping extra money into operations, perhaps it's more one-time efforts that should be looked at, why the Department of Health hasn't done that overall, and particularly in this case.

What can I tell, you know, people back in Rosetown who have been asking me, is the Health minister going to move on this issue?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think the first answer that the member should give to his constituency is that Outlook, which is in your constituency, is getting a project right now and that has been the number one project on the request agenda from the Heartland Health Region. And they're just in the process of having this project get forward, so the money for that project will be rolling out to the health region so that it can build that project.

And as you know, we're in the process of building in Swift Current, in Moosomin, Maidstone, Preeceville, a number of places right across the province. And what we do is we have the health regions provide us with the projects that are in their area. And then we ask them to put them in some order of priority. And we're now working on the one that is at the top of the list from Heartland.

Not every health region in the province was able to get a project in this particular year, and so we're working to do that.

One of the big challenges frankly is to have enough capital dollars when we all know in health care, the big . . . 70 per cent of the cost of the over \$3 billion spent in health care relate to employees and the compensation and benefits for them because health care is provided by people.

So I think that . . . I've been to Rosetown myself. I know what you're talking about. I understand the kinds of concerns that they have. But I've also been in quite a number of other communities in the province who are in the same position. And we have 269 facilities in the province, and there are quite a number of them that are in need of either renovation or replacement or rebuilding or remodelling in some way.

We're continuing to look at this very carefully, and we will keep the Rosetown community clearly in mind. But we're going to get the Outlook project done first.

Mr. Hermanson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm not sure how the Outlook project relates to the fact that there are people in Rosetown who call this place home and may never see something better for the rest of their days unless something occurs.

I want to know what's the process, and what can these people expect? We know that, I think, the Humboldt hospital project has been announced five times. I don't know if the sod's been turned yet. I believe it's about five times that that's been announced. I know that the Outlook project has been announced more than once, but it is now underway. And I mean that's good. I know the Swift Current project was announced several times before it occurred.

We haven't even heard the Rosetown project announced once. Are these people going to have to wait for five announcements before the project will get underway? What's your process here?

These people need to know because they're the ones that have to go back to the community, to municipal governments, to businesses who are supporting this, to individuals who are supporting this project and say, we're going to, you know, we're going to need X millions of dollars from our point of view or from our side of the equation to make this project fly. And people are saying, well is it going to go or isn't it going to go? And they . . . well we haven't got an okay from the department yet; we've taken it to our health region. Yes they've taken it to their health authority. The health authority is of the understanding that the project needs to be done. You've acknowledged the project needs to be done.

These people need to know what's the time frame so they can tell their people it's going to actually occur in two years or in three years or hopefully even in, you know, the next budget year, rather than this, oh yes, we're sort of working on it. We've sort of realized that, but we're sort of doing something in Outlook. And we're sort of doing something in Humboldt, and we're sort of doing something in Moosomin. And we can't give you a definitive answer, so we don't know when we need the money. And we don't know when the project's going forward, and we can't tell you whether those people are going to die in that basement or not.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think the member has been around here long enough to understand the process. There's often a fair bit of frustration actually on my part when I've been working on these projects. And I mean there are a number of them.

Outlook is a good project. We were ready with that money a

year ago. But they've been working to get even a better project, and so it's taken longer. And it's not the fault of the Saskatchewan Health and the people who are there. But it does take a long time to make sure that the right project is there.

In Moosomin we've got a very good project going along. But it's taken a lot of work by many people to make sure that you get the right project that's going to be there for the next 40 years.

So I guess my response to the people of Rosetown is the same as the response to people in Foam Lake that I met with recently — or people from Shellbrook or other parts of the province — that they need to make sure that what they're doing is well understood and is part of the overall budget and capital plan of the health region in which they're located.

In this case it's the Heartland Health Region, and I know that they've been working with them. Heartland will present the project on their behalf to the government. It will be reviewed and worked at with the officials within the department, and at the appropriate time, it will be included in the budget. It's not included in this year's budget as you know, but we would hope that these kinds of projects would be in position to be presented as part of the budgets that are coming next year or the year after.

Mr. Hermanson: — But, Mr. Minister, the appropriate time is now. What we want to know is when can we expect it to happen?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think that the issue is, you know, how much money do we have? And we end up having all kinds of requests from you and your colleagues around spending money. But we also have the equal number of requests to reduce taxes, do all kinds of other things.

And I think one of the reasons that we remain in government is that people respect the fact that we're very careful with our dollars and with our planning, and we don't talk about spending lots of money and reducing taxes at the same time. If we're going to reduce taxes, we do it in a sustainable way. And I will stand on that record in what we're doing here.

Mr. Hermanson: — Well what it looks like you're doing is you are taking an opportunity, when you've received almost a billion dollars that you didn't expect to get, and you're putting health care share into more operations rather than meeting some of these capital project needs when the opportunity arises.

So what do we do if in two years there's a downturn in oil prices and you don't have that money? You basically are saying that those people will die in the basement.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — No. I think that in this particular budget, we have \$100 million committed toward the academic health sciences building which relates to the health system and to clearly the university system. But that's money that's going towards a very large one-time expenditure. It's actually the largest grant ever given to any university in this province.

And so we are taking the opportunity to do exactly what you say. We've had to make some choices, and that's one of the

choices that we've made at this point. But we'll continue to work with communities, with health regions, and we will respond to the needs there in as timely a fashion as we can given the resources that we have.

Mr. Hermanson: — Seems obvious the minister doesn't have an answer for me, so I have no more questions. Thanks.

The Chair: — Mr. Krawetz.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. I'm not sure which minister . . . or in fact whether my question's maybe directed more to the deputy, depending upon whether or not the ministers have knowledge of the Eaglestone Lodge as a facility that operates in Kamsack.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes I have knowledge of the Eaglestone Lodge.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Minister, as you are aware, I have raised this question a number of times. The Eaglestone Lodge was a facility that was operated by a health district. And then at the time that funding disappeared for level 1 and 2 as you indicated to my colleague, the member from Moosomin, the funding was no longer in place for people in that level 1 and 2 category. And therefore the municipalities got together and purchased the Eaglestone Lodge.

Mr. Minister, have you responded to a very recent letter of the administrator of the Eaglestone Lodge, and has that response been sent to the Eaglestone administrator?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I don't recall receiving a letter recently from them. I know the, you know, the particular issue of the Eaglestone Lodge over the last number of years, but I haven't seen a recent letter. If you actually have a copy of it . . . No, and it may be that it's often part of the discussion that they will contact us again. But there's been an ongoing dialogue with them.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Minister, this is an article from the *Kamsack Times* paper, and its date of publication is October 27, 2005. And the reason you may not have the letter of course is that the letter was sent to the Premier of the province. And the heading on this article in the paper says, "Premier Calvert asks minister of health to look into Eaglestone Lodge concerns." That's the editorial headline, if you like, that has been put on this article.

And I know from the information that is contained in this article that the Premier basically says that the Minister of Health will look into their concerns. And of course their concerns are around funding as a municipality.

I've inquired as to whether or not the Minister of Government Relations is prepared to add categories to municipal revenue sharing to assist municipally owned facilities like this to be able to operate, or whether or not the Minister of Health will recognize that this is a . . . not a for-profit centre. This is taxpayers that are fully funding this centre beyond what is charged to the patients.

And the other point as indicated in this article, Mr. Minister, is

that when the Eaglestone Lodge became the facility operated by municipalities, the construction code needed to be upgraded. Prior to that when it was a health district-owned facility, there was no need for changes. And as Rona Seidle who is the administrator there, she reports that, you know, as soon as the municipalities became owners . . . And this is the direct quote. She says:

"It is interesting to note that as long as the health district owned the facility, no upgrades were necessary, however, when the ownership transferred to the municipalities, we had to complete several major upgrades . . . "This put the facility . . . [into] debt immediately and we are still trying to catch up."

So as you can see, Mr. Minister, there's been, you know, there's a lot of pressure that's put on the town of Kamsack and all the surrounding RMs [rural municipality]. There are villages that are involved that are trying to maintain this level 1 and 2 facility. It currently has 48 residents. It's almost at capacity. It operates, you know, very well. And yet they're in dire straits of either taxing the people of the area to say, we need more funds, or they're asking you to inquire into their concerns and to respond. And to date, as you've indicated, you have not responded.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — What I would say, and it's the same discussion that I had in previous years, is that the province does not fund level 1 and 2 care. We do not fund personal care homes which is what this would qualify as. So we don't have a category to fund that at all out of Health. We fund level 3 and 4 care.

You raised a question about the changes that needed to be made. What happens when ownership changes in any particular building, that's when fire code changes have to be made. And so as long as it was held by a previous owner, then it would . . . the changes wouldn't have to be made according to the fire code. But those changes would be made under the fire code.

But I think the simple answer is, now we do not provide funding for level 1 and 2 care. And we don't provide funding for personal care homes, I don't think . . . well not in anyplace in the province.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And as you indicated to my colleague, that was your answer to the member from Moosomin, and your answer has remained consistent. And, you know, whether or not your government is going to change that position in the short term or the long term based on additional sources of revenue obviously will be your decision.

Mr. Minister, I do want to change to the very same thing, Eaglestone Lodge. But I want to . . . I was intrigued by your answers regarding Community Resources to our Health critic.

There are two sources of revenue at the Eaglestone Lodge. One is that the municipalities put in a certain amount of money to help in the operation. The other source of revenue comes from the residents in the way of a charge, as you would expect. They've tried to keep the amount of money that is charged to residents at a competitive rate, I guess is the best way of putting it. And most recently, this past spring, they were forced to

increase the rates significantly because they just realized that with increasing costs, they were unable to keep the doors open. So many residents were charged an additional \$100, \$100 plus.

And I raised this concern during the spring session, Mr. Minister. The program that was announced through DCRE, which involved subsidization of rental by low-income earners, that people living on their own in homes could in fact apply for a subsidy if indeed their income is very, very low. The condition that these people face is that they don't qualify. And the reason they don't qualify is that their sum of money that's charged to them — \$1,500 a month — includes food. And as a result they are ineligible to even apply for that assistance. In a couple of cases what has happened is the individual has used up all of the revenue that the person receives in the way of pensions. They have no family. And now they are asked to of course provide additional monies for, you know, the other charges within. And I'm talking about medications, about diapers, and the like. And they don't have any more money. Yet they don't qualify to apply to the DCRE program because a portion of their charge is for food.

And, Mr. Minister, I think that that's wrong, number one, and I've asked for a, you know, a clarification from the Department of DCRE. But if your Department of Health is not willing to fund level 1 and 2, I think we have to broaden this. We have to be able to make use of other programs that are currently in place from this government.

And one of them is, of course, is the low rental. This is a low rental. And the situation that the mayor uses and other people use is that the individual who can't afford to pay the \$1,545 worth of charges can in fact be booted out of the Eaglestone Lodge, can go across the street and rent a home — a dilapidated home — and they will qualify for assistance. And that's wrong.

So I'd encourage you . . . Or first of all I look to your comment, first of all, as to whether or not you're . . . any of your officials are working on this because this has been raised a number of times. And secondly would you be the catalyst that tries to bring the two departments together? And I know my colleague from Kelvington-Wadena uses the term, silos, many time, and I think that's what we see happening. I worked in education long enough to know that there's a silo in Education, and Health works outside of that.

And I think what we have to do is create a bit more horizontal situations here, where we've got departments that are going to assist the other department. I look forward to your comments.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I mean the issues around how different programs mesh in the community is exactly why I got into politics many years ago because I had a lot of concerns about how some of these things work. And I guess what I would say is that often what gets misunderstood in what you're talking about is that the Department of Community Resources and Employment has a system of assessing people as to need financially, as to what services can be provided.

Within Health we don't do that. That's not the kind of role that we have. We don't also have any role as it relates to the particular housing needs. And as I said before, on level 1 and 2 care, we don't fund that at all out of the health system. We fund

level 3 and 4 care, and acute, and lots of other kinds of things.

I think the issue of how you can deal with particular people and their own individual situations has to be assessed by the workers within the Community Resources department, and they will do that, and they will reassess and re-evaluate as individual situations change. And so I encourage you to do that or to have these people do that.

Now there's another issue when communities take on the responsibility of a personal care home and I guess end up with bigger commitments financially than maybe they originally anticipated. But that's not one that I'm able to solve from the Health department when it's an area where we're not providing any funding. So I encourage some of these individuals to apply and see whether they qualify for assistance from the department, and then they will be assessed based on their particular needs and on where they go.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you for that comment, Mr. Minister. But that's the problem; you've hit it on, the nail on the head. They cannot apply because they receive food in the source of their first initial expenditure. So if you are ineligible to apply, why would you want to put together an application if you're ineligible? And that's what I'm asking, you know.

When the Premier says I've asked the Minister of Health to check into Eaglestone's concerns and you've indicated that there's no funding for level 1 and 2 and I accept that, okay. Let's base our answers now on the premise that there is no funding from the Department of Health for level 1 and 2.

The other concern though is how do we address this? And my concern is, I would ask you then — you know as the Premier has asked you to respond to Eaglestone Lodge — I would ask you to respond to the minister for DCRE to say we need to work together with patients that are receiving health care because that's what they're doing. They're receiving health care in a level 1 and 2 facility that you're not funding, and there is a roadblock. The roadblock is they're ineligible because obviously certain amount of that money they pay is designated for food. I'm sure that we could arrive at a common sense approach that would say there's a certain amount of the \$1,500 that is food, but the remainder is for lodging. And that's what's needed.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well if I'm understanding you correctly, you're only talking about one specific program around housing, that the concern is around that these people don't qualify for that particular housing program.

What I'm explaining is that when people are of low income or have few if any assets at all, they have the ability to apply for social assistance, and social assistance will provide funding for housing and for other expenses. Then they would have the choice about where they would live and what they would do. And it appears . . . like, I don't know fully how an individual resident of the Eaglestone Lodge would qualify or not qualify for social assistance, but that's where your question is, and that's where you need to get the answers. And each individual then needs to apply. You can't have the administrator apply as a group for a whole bunch of different individuals who have different asset bases because our system is set up to deal with

individuals' needs.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: — Ms. Draude.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you. Ministers and their officials, I'm looking forward to some questions today that are surrounding an issue that I'm sure you're expecting to talk about tonight. But I'm going to start with the issue that I tried to bring up tonight with Aboriginal and First Nation, Métis minister around the subject of MACSI [Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc.] and he told me that that would be now your responsibility.

So this was an issue that we . . . that was actually . . . the report was done on it with a number of recommendations. I believe it was in February 2004. Can you tell me the status of the MACSI issue right now?

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Yes. As the member has indicated that it was an investigation. There was an audit done by the Provincial Auditor, by a forensic auditor, as well as we've had a management team look at that. And there has been a number of recommendations that have come out of that. As well, it was turned over to the RCMP for investigation. My understanding is that investigation is ongoing. All of the recommendations that were recommended have been acted upon. There is still the issue of board governance and . . . as well as strategic planning, that is still being worked on.

Ms. Draude: — As of September 13 . . . Pardon me. I'm sorry. As of September 13 I think a letter that you had received from the Central Urban Métis Federation talked about the recommendations, but they also talked about ensuring that this wouldn't happen again. And they're very concerned that the recommendations aren't addressing the problem of the accountability and the fact that no safeguards have been put in place.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — I should have mentioned this earlier on. We do have an interim board that is overseeing that as well, so the financial accountability is there. The agreements that we have signed directly with MACSI have been tightened up, so we're confident that with the addressing of the Provincial Auditor's concerns that we do have the financial controls that are there that are required to be there at this time.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm wondering if you can give me something in writing that I can be giving to people that contact my office, the number of recommendations that were reported to your government and how you have addressed these recommendations and the safeguards that they're concerned about.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — We can do that.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister.

The Chair: — One second, if the minister gives any information, we need 15 copies through the Chair to the Clerk. Thank you . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, again to the minister, I guess that leads to the next question, and that is with your government's decision to put addictions under health — under mental health I guess is where they've gone — it has put the organization SADAC [Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission] basically in the background. It's not . . . We don't have the alcohol and drug addictions council that's working in the way it does in other jurisdictions, and that is a philosophical decision made by your government. Can you tell . . .

And then with the new Project Hope, one of the guidelines or one of the decisions was to have the new board, would have a degree in addictions. The board members would have degrees in addictions. Can you tell me how many of your board members have the degree in addictions — not in social work, but in addictions — that you can only get outside of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Addley: — On MACSI?

Ms. Draude: — On Project Hope.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Okay. The member's correct in saying that the philosophical direction within Saskatchewan is not under SADAC. There's only two provinces that I'm aware of that follow that direction; that's Alberta and Manitoba. The other provinces are moving towards the model of merging mental health and addictions and having them work together, because what we do know is that an individual that may have a mental issue also can have an addiction issue or vice versa. And so we want to treat the whole individual, not just the specific symptoms that they present.

So some of the functionality that was lost under SADAC . . . When I was doing the review as Legislative Secretary, I did hear that from addiction counsellors, that they felt that they were operating . . . while they appreciated the level of autonomy that they had as opposed to working under SADAC and having the funds flow through the regional health authorities, they did feel that a functionality of SADAC was lost in a centralized support. And so by having the prevention and education directorate, that functionality has been put back without impacting on their autonomy.

I think what you're talking about on the last point is the recommendation to make sure that we have specific standards in place or accreditation process. And what that is, that hasn't been worked out as to the details. But the idea behind that is that programs that we fund would have to meet that accreditation process, that individuals that are working in that area would need to meet that standard.

And it's not specifically defined that it would have to be a university degree. It could be years of service. It could be experience. But the idea is that if parents want their children treated, that they know that they're being treated by fully qualified individuals and that the public knows that public funds that are put into organizations are put into organizations and different groups that meet that accreditation process.

Ms. Draude: — I have two comments, Mr. Minister. The first one is that the workers that were working under SADAC were . . . it was basically a CBO [community-based organization].

And they received considerably less money when they were working under that body than it was when they became a unionized member of a health district.

So when you're talking to people whose job description may have changed, but when you basically gave them a huge increase in money, you're going to find a response that's going to say, yes, I sure liked the last one. And that's goes without saying.

I think that you're going to find some of the chemical addiction workers are saying, yes you can't put a definite line between mental health and addictions. But there are people who are trained in addictions. And my question to you, that I guess I didn't ask properly was, under Project Hope, the new board members are supposed to be members who have a degree in addictions.

A Member: — Which board members are you . . .

Ms. Draude: — In Project Hope.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — The commission was set up by and funded by government, so our understanding is that there was no change in pay. And when you say board members for Project Hope, Project Hope per se doesn't have board members. So perhaps the member could clarify what you're meaning or what the member is meaning on board members.

Ms. Draude: — The people that are working within Project Hope, working with people that have addictions. At some levels they can have their certificate in addictions which you can receive at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] and some of the other locations. But if they're in a supervisory position, they're supposed to have a degree in addictions.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — We're struggling to understand the question and try to answer it appropriately. So we know that there's individuals that are working in the field right now and they're valuable. We know that we're moving to a new model that we're going to be redeveloping, and we need to ensure that the training is appropriate to meet the standards and meet that accreditation process.

There's a bit of confusion as to when the member's referring to a board for Project Hope because there is no board per se on Project Hope. If the member is talking about employees that are working there and supervisors in the different RHAs [regional health authority], the addiction workers, yes we'll be ensuring that the accreditation process takes into account the previous training, previous education, and previous experience.

One of the struggles that we are finding is that because this is a 60 per cent increase in the addictions field — \$15 million new money — there's going to be a lot more individuals working in this field. We need to be training them as quickly as we can, that there could be a shortage to bring these on to stream. So is that answering the member's question?

Ms. Draude: — It's getting there I guess. What I need to hear is that we're going to have people that are working with anyone that has an addiction who is trained in that area — a

professional that has a degree not just in social work with some classes or some professional development in the area of addictions, but their degree in it where that is their professional . . . their career, if they are supervising people and working with people and making decisions. We've taken away SADAC. We've taken away people who are dealing with addictions specifically, but we have to have people in place whose professional background is in addiction training.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — I think I understand the member's question or the concern that is behind the question. SADAC was . . . It was more of a decision to restructure of how we deliver the addictions services. And some functionality was lost and some autonomy was gained.

What the member is talking about, if I understand correctly, is that there is a concern and a stress point between those that are delivering mental health services and those that are dealing addiction services. And if they haven't worked together in the past, as they move closer together to work together to treat the whole individual, there's certain levels of experience and expertise that addiction counsellors and chemical dependency workers have, that they want to ensure that as people with mental health backgrounds come into the field that they're not just treated on that basis, that they also have that experience and have that training dealing with addictions.

So I take the member's point and that is the direction . . . We are aware of that concern, and we'll be as sensitive as we can. The bottom line is we want to make sure that we provide the service to the clients as best we can and treat the whole individual, whether it's a mental health issue or an addictions issue. So I think the member's point is valid.

Ms. Draude: — Can you tell me how many workers you have now in the addiction field who have their degree?

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Apparently the standard is that they need to have completed the two-year chemical dependency worker program through SIAST. Supervisors, many of them would have a degree of some sort, but it's not necessarily a requirement. It would be, could be an experience factor, the level of experience and other training as well. Some of the CBOs would be required to have the one-year diploma course as opposed to the two-year program that all of the regional health authorities are required to have. So to work in the field and employed by the RHAs, you would need the 2-year program from SIAST or equivalent.

Ms. Draude: — So there is no . . . Your department is not requiring that you have professionals in the area of addictions that have a degree to work with the mental health workers. To me this isn't a lot different than saying that somebody, an RN's [registered nurse] work can be done by someone who has their certified, their LPN. We have to have . . . there should be somebody in place. My question to you as the minister was, how many certified, how many degree addiction workers do you have working in your area?

Hon. Mr. Addley: — We don't have that information. And at this point we don't have any plans to have addiction workers be required to have a degree. Anticipating where the member's going, we don't . . . we'll ensure that individuals will not be

practising beyond their scope of practice. So we won't have addiction counsellors that are providing, that have the two-year training, to be providing the service that a psychologist would be providing with his or her years of service. So while mental health and addictions are moving together, that doesn't mean that the work, that individuals within those fields are interchangeable. They'll still be doing the work that they're qualified to do.

Ms. Draude: — Can the minister make the information available to me after, in a short period of time after this committee meeting, and let me know what experienced workers you have? How many they have, whether it's in the different regional health areas, how many you have with different degrees?

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Well there's no requirement for them to have degrees. They just need the two-year program. So at this point we're not aware if they would have a degree. I'll just check to see if we can get that information.

Well the issue is that these individuals are working in a job which requires a two-year diploma program which we've ensured that they have. Whether or not they have a university degree in a related field or an unrelated field, if they've told us that, we would be able to find that in a personnel file. But that would be a very cumbersome process to go through. And it would not necessarily be accurate because if they have a degree, but have not indicated that they have the degree because it's not a requirement, we wouldn't have that information. So I'm not sure that we can undertake to provide accurate information for the member.

Ms. Draude: — Okay. Can the minister tell me how much money the government is now giving to Larson House?

Hon. Mr. Addley: — How much money is given to Larson House? We don't have the information here, but we can get that to you.

Ms. Draude: — Can you give us some idea of how much of the \$18 million that was talked about in the news release of November 16 will go to addiction workers' salaries in the health care organizations?

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Duncan Fisher will give more details on that.

Mr. Fisher: — In terms of the additional funding for CBOs if the question was, do the CBOs that are contracted by regional health authorities, will they receive a share of that funding? The answer is yes.

Ms. Draude: — Can you tell us how much of it they'll receive?

Mr. Fisher: — I can tell you in total. I can't tell you the individual allocations for each CBO.

Ms. Draude: — Then I can receive that information at a later date as well if you want to look it up.

I just want to make a comment or I would like some clarification. The Minister of Health spoke earlier about the

different departments and the way they work together. And Project Hope is funded, there's funding under your ministry and also under Justice as well.

So is there some delineation between how much money is going where? And are you responsible for this money under both departments? And how ... like who is going to be the one that's answerable to this?

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Sure. The Project Hope contains a series of recommendations, some of which fall under SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority]. Some fall under Justice, and much of it is under Health.

Two point six million is allocated to Health to advance initiatives under Health ... [inaudible] ... of operations. And 300,000 is provided to Justice to advance implementation of prevention initiatives, including enhancements to The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act.

Ms. Draude: — So has that money been spent to date?

Hon. Mr. Addley: — That's the estimates that we're here to ask about, the 2.9.

Ms. Draude: — Okay. Then that will be spent before the end of the next fiscal year. The cost of the Addley report, is that within that as well?

Hon. Mr. Addley: — As to the preparation of it or the recommendations that are contained within?

Ms. Draude: — Both.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Well the preparation of it was fairly minimal, and that was through the Health budget. The recommendations that were in that were rolled into the Premier's Project Hope. So the Premier's Project Hope is the approximately \$15 million over the next three years. So that is the amount. So the report *Healthy Choices in a Healthy Community* was flowed into the Premier's Project Hope. So the final number is 14.7 million.

Ms. Draude: — I have lots of questions I can ask, but I appreciate the fact that we are over time. And I will look forward to being able to see the results of the money that's being spent the next time we get together. Thank you to the minister.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Thank you very much, and thank you to the member for all her good work over the past years. Thanks.

The Chair: — Thank you. Then seeing no more questions, Health vote 32 on page 13 of the Supplementary Estimates book, central management and services (HE01), 250,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Regional health services (HE03), \$114,137,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — I'll have a motion:

Be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2006, the following sums for Health, 114,387,000.

May I have a motion? Mr. Borgerson. All agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — The motion is carried. Thank you to the ministers and their officials.

[Vote 32 agreed to.]

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — November
Culture, Youth and Recreation
Vote 27**

Subvotes (CR03), (CR09), (CR06), and (CR08)

The Chair: — The next item up for business before the committee is the consideration of supplementary estimates for the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation found on page 12 of the Supplementary Estimates book. I'll have the minister introduce herself and her officials.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — My name is Joan Beatty and I'm Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. And with me this evening is Glenn Hagel, Legislative Secretary for Saskatchewan Centennial 2005; Barbara MacLean, deputy minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation; Bryon Burnett, CEO [chief executive officer] of Saskatchewan Centennial 2005; Dawn Martin, executive director of culture and heritage; Dylan Jones, executive director of strategic policy for CYR [Culture, Youth and Recreation]; Melinda Gorrill, director of corporate services for CYR; Ken Alexce, CEO and president of SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network]; and also Twyla MacDougall, executive director of planning and finance for SCN.

The Chair: — Thank you. Questions. Ms. Draude.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Chairman. To the minister, good evening. I have a number of questions, and I'm going to start again with the centennial. I have an email from someone who was talking about the recent decision to mail out 150,000 centennial pins to seniors. I'm aware that . . . First of all I'm wondering why this decision was made at this late date to send out this many pins? This summer we were under the understanding that they were a rare commodity, and now all of a sudden there seems to be an abundance of them.

Mr. Hagel: — The decision was not made at a late date. The decision was made quite some time ago. This is a special seniors' pin, a seniors' centennial pin, and it's being sent out at this time in the centennial year. We're into the phase of the centennial celebration, which is the expression of appreciation for Saskatchewan people for contributions having been made, well, through the centennial year, but really to our province over a long period of time, and this is a way of expressing thanks on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan to those who

are seniors in the province. And so each senior, each person over 65, in Saskatchewan will receive a seniors' centennial pin.

Ms. Draude: — So this was something that was considered for a while or has been determined for a while. I know that the cost to send them out is I believe about . . . I guess I'm going to ask you. What is the cost for these pins and for the mailing out of these pins?

Mr. Hagel: — It's approximately \$200,000 it works out to. The pin and the processing is about \$1.40 per person.

Ms. Draude: — We also notice that lately there has been a number of plaques given to towns and organizations to thank you for their centennial celebrations, for the work they put on. How many of these thank-you plaques are done up, are being considered to be given to communities and which communities get them?

Mr. Hagel: — I think you're probably referring to communities or organizations who have had a centennial celebration. There would be about, just about 4,000. And the arrangement is this, is that throughout . . . this was actually announced on January 1 that in support of communities and organizations that would have their own centennial celebrations, and just my last check on the centennial website, the number of officially registered events is now 3,989, so we're 11 short of 4,000.

Each of them, when they register, then are provided . . . well information to advertise on the website. They also then have received — or will receive if their event hasn't been held yet — the centennial promotional materials to bring centennial colour and flavour and that sort of thing to their events. And along with that, then there is a certificate that they receive to acknowledge their centennial event. Some people will frame it and put it up. Others will keep it among their records or their souvenirs of the event.

Ms. Draude: — Some of them have been taken out and given personally to communities, is that correct?

Mr. Hagel: — Not that I'm familiar. No I think . . . As far as I know these have all been sent out. They're probably in most cases included with the centennial materials when they receive that; it's part of their package so that, as we've been preparing in the centennial office, the materials to go out and putting it together, the certificate would be included in that. And then those are . . . The organization or town or whoever is sponsoring the event then is advised where the materials can be picked up and then they pick them up there.

Ms. Draude: — Can you tell me the number of employees in the centennial office and the amount that was spent on salaries?

Mr. Hagel: — There will not be this many people at the centennial office now because what's happened is as the centennial office wrapped up . . . it grew as the demands increased, and then it maxed this summer just before the centennial celebrations because this was . . . July and August was obviously the heaviest amount of activity time. And now it's starting to wrap down now as you move towards closure.

At its maximum there were 27 salaried staff, two . . . or sorry,

and three contract staff for a total of 30. And the salaries for the 2-year project are \$1.210 million.

Ms. Draude: — That includes the salaries spent . . . The employees that were contracted by Brown Communications, can you break that down separately in money given to Brown Communications?

Mr. Hagel: — Yes I'm sorry I don't have that in exact terms here, but we'll provide that to you.

Ms. Draude: — Can you tell me how much money was made from the sale of the centennial merchandise and the breakdown of the costs for selling it, like the operation of the stores and the purchase of the materials?

Mr. Hagel: — Because we've not finished our business year or our fiscal year, we don't have final numbers at this stage. But that will be tallied, and that will be part of our final report. There have been revenues in excess of \$1 million which is returned to the General Revenue Fund.

Ms. Draude: — By revenues, is that profit or is that total?

Mr. Hagel: — Yes that's revenue received.

Ms. Draude: — And I appreciate if we could just get the information. I know it'll be in the report, but perhaps you could just give me a copy of it when you have the information. Is that possible?

Mr. Hagel: — Actually it'll probably be right together with the report. And you'll certainly receive a copy of the report which will have that.

Just on the merchandise too, that will directly relate to the item that is before us, before the committee in the supplementary estimates right now. Because a portion of this, about \$800,000 of this, is to provide those funds for the purchase of the merchandise.

The other side of the coin is that money then is returned. As merchandise is distributed, then the monies are returned to the General Revenue Fund. So it's money in, money out.

Ms. Draude: — So the cost of the merchandise is approximately \$800,000. And so you made about \$200,000 on it?

Mr. Hagel: — The 800,000 is for purchases in fiscal year '04-05. And then there have been some purchases in fiscal year '05-06 although they will be relatively small by comparison because the bulk, the large bulk of the centennial merchandise would've been purchased prior to the end of March of course.

Also I think it's been in my view a very successful kind of program. The vast majority of that merchandise was . . . well it was all either made in Saskatchewan — which was the vast majority — and that which wasn't capable of being made in Saskatchewan was all completely value-added in Saskatchewan. So it's been a very good, it's been a very good exercise for Saskatchewan business. There have been . . . And we'll report on that in our final report as well.

And also my final report will refer to the amount of fundraising that it provided for centennial committees and non-profit organizations who used the centennial merchandise then in this year to fund some of their centennial activities or other activities of non-profits.

Ms. Draude: — I imagine your report will also give information on any inventory that's left.

Mr. Hagel: — Yes it will be my hope that there will be very little inventory left. And I think in the grand scheme of things — for sure — because there isn't that much left now. But we'll look at what's an appropriate way of dealing with that inventory, ideally be down to zero. So we'll get as close to that as we can.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I know that any retailer here would understand exactly what you're saying. It would be like buying a calendar for 2005; it's not much good in 2006. So I understand.

Mr. Hagel: — I would say that if you know several people who wear really small sizes that some good centennial deals could be probably be had.

Ms. Draude: — Minister, I'm not sure if you have the information for this question. But if you don't, then again it's something that you could get to me and 15 copies for the committee.

Mr. Hagel: — Well if we can get it in the final report, then we'll have 58 copies to all MLAs.

Ms. Draude: — I wonder if you can give me information regarding the contract for the fireworks, including a description of the RFP [request for proposal], the names of the organizations that submitted their proposal, and the dollar figure of each organization that gave a proposal or a bid.

Mr. Hagel: — Some of that would be in the category of confidential information of course. It was standard . . . We used the standard call for proposal through SPMC [Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation], and that was the process that was used. But we'll provide whatever is according to the standard rules of provision of information.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you. Can I get a listing . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh sorry.

Mr. Hagel: — And by the way did you enjoy the fireworks?

Ms. Draude: — I did.

Mr. Hagel: — You and 300,000 others.

Ms. Draude: — There you go. I didn't get it on my radio, but I saw them. Can I get a listing of the third party organizations or agencies that received funding for the events and the amount received by the organization or agency?

Mr. Hagel: — I believe that information will be in the final report. And if it's acceptable to you . . . If it's not in the final report, we'll provide it separately if it's acceptable to you

because the availability will be at approximately the same time. The final report will come at close to the . . . following the end of the fiscal year because the office will be wrapping up then. But if that's acceptable to you . . .

Ms. Draude: — Thank you. As soon as you can get it, I'd appreciate it. That would be great.

And then the last one is, can you give me the amount spent on communications or advertising by the centennial office, and including the amounts provided to Brown Communications for advertising and communications related to the centennial?

Mr. Hagel: — Okay. I think I can give you a breakdown on the advertising costs. And this would be for the two fiscal years combined. And what I'm providing here then is budget because we're not at the end of the fiscal year yet.

For print advertising it's one million four . . . and these would include the Brown . . . The Brown Communications would be within these figures. The print advertising, \$1,485,935; television advertising, eight hundred and fourteen thousand nine hundred and sixty-seven thousand dollars; radio advertising, \$544,665; interior airport posters for those who are travelling in and out of the province, \$20,893; billboards, this is the outdoor billboards, \$298,529; and Web banner ads are \$12,564 — for a total \$3,177,553.

And I think while giving you those numbers, I would like to acknowledge as well the synergies that I was very pleased to see which occurred by the various medias, both electronic and print medias, who undertook on their own initiative centennial projects and publicity which brought attention to Saskatchewan achievements, matters of interest, and historical interest, and that sort of thing. And so there would have been — it's hard to estimate — but there would have been a value substantially higher than what was paid from the centennial because of the enthusiasm that the, on their own initiative, that our medias took here in the province.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. My colleague from Saskatoon Silver Springs has a couple of questions for you, and then I just have a couple for the minister.

The Chair: — Mr. Cheveldayoff.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Minister, yes I do have a couple of questions. First of all regarding the Mendel Art Gallery . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No it'll be for the minister, not on centennial.

Regarding the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, the Mendel Art Gallery has received some \$4.5 million in funding from the city of Saskatoon, and they've been successful in receiving a Canadian Heritage grant for \$438,500 from the cultural spaces program. And they have informed me that they've applied for a \$4.5 million grant from the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation. Could the minister update me as to the status of this application and any correspondence that's taken place lately?

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — What I will say is that we've received a number. The Mendel Art Gallery is just one of the applications we have received from across the province. And we are in the

process of going through the budgeting, the planning process, as you are aware, so that's one application that we'll also be considering.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Okay. Approximately how many applications have you received for funding, and is there an allocation of funding put forward towards these applications?

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Yes there is two types of applications we've received from across the board. In the area of cultural capital, we've received between six and ten applications, and the total in the amount of about \$11 million. And I think, you know, we're all aware of the need for recreational facilities as well, so there's been applications in that area. As of now, we don't really have a strategy completed yet, you know, as we look at ways to come up with a program or, you know, to meet this need, these applications that have come in.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Madam Minister, when do you anticipate having some correspondence back to the applicant, specifically the group from Saskatoon?

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Basically, you know, we go through the budgeting cycle and we, you know, we have to make decisions based on priorities that the provincial government has to make. So once that process is done, then we'll know what we have to work with.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Is it fair to say that the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon is a priority with your department?

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Well there's a number of facilities across the province that are just as important as the Mendel Art Gallery. You know at this point in time I cannot say that, you know, it's more important than some others. But for sure it is an important facility. There's no question.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Madam Minister, I have the estimates here in front of me. And I'm just wondering, does the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina receive any funding from your department? I don't see it as a line item itself, but does it receive funding currently from your department?

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — We provide funding from two sources — some from the lotteries and some from CYR. And I'm going to ask the deputy to explain the breakdown of that.

Ms. MacLean: — We have money provided in our budget, in the accommodation line of our budget. So \$1.684 million is provided for that. And there is a payment made each year out of the lotteries for \$275,000 that goes to the MacKenzie Art Gallery. They'd also receive funding from the Arts Board, but I don't have that information available. Okay?

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Are you aware, does the Mendel Art Gallery receive similar funding from your department or from lotteries or through your . . .

Ms. MacLean: — They do from lotteries. They do not receive any accommodation funds from the department as the Mendel Art Gallery is a city-owned-and-operated facility.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Okay. Well thank you for the information. I guess we'll be looking towards the 2006 budget from what I'm understanding from your answers for capital funding. And I certainly hope your department sees its way to consider the Mendel Art Gallery as a priority, especially in light of what's happening with the downtown Saskatoon River Landing projects right now. You know, time is of the essence. Some federal money has been allocated and needs to be triggered, and I certainly would like to see something happening there in 2006. And I look forward to further questioning and debate on this issue.

Another question, Madam Chair. Madam Minister, it's regarding Saskatchewan Communications Network. Last week I had the opportunity to be in Stoughton, Saskatchewan and talking to individuals and citizens there in a public forum. And it was brought to my attention that they're not able to receive the legislative broadcast. That may be a surprise to some of us here that people would be requesting real-time television broadcasts of the legislature, specifically question period.

I believe Stoughton and other communities in rural Saskatchewan that don't have a cable provider that carries the legislative channel view the legislative proceedings through SCN and have a choice of early morning rebroadcast or late evening, I believe midnight rebroadcast. Is that indeed correct, and are there any thoughts of doing something in the afternoon in a more convenient time schedule for people?

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — I'm going to get Ken Alexce to respond to that question, CEO of SCN.

Mr. Alexce: — Madam Chair, the broadcast goes out under contract with legislative broadcast control services here. In terms of what they show live and when is part of that contract which is directed to them by the Speaker after consultation with the House leaders.

In terms of what's available to those communities, I'd have to check to see if they're getting anything different from any other community. There shouldn't be a difference between what they get as a broadcast or any other broadcast if they do have cable or Bell ExpressVu or Star Choice which also carries it.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — They get SCN and they get of course the same coverage that everybody else in Saskatchewan gets, but they don't get the cable is my understanding. So they're looking to SCN as their only provider and were expressing an interest in seeing a midday type of broadcast. Right now I believe there's a 7 a.m. and a midnight rebroadcast of question period, and they were asking for something midday.

Mr. Alexce: — We can certainly check into that. I believe that is part of the contract, the direction that we receive in terms of when it's broadcast. But let me check into that, and I can come back with that information.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Alexce. Any other type of leading edge communication technologies that will be used with SCN or used in the rebroadcast of the legislative channels like satellite radio for example, do you have any knowledge of any discussions along that line?

Mr. Alexce: — We have not received a request to broadcast over satellite radio. We do have satellite capability. We haven't actually done any radio transmission of any kind, but it is possible if it was asked for under our contract. The other possibility is using web. We have a website, as does the Legislative Assembly, and we can stream on there as well. And if that's requested, again as part of the contract, can certainly do so.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well thank you for that answer. Certainly individuals that were expressing their opinions to me very much appreciated the Bell ExpressVu and the Star Choice choices that they do have and were expressing an interest in satellite radio and any other technologies.

And may I just add a personal note. It's good to see you, Mr. Alexce, a former colleague of mine at the department of western Economic Diversification. So good to see you here. Thank you for those answers. That's all from my questioning.

The Chair: — Seeing no more questions, vote 27 for Culture, Youth and Recreation on page 12 of your Supplementary Estimates book, culture (CR03), 6,982,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Recreation (CR09), 117,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Community Initiatives Fund (CR06), 133,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Saskatchewan Communications Network (CR08), 50,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — I need a motion then:

Be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2006, the following sums for Culture, Youth and Recreation, 7,282,000.

Mr. Borgerson: — Moved.

The Chair: — Mr. Borgerson so moves. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That's carried.

[Vote 27 agreed to.]

The Chair: — Thank you very much to the minister and her officials.

Subvotes (CP04) and (CP06)

The Chair: — The next item up for business before the committee are supplementary estimates for Corrections and Public Safety, vote 73 on page 11 of the Supplementary Estimates book. I invite the minister to introduce himself and his officials.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Good evening, Madam Chair. Peter Prebble, Minister of Corrections and Public Safety. And with me I'm joined to my right by Mae Boa, who is in charge of administration for our department, and to my left the deputy minister of Corrections and Public Safety, Terry Lang.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Mr. Toth.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Minister it's getting pretty late tonight, so I'm not going to go on too long with a liturgy of questions. I just want to do a quick follow-up on the disaster relief fund, and just a couple of quick questions. Has the minister received inquiries from low-income individuals concerned about the fact that they wouldn't be unable to cover the 20 per cent part of the claim they must pay to access relief?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — I'm going to answer this in two parts, Don. On one quickly to say that I have had cause to talk with one municipal administrator who's pointed out to me that there would be 2 or 3 residents of his community who would have difficulty undertaking repairs that were required because of an inability to cover the 20 per cent cost, even though 80 per cent would be covered by the province. I want to just check to see if there's been any calls to my office on this regard in addition to the this case that I've made reference to.

I'm advised there's been no calls to my ministerial office, and no letters have come to the department on this. But I do recognize that this is a concern for some individuals who will have been impacted, and this is something I think that deserves review by the department.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I guess that's the other question. If the calls do eventually come forward, as people begin to finally realize the cost of the claims and the costs they're going to be dealing with, has the department put in place a plan to address these issues? And if so, what is the plan?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — There isn't a plan in place at this time. I can indicate that I've asked the department to undertake a review of the provincial disaster assistance program, and this is one of the issues that will be looked at in the course of that review. We are looking at the need for possible changes to the program. I should just say these aren't easy to negotiate because this is not just a provincial decision alone. There's also federal cost-sharing arrangements. So one of the issues would be whether we could get the Government of Canada to join us in making some of those adjustments. If they didn't, we'd be basically funding them 100 per cent by ourselves.

Mr. Toth: — And, Mr. Minister, do you think the government will be rethinking its actions last spring and possibly having a little more money in the contingency fund to address disasters down the road? Or are we going to just do the knee-jerk

reaction we had this year?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well we've generally been following a three-year average in terms of our budgeting process. So given the increase in PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] spending this year, I would expect . . . Well it's clear that the three-year average is going to go up significantly. So I can assure you that next year's budget will . . . I have every reason to think it'll be much higher than the budget of \$550,000 this year.

Mr. Toth: — And, Mr. Minister, just a question on the side of Corrections and Public Safety. Can you give me what it is, what it costs to house a prisoner for a year in a correctional centre and in an actual prison? And what costs would be incurred in trying to, in educational and training programs per individual, if you have those numbers.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — In an adult custody facility, the cost is approximately \$126 per day. In a youth custody facility, the cost is higher. It's \$210 per day for youth and a smaller number of youth with a smaller staff ratio. To be looking at the staff/youth ratio, it's a lower ratio in the youth custody facilities than it is in the adult custody facilities. So that's a big part of the difference in cost, and I would say also in more intensive programming in the youth custody facilities, including of course the delivery of K to 12 education in small classrooms where there is often five or six youth and one teacher. So the investment that's made in youth in the custody facilities is significantly higher than it is in the adult facilities.

Now I don't think I've fully answered your question because you also had a question about programming. And I'll ask Mr. Lang if he could elaborate on the points that I've made with respect to the programming issue.

Mr. Lang: — Thank you, Minister. I don't have any specific dollar value in terms of what the programming would cost per day per inmate, for example, but in our . . . the minister referred to our youth custody facilities. And in each of those closed custody facilities, we would have on staff teachers, two or three teachers. Education is mandatory in those facilities.

In the adult facilities we would have smaller amounts. We have some teachers in all of our adult custody facilities, but not to the same extent as in the youth facilities.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you. So, Mr. Minister, just a quick comment. I would understand then when you indicated the cost of 210 a day, that would be basically including education and training.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — That's correct.

Mr. Toth: — Madam Chair, no further questions.

The Chair: — Corrections and Public Safety vote 73. Adult corrections (CP04), 2,535,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Public safety (CP06), 14,650,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — We need a motion then:

Be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2006, the following sums for Corrections and Public Safety, 17,185,000.

Do I have a mover? Mr. Hagel. So moved. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That's carried. Thank you very much to the minister and his officials.

[Vote 73 agreed to.]

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Madam Chair, and my thanks to my officials and my thanks also to members of the committee for their questions.

Mr. Toth: — And, Madam Chair, thank you to the minister and his officials waiting around for this time of the evening. We look forward to further debate when we get into the spring session.

The Chair: — The Clerk is just handing out the standing committee on Human Services fourth report which summarizes the activity that we have done with the estimates. And if there is no errors, we will entertain a motion to:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be adopted and presented to the Assembly on November 29, 2005.

Mr. Elhard, thank you. And all in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Thank you, that's carried.

I need a motion now for the last item on the agenda for us to go in camera. Mr. Elhard? You'll be moving that we're going in camera for this discussion?

Mr. Elhard: — I will so move.

The Chair: — Thank you, all in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed.

[The committee continued in camera.]

[The committee adjourned at 22:55.]