



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Hansard Verbatim Report

No. 29 – April 20, 2006



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Twenty-fifth Legislature

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
2006**

Ms. Judy Junor, Chair
Saskatoon Eastview

Mr. Wayne Elhard, Deputy Chair
Cypress Hills

Mr. Lon Borgerson
Saskatchewan Rivers

Ms. Joanne Crofford
Regina Rosemont

Mr. Don Morgan
Saskatoon Southeast

Mr. Peter Prebble
Saskatoon Greystone

Mr. Milton Wakefield
Lloydminster

[The committee met at 15:08.]

The Chair: — I'll call the meeting to order, but we're going to go in camera just for the first bit.

[The committee continued in camera.]

The Chair: — I will call the meeting to order. We're now being broadcast. Before we deal with The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Amendment Act, we have The Consumer Protection Act, Bill No. 12. And the committee has a report, the fifth report of the committee on our public hearings. I'll entertain a motion to share a draft copy of this report with the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Borgerson: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Borgerson so moves. All agreed that we forward a draft copy of the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Human Services to the Minister of Justice for his consideration?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. All right.

**Bill No. 21 — The Boiler and Pressure Vessel
Amendment Act, 2005**

Clause 1

The Chair: — Then we will move on to item no. 2 on the agenda which is Bill 21, The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Amendment Act, 2005. And we have the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety here to introduce the officials with him. And you had an opening comment last time so this is just a continuation of discussion of the Bill, and we will open it up to questions after you do your introductions.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'd like to reintroduce to you the officials I have with me today for the Bill before us. To my immediate right is the deputy minister of Corrections and Public Safety, Terry Lang. And too, sitting at my left is the executive director responsible for licensing and inspection — pardon me; I should have known that — Brian Krasium.

And with that I would like to thank you for your co-operation the last time we were before the committee. I would note I have provided you with packages of information that I hope would be helpful. I am sorry for the delay in getting those to you and open the floor for any questions you might have.

The Chair: — I just ask if everyone has a copy of that. I know I have mine. Some people don't. Do you have extra ones with you?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I forwarded copies to Mr. Toth. I'm sorry if I didn't forward enough copies.

The Chair: — All right then. We'll proceed with questions from the members. Mr. Elhard.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister and your officials for being here again today.

As we concluded our discussions on April 4, I was into asking questions about the way inspections were going to be undertaken on pressure vessels, boilers, as they relate to antique farm equipment and so forth. And I think we'd covered a lot of ground there, but as a result of a conversation I had earlier today with an acquaintance who is very actively involved in that type of activity — thresherman's activity — I have a few additional questions I want to ask.

I understand that there are several different designs — primarily three — but a variety of designs that were in common usage when boilers were constructed and sold for agricultural and industrial application. We're talking about antique boilers now. And I'm wondering if all of those designs are going to be treated equally under the inspection provisions and the regulations that are going to be laid out with this particular piece of legislation, or will there be varying regulations depending on the design of the boiler?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much for the question. We do treat all antique boiler pressure vessels exactly the same. They all fall under the 100 psi [pounds per square inch] requirement.

Mr. Elhard: — Can the minister tell me from his knowledge of this area, are all of the designs of boilers constructed with rivets? Was that the only construction design of boiler equipment?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Because of the technical nature of this particular question, I'd ask Brian to answer these questions. He is the technical expert.

Mr. Krasium: — Brian Krasium, the executive director of licensing and inspections. No, there is a method of fabrication that uses welding as well in some of these antique traction engines, not just riveted.

Mr. Elhard: — I understand there was also another design that basically incorporated two curved ends of plate basically that interlocked and then were wrapped with an expansion band to tighten them up. Are you familiar with that design?

Mr. Krasium: — Not personally I'm not, no.

Mr. Elhard: — Okay. One of the concerns that has been raised as a result of this legislation is the possibility that riveted designed boilers, or boiler designs that employ riveting will be banished or outlawed as a result of this particular piece of legislation. Is that an assumption that is correct?

Mr. Krasium: — That is incorrect. We have not changed. We are not proposing any changes to the way we handle our antique traction engine inspection program. So the riveted boilers are being treated the same as the welded or the banded ones that you're describing.

Mr. Elhard: — As we go forward, is it the understanding or expectation of the department that the designs that include

rivets will likely weaken and fail to meet the 100 . . . I guess it's 200-pound psi test level that is incorporated when inspections are undertaken. Will they be expected to crash first?

Mr. Kراسيun: — Through our inspection program we have nothing that would indicate that mode of failure being more prominent in a riveted boiler compared to a boiler or an antique boiler of another fabrication method.

Mr. Elhard: — In the experience of the department, have you found a significant difference in the types of design by different manufacturers? The reason I'm asking that particular question is that I'm led to believe that boilers that were built in Canada, that were identified as Canadian boilers, were considered to be a superior product even in the early days when these boilers were in common usage than boilers that were introduced from different countries by a variety of manufacturers; that we had sort of a superior standard of design and construction at that time; and that boilers that were brought into Canada from other jurisdictions — although they were satisfactory at the time — were not designed to the same standards of safety and longevity.

Mr. Kراسيun: — We have quite a few manufacturers of the antique traction engines within the province. Just to name a few of these manufacturers — we have Eric Brown, Case, Vulcan, Slant Fin, Garth Scott, Geo White, Waterloo, Reeves, Rumley, Sawyer Massey, Nichol Sheppard, Baldwin, Robert Bell and Oliver's Boiler, and Geiser.

The history behind these boilers as far as who the original manufacturer is and the operational history as far as whether or not the boiler had originally operated in the province of Saskatchewan or Canada, for that matter, we are uncertain. I do know that through our inspection program and through our inspectors who have a vast knowledge, some of which who have a vast knowledge in this area, had indicated that the original design of these boilers I believe was at around 140 psi. Because of some form of patent pending at the time, they then tried to get around the patent. Some of the manufacturers tried to get around the patent pending by offering various working pressures of their unit. So then after that, we had found some of the pieces of equipment that came in at 125 psi and 150 psi. Now the original operating pressure of these pieces of equipment is not known. That is what history has told us — that there was this range of pressure equipment.

So to answer your question directly — whether or not a piece of equipment that was built in Canada for use in Canada is superior to anything that may have been imported from the United States — we have nothing. I don't have any information that would support or go against that claim.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you. I would also like just to remind the member that there is nothing before us in this piece of legislation or anticipated in the regulations that will come before us that changes anything for antique traction devices, moving forward. All we are doing is taking the rules, regulations, and legislation as it was and as is in place today. There is nothing changing that before us today at all.

Mr. Elhard: — I'm glad to hear the minister say that because I think that is one of the concerns that had been directed to us as

a result of some of the discussions that have arisen around this particular piece of legislation. There is a concern among some individuals who do this as a hobby that there is a potential possibility, I guess, that the machinery that they're particularly working with or own or enjoy will be ruled inoperable as a result of the application of the regulations going forward. And I think there is some concern that certain designs, certain constructed designs might be more affected and more readily affected than others depending on the kind of design and the manufacture and the original source of that particular piece of equipment.

One additional question on this. I'm asking it for curiosity's sake. As I understand it, when these machines are operated for field days or parades and so forth, they're restricted to 100 psi. Most of them are designed for 125 to 150 psi. And yet when you test them, you run them to 200 psi. What's the collateral damage going to be if under testing at 200 psi one of these things fails?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I'll turn that question over to our technical expert who would have a much better understanding of that.

Mr. Kراسيun: — The design of this equipment according to the original code of construction — which is ASME [American Society of Mechanical Engineers], section I — required at the time of construction for this unit to be hydrostatically tested at one and a half times its theoretical design pressure. So at an average of 140 psi, which is one of the numbers that you quoted, one and a half times that would be at 210 psi. Doing an ongoing pressure test at 200 psi is well below any kind of pressure this unit might have ever experienced.

Mr. Elhard: — I've lost my train of thought. I was intrigued by that particular answer because, you know, I know that there is very serious safety concerns associated with the operating of these particular pieces of equipment. And if they've been overdesigned as you indicated in your answer, then testing at 200 psi is really not a safety, is not a safety issue at all. Correct?

Mr. Kراسيun: — The test that we're talking about that we perform at 200 psi is a hydrostatic test which means that we fill the unit with water. Water is an incompressible fluid. So at the time of testing if there ever is a leak or some form of a rupture, then there is an instantaneous release of the energy which is very minimal. It would result in a small leak of water. If this item was to rupture or be tested with a compressible fluid such as air or steam, there is a much larger stored energy and so a failure at that pressure with that fluid would be much more serious.

Mr. Elhard: — The final question, or the area of questioning that I'd like to pursue is the consistency of the inspection process, given the human element associated with it. I'm led to believe that some individuals, some inspectors, really don't care much for this particular type of operation and are very, I don't know, heavy-handed might be a way to describe their application of the rules, whereas other inspectors are really quite fascinated by this whole area of endeavour and are at least much more accommodating.

How does the department intend to stabilize or standardize their inspection process in that environment?

Mr. Krasium: — Mr. Lang expressed last time we met . . . Last year during the province's centennial we actually started a program for the inspection of these antique programs where we had a team of two inspectors, two dedicated inspectors, who travelled throughout the province and inspected each and every antique traction engine. This was done for two reasons. One was to develop and to acquire a baseline data for all the equipment throughout the province, both pictorial and technical. And secondly, it was to provide a consistent inspection approach to how we handle traction engines last year and in the future.

We do have training that we provide our field inspectors for inspecting this type of equipment. As a matter of fact, we have such training scheduled for next week, over two days of training, that we're gathering all our field inspectors together to one of the Western Development Museums in the province to thoroughly go over and share the information that each of the inspectors has to provide a consistent model and approach to the future inspection of these types of pieces of equipment.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you. I think the response will be of some reassurance to individuals in this area of interest. They spend a lot of time developing their hobby and working to make sure these machines are operational and safe and enjoyable for them and enjoyed by the communities in which they demonstrate and show off their pet project. So I think they'll appreciate that approach, and thank you for your time. No further questions from me.

The Chair: — Mr. Toth.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Minister, at our last meeting you commented on a July 29, '01 county fair in Ohio where an antique steam engine blew up, and a number of people were killed and a number injured.

We have received an email from that comment, and it's coming from the antique boilers association. And basically they're pointing out that they looked very carefully and were unable to find explosions that were caused only by base material failure. They're indicating that the situation that happened here was that overpressure will cause leaks well in advance of any major event, talking about the safety factor and how you check boilers. And what they're suggesting is this . . . the incident happened here was more the result of that it was basically operator error that caused the problem, not a faulty boiler and that outside of the fact that, if it had been inspected properly, this would not have taken place.

And I guess the concern that they have is if inspections are conducted appropriately, I think is what they're indicating, that this wouldn't happen. And those issues would be dealt with and then we wouldn't really run into a situation where organizations are forced to shut down shows, had inspections been done appropriately and well in advance of, say, at thresherman day or whatever.

And I guess their concern is it's . . . I think what they were doing was taking your comment to indicate that their concerns really weren't, aren't that appropriate and that they're being basically looked upon as not being very careful in how they manage and how they conduct their affairs.

And I guess that's . . . I think they just want a clarification — coming back to what Mr. Elhard said as well — that indeed inspections will be done in appropriate, timely fashion so that it doesn't disrupt how a fair is conducted and how a thresherman's day is conducted and that these associations will be consulted if there are any concerns raised and that the department is willing to work with them to address these issues rather . . . in an amicable fashion rather than a confrontational mode.

And I guess what I'm asking, Mr. Minister, as we move forward on this piece of legislation . . . You've kind of indicated, and I would like your assurances, that the department will do everything within its authority to ensure that there was a working environment so that these associations can continue to do their fair days.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much for the question. I'd like to just ensure the public and those that are concerned about this that when I raised this particular issue, was not the intent to in any way indicate that these people were not diligent in their responsibilities as operators or in any way not properly maintaining their equipment or looking after or looking out for the concerns of the public and citizens.

What I wanted to . . . As I was stressing, we do inspect these boilers for reasons of public safety and for those same reasons because in some cases, and in many cases, unknown and uncertain parts restrict the operations currently to 100 psi. And we do that for public safety. It was by no means any reflection on any of the operators or how they maintain their equipment.

And I would like to reassure them that we will continue — there's nothing here that's changing — we will continue to work with them to continue to make sure that the people of our province get to experience that portion of our rich heritage that shows our young people and generations to come what our past has been as far as agriculture and how we carried out the agriculture activities in the early years of our pioneers. And by no means are we going to change anything, and nothing in this legislation changes anything. And we're very pleased to work in co-operation with those antique tractor owners or operators.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, one final question here. And first of all let me say thank you. Well it was, earlier this day we received information to a number of questions we had posed a while back. You had indicated in a follow-up letter that stakeholders were asked to complete a questionnaire and attend one of two meetings, one in Saskatoon and one in Regina, in regards to this piece of legislation.

The question I would have, Mr. Minister, is what kind of response did you get to the questionnaire? Were these meetings well attended? And how did your department respond to . . . were there any . . . I guess the question is: questions — were they raised, concerns, and how did your department respond in view of the fact that you invited stakeholders to come and offer their opinions?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Well I'd like to start by indicating that the responses were good, were large in number. The stakeholders, the total number of stakeholders that attended the meetings were 30 and an additional 17 responded by virtue of just a

survey. But the consultations were varied across the industry, were well received, and the responses came back with indications on how to make the program better in our province.

Mr. Toth: — And one of the groups that attended, would the Steam Association of Saskatchewan have taken the time, that you're aware of, to attend one of the meetings to offer their concerns or raise the issues that they had in regards to the Act?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Yes. They were in attendance, and they also submitted a report to the department which will also be part of the submission to the legislative instruments committee.

The Chair: — Mr. Wakefield.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Minister, we've been spending a lot of time talking about the antique traction steam engines and so on. My question is maybe going to expand that a little bit. Was there consultations in drafting these amendments with parts of the industry that are more involved in steam generation and pressure vessels involved in the oil industry as an example, where steam is used now as an enhanced recovery for bitumen oil?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — The simple answer is yes, and many of the major stakeholders that are involved in this industry have been involved and consulted throughout this process.

Mr. Wakefield: — Are any of the amendments that are included here, are any of these amendments going to affect how the operations of those steam plants are going to be operated after the passing of the Act?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I'm going to ask Brian to answer this question.

Mr. Krasium: — Our revised boiler and pressure vessel safety Act and the proposed regulations which will be forthcoming have recognized advancements in the operational controls of boilers. So in regards to heating boilers or low-pressure steam boilers, we have introduced some changes to operator attendance requirements, reducing the amount of attendance necessary pending the rating of the boiler or the size of the boiler plant. We have introduced a number of different types of attendance requirements compared to the traditional method of mandatory 24-7 attendance and of course those are based upon certain types of occupancy and the environment where the boiler is installed.

When it comes to high pressure power generation boilers I don't believe there are any changes in the operator attendance requirements for those units.

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Minister, because it is such a significant part of the economy in my part of the province, are there any . . . Following the explanation that was just offered, is it going to cost the companies involved in the steam generation for injection into the, you know, petroleum levels, is it going to cost the companies any additional to comply with these amendments?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — The short answer is no. In fact it could have the exact opposite effect and save those same companies

potential revenue and resources.

Mr. Wakefield: — I'm pleased to hear that and I'm sure that was included in some of the consultations, I would assume. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — We've received no negative feedback from those stakeholders on this issue.

Mr. Wakefield: — One of the unique aspects of the petroleum industry in the area where I am of course is that bitumen oil is . . . needs enhanced recovery primarily and it's on both sides of the border, of the Saskatchewan-Alberta border. And I would assume most of the plants that are being designed and built are done so in Alberta and then installed in either Alberta or Saskatchewan. Because it's a common field; it's not an Alberta field or a Saskatchewan field.

Is there any differences that you would be aware of, or through consultations you've become aware of, that would cause a problem in both design and installing this equipment on the Saskatchewan side as opposed to the Alberta side because it's virtually side by side there?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — The short answer is no. We've actually made it much easier for those companies to bring equipment into the province and set up.

Mr. Wakefield: — That's very encouraging and I assume that was part of the overall objective, is to try and coordinate exactly that.

I just have one more question, Madam Chair. Mr. Minister, I read in some of your information that the first and second class certification, which was a passing mark . . . when the exams are written was at the 60 per cent range, with kind of an average of 70 per cent of your whole marking, is now changed to 65 per cent. Is there a change for third and fourth class as well? Maybe I just missed it in the information.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I'm going to ask Brian to answer that question because of its technical nature.

Mr. Krasium: — What we've done is we've changed our marking scheme, our traditional marking scheme within the province of Saskatchewan to come into line with the recommendations of SOPEEC [standardization of power engineer's examination committee], which is the standardization of power engineering examinations. And that is a recognition of an achievement of an operational certificate within one province that is recognized for transfer throughout Canada.

We have had a different grading system in the province of Saskatchewan compared to other provinces and the SOPEEC guidelines for a number of decades. And this is an adjustment to bringing on stream or bring it to the comparable level that everybody else is operating under.

Mr. Wakefield: — I think that's desirable. I just wondered if it's going to be increasingly difficult or will people, will our power engineers that wish to become certified in third class or fourth class be required a more stringent marking system now.

Mr. Krasium: — From my experience in the examination program and assessing an individual for a certification, we found that the averaging portion of our marking has been a difficult achievement for them to obtain. So it's not the passing grade. It's the overall averaging that they've been having difficulty in obtaining and that has been delaying their receipt of a certificate. So based upon that experience, I would tend to believe that we're making it . . . I don't want to say that we're making it easier, but I don't think we're introducing any changes that would make it any more difficult for them to obtain a certificate.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: — Mr. Elhard.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Chair, thank you. Since my colleague, Mr. Wakefield, brought us into the other major area of this particular piece of legislation maybe . . . I'd like to get just a couple of other items on the record.

Mr. Minister, I know that you're excited about this legislation and you want to crow about it a little bit, so I might be lobbing you a softball here. But I can tell by the countenance on your face that I probably am in the right area.

Part of this legislation allows for self-inspection opportunities by businesses. Do you want to tell us why you've done that, what you think the benefits are, and what the impact might be throughout industrial applications?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Well you're talking about our quality management program and it will do a number of things for us. One, it will put in place the ability for companies to inspect their own equipment and of course be monitored by the department or audited by the department.

It'll do a number of things. One, it will allow companies who have the capacity and the ability to inspect their own equipment — have inspectors in some cases on staff already in other jurisdictions — to use those inspectors to inspect their equipment in this province. It will also allow us to concentrate our efforts then with the inspectors we have on those pieces of equipment that need to . . . that companies are not in a position to have the technical expertise and inspectors on their own staff or the ability to hire them, to do that work.

It will help industry and they will be able to move forward on inspections of their equipment on their timetables because of course those inspectors will be theirs. It will allow businesses then to make certain business decisions and changes as they . . . on the timetables they want without necessarily having to wait in some cases. But most importantly it allows . . . it recognizes that industry has the expertise and technical ability themselves to carry out those inspections, and it allows them to do those things on their own timetable then.

Mr. Elhard: — Does this by itself bring us up to a playing level that other jurisdictions were already at? Does this put us on an equal footing with other jurisdictions both from a technical point of view — I think that's an important question — from a capability point of view, but also from a capacity point of view? Because there's a real demand and a shortage for

these kinds of qualified people in jurisdictions all across the country, not just in this province. So by doing this have we addressed not just the technical capability and the efficiencies that business would like, but also a recognition that we had to be competitive and by doing this we've achieved that goal?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — The short answer is yes. This puts us on an equivalent footing with the province of Alberta. The one difference from the Alberta program and ours is when Alberta introduced their program, they made it mandatory. At this point we're making our program voluntarily. That is at the request of industry so that it can be phased in and doesn't just take effect instantly in one day. Industry would prefer it be put in, in this method. So through consultations with industry, that's where we're going.

Mr. Elhard: — No further questions.

The Chair: — Mr. Toth.

Mr. Toth: — One final question, Mr. Minister. As you are aware, when this Bill came forward in the fall, the minister at the time indicated that proclamation of the '99 Act had been delayed in order to develop and finalize supporting regulations. Now over the process of questioning regarding Bill 21, you've indicated that you've been moving forward with regulations. You've had consultation.

And I guess my question is: when can we expect the regulations will actually be in place? Back in the fall the minister indicated spring of '06. Are we on line to achieve that goal or will those regulations be delayed even further?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — We're at this point anticipating them coming into effect in the summer or fall of this year, 2006.

Mr. Toth: — Can you give us a more specific timeline?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — At this point I can't. It depends on whether or not we pass . . . at what point we pass legislation and then have the ability to bring forward regulations through that process.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, just based on that comment, I'm anticipating that you've been actually working on, your department's working on regulations that will fall into line with the legislation. And I would anticipate the legislation will proceed actually fairly quickly once we move forward with passage of the legislation and I would anticipate Royal Assent fairly quickly. How long will it take following Royal Assent — two, three months? — to actually move forward with the anticipated regulatory changes?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I would like to indicate that we have actually completed consultations on the regulations. The time frames are such that we cannot implement these regulations till after July 1. So we're anticipating shortly after that period of time to implement these regulations, legislation and regulations.

The Chair: — Seeing no further questions then . . . Short title, is that agreed?

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 10 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: An Act to amend The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999.

Do I have a motion to adopt the Bill, or to move the Bill forward without amendment?

Mr. Elhard: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Elhard. Thank you. Agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Now before we move into estimates, I have one letter from the Minister of Justice to table, dated March 28. I'll table that now so you can all get a copy. Oh you have a copy, okay.

And the second item before we move into estimates is to advise the committee that it has received an order of the Assembly dated April 13, 2006 to consider and report back on the estimates and supplementary estimates for the following departments and agencies: vote 37 and 169, Advanced Education and Employment; vote 36, Community Resources; vote 73, Corrections and Public Safety; vote 27, Culture, Youth and Recreation; and vote 3, Justice.

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

Subvote (CP01)

The Chair: — So now we'll move into the third item on the agenda which is the consideration of estimates and supplementary estimates for the Department of Corrections and Public Safety. And that will be found on page 45 of your budget book, starting at page 45. The minister is here still and has some new officials, if you would like to introduce them. And if you have any statements at all on your estimates, you can give them at this time.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'd like to introduce the officials I have with me today. To my immediate right is of course Terry Lang, the deputy minister. To my left is Mae Boa who is the executive director of management services. Back on this end is Bob Kary, the executive director of the young offenders program. And the gentleman seated in the middle is Tom Young, the executive director of protection and emergency services. The gentleman next to him is Barry Sockett, the director of human resources. Beside Mr. Sockett is Avonda McKay, the director of institutional services, adult corrections. And at the end of the list is Brian Krasium who is the executive director of licensing and inspections.

And, Madam Chair, with that I would like to make some introductory remarks. The mandate for the Department of Corrections and Public Safety is to promote safe communities by delivering effective programs for individuals in conflict with

the law; for emergency planning and communication through monitoring of building standards; the delivery of fire prevention and disaster assistance programs; and through licensing and inspection services. The budget for Corrections and Public Safety supports this direction.

Within the department's strategic plan, a number of goals and objectives have been identified and are reported on annually. They are multi-year and reflect the building of community capacity, effective correctional program interventions, and the development of emergency preparedness and safety standards. And as this is primarily an operational department with a large staff contingent, they are also focused on safe, healthy, and respectful workplaces.

To give you a sense of the primary key activities of the department, here are some key statistics. In 2005-06 the department supervised an average of 1,244 adults in custody programs and 6,016 adult offenders in community correctional programs. In 2005-06 the department supervised an average of 208 youth in custody programs and 2,123 young people in the community. In 2005-06 we completed a total of 11,527 inspections on boilers, pressure vessels, elevating devices, and amusement rides. Over the summer of '05, 95 communities in Saskatchewan experienced weather-related disasters. This generated over 2,300 claims in the 2005-06 year under the provincial disaster assistance program.

The overall budget for the department will increase by \$18.27 million or 14.2 per cent to a total of 146.613 million.

The department's full-time equivalents will increase by 11 to 1,694.7 full-time equivalents. The majority of the increase, 12.287 million, is for a one-time investment in capital. That includes \$10.77 million for a two-year capital construction of the Regina Correctional Centre; \$700,000 for safety and security upgrades at the Saskatoon Provincial Correctional Centre; 527,000 for two years of the justice enterprise integrated network project, this is the development of an integrated computer system for the justice system; 190,000 for a long-term planning study for the Pine Grove Correctional Centre; and \$100,000 for a collocation study with the federal government and system upgrades for the provincial emergency operations centre.

An additional \$100,000 is provided for the violence reduction strategy. You will recall that this program was initiated in 2005-06 with funding of \$200,000. The violence reduction strategy delivers specific training to staff and specialized program and case management for violent offenders. Research has shown that programs that reduce violence in the facilities also reduce reoffending in the community. The focus of the 2006-07 budget will be on establishing a supportive employment initiative for offenders in collaboration with the Department of Advanced Education.

Building on the success of the community partnerships like the Regina auto theft strategy, 270,000 is provided. This will provide resources to expand the existing initiatives in Regina and Prince Albert as well as enhance the Cree court and establish new initiatives in La Ronge.

300,000 is provided to implement a gang suppression strategy

for high-risk youth. This initiative will further reduce the offending of youth from the socially disadvantaged inner-city areas and northern youth, including youth that may be gang active or vulnerable to gang recruitment.

Substance abuse is one of the contributing factors to offending. Research indicates that effective treatment in substance abuse reduces the likelihood of reoffending. So \$550,000 is provided for addiction services in adult and young offender custody facilities as part of the Premier's Project Hope initiative. This program will be developed in partnership with the regional health authorities across the province.

\$210,000 is allocated to temporarily address overcrowding at Pine Grove Correctional Centre by utilizing the Sharber 12-bed unit pending the completion of a long-term facility plan.

Of the remaining increase, 4.086 million is to provide for the cost of the collective agreement, salary supplements for occupations in demand such as nurses, and increased utility costs for our adult and youth facilities.

This budget enables us to continue our work with key partners such as local and First Nations communities.

At this time, I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

The Chair: — Thank you then. Questions? Mr. Toth.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Chair. And welcome to the minister and his officials.

Mr. Minister, I'm going back to boiler inspections for a bit, in general. And it's our understanding that there are a number of overdue boiler inspections, that we're actually behind. There's some concerns in regards to the overdue boiler inspections. And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you can indicate how long this has been going on. And when do you anticipate that you'll be able or the department will catch up with the inspections that are currently outstanding?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much for the question. I'd like to indicate that the new legislation will significantly reduce the number of inspections required for two reasons. One, it will reduce the number of inspections of low-pressure vessels, significantly reducing the number of inspections actually required. So it's reducing the number of actual vessels that need to be inspected.

Secondly, the quality management program when implemented will result in a number of inspections being done by industry themselves and then audited by the department, which should significantly reduce the number of overall inspections required on an annual basis actually by department personnel.

Now to have a specific date when we'll actually be in a position when there won't be any inspections, I can't at this point predict that date. But the legislation that we are moving through the system and its accompanying regulations will have a significant impact on the total number of inspections required.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would also like to

indicate of the 955 current overdue boilers in the province, the new regulations, once they're put in place in legislation, will eliminate 182 of those from licensing. It will also change the interval, inspection interval of 293 . . . [inaudible] . . . boilers to a date which is, would not have them at this current overdue, as well as the other comments I made previously about the quality management program and its impact on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, it's from questions, responses to questions that we had asked early in the session. I noted that the overdue inspections had actually increased from 530 in March of '05 to the 955 in March of '07, which you have now indicated 182 will be, that number will be reduced by 182 as a result of some of the changes coming forward through the legislation. And that's still a significant number of overdue inspections.

And what is the department doing to address these overdue inspections and how do you hope to get them to a point where, I guess I could use the word, they're seen as being more manageable and more in tune with what would be seen as a timely manner of inspection?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much for the question. I'd like to indicate at this time that of the 12 positions we have, we currently have two vacancies which we are attempting to staff up. Staffing up those two vacancies will help significantly with dealing with the backlog. So we now have 10 positions of the 12 we have actually occupied.

I'd also like to indicate that the quality management program will remove 16,000 pieces of equipment potentially from our requirement to inspect. That will become the responsibility of industry. And that is a reduction of 45 per cent of the overall equipment in the province of Saskatchewan requiring inspection.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, of the overdue inspections, is this fairly general province-wide or are there significantly more in one region versus another? And which region would have the highest number of overdue inspections?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much. It can be best described as a general distribution of the populated areas of the province is where the overdue inspections would be located.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, has your department done a risk assessment on the risks involved in overdue inspections? Is there a concern in the department about the number of inspections that are overdue and whether or not they create a risk factor to the general public?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — While the backlog exists, they represent low-end risk areas since priority of inspection has been maintained for high public occupancy locations. So in the backlog of inspections it has been the department's endeavour to ensure that high-risk areas in fact have been inspected, and those that remain in the backlog are areas of very low risk. And many with the new legislation regulation will not be inspected, not require inspection.

Mr. Toth: — Of those areas of high risk, I would take it that they would be schools, hospitals, or long-term care facilities, of

public use that still use boilers or hot water heat. Am I correct?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — That would be correct.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, when you mention about the high-risk areas, and these would be . . . As we've just indicated, they're areas where there would be a major public concern because it's public involvement and public living in those facilities. I guess the question is, how many overdue inspections are there in those areas, or are those areas basically up to date and mainly the low-risk areas that we're really behind on?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much for the question. The inspection priorities are set based on the types of community structures you spoke of — schools, hospitals, nursing homes. We ensure that those are properly inspected and up to date. As well, high-risk or high pressure vessels, such as used in power generation and extremely high pressure vessels, are also inspected on a regular basis. And we try to ensure that they don't fall behind at all and get into an overdue status.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, a moment ago I think you indicated that . . . I'm just trying to recall your comment about just hiring two inspectors, or there's two vacancies in the number of inspectors.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — There's currently two vacancies.

Mr. Toth: — How many inspectors would you normally have in the province of Saskatchewan, and where would they be located?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — We currently have 12 inspectors, and they are located in two locations — six in the city of Regina, six in the city of Saskatoon.

Mr. Toth: — Actually with all the inspectors being located in the two major centres, would you not consider that maybe having inspectors outside of the two centres would be a way of addressing some of the inspections? For example when you come to hydro generation and that type of high pressure vessel, is it . . . or the fact that the inspectors are in the two largest centres doesn't impact on whether or not inspections are done on a timely manner?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — The location of the inspectors doesn't impact at all on the ability to do timely inspections. It was found that in fact the offices and the coordination was more effective working out of two regional offices in the province.

Mr. Toth: — So your department is quite confident that the current system is working quite . . . Well we've got a number of overdue situations. The high-risk inspections are actually being carried out in a timely fashion and the inspectors working out of both the two larger centres are able to work within the time frames to ensure that those inspections are done in a timely manner.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Yes. And with a combination of changes in the number of vessels that need to be inspected and the time frames for those inspections moving to standards that are recognized more readily across the country, but also reflect changes in technology, and the building and structure of these

vessels themselves accompanied by moving forward with a quality management program, we are going to be in a position that will allow us to move forward with some confidence in the future.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. My colleagues, any follow-up questions on this before I move off this topic?

The Chair: — Mr. Elhard.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Minister, can you tell us for the record, is there an area — a geographical area — in which some of your overdue inspections are most significantly concentrated? Is there one area of the province that is suffering from overdue inspections more so than any other area?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — The area with the most overdue inspections is in fact the largest geographical area in the province. It happens to be in the Swift Current area of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Elhard: — I think anecdotally I have that information. That's why I asked the question. The largest geographic area also suffers the ignominy of being unattended more frequently than any other area of the province and I just wanted to address some of the difficulties there.

Is there a specific reason why we in the southwest area are unattended in a greater way than other areas?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I'd like to thank the member for the question. And I'd like to assure the member that the Swift Current area is not ignored or treated any differently than other areas of the province.

I think there are two significant factors the member should be aware of. We have two inspectors that regularly frequent that area of the province. But that area of the province will also be one of the areas if not the most significantly impacted by our changes to a quality management program. And one of the challenges in district 1, which includes Swift Current, is the vast geographical area with the frequency of equipment that needs inspection.

And so this is a situation that will change with the quality management program, and in fact this area of the province, or district 1, is getting as much attention or inspections as any other area of the province.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Minister, wouldn't the large geographical area, the sheer distance of travel required, have been a real strong argument to have had placed right in that area some of the inspectors necessary to do the work? You alluded earlier to the fact that inspectors are centralized in both Regina and Saskatoon. But given my own experience, knowing the amount of time it takes to get from here to the middle of that area, would not it have been a prudent decision to have some inspection capacity located right in the city of Swift Current for instance?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much for the question. I'd like to indicate to the member that the reality of the type of

work that the inspectors are required to perform requires them to go to the actual pressure vessel. So the boilers or pressure vessels don't go to the inspectors. They in fact have to go to each individual pressure vessel. So when inspectors come out of Regina or Saskatoon, they will spend several days in the Swift Current area, spending the nights there and doing the inspections.

I'd also like to point out that the majority of inspections in this area are in fact wellheads and very, very low risk in the non-populated areas, pose little or no risk to the public. And many, many, many, many of the pressure vessels needing inspections in that particular area of the province will hopefully fall in the future under the quality management program.

Mr. Elhard: — Just for the record, Mr. Minister, can you give us an indication of how large that geographical area is? When you're talking about the southwest area, can you give us the boundaries of that area?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Actually the response I'm giving I've once tabled with the hon. members in a written question, written question no. 572.

The Swift Current area is defined as the geographical, or referred to by the licensing inspection as district 1. It encompasses 24,300 square miles and is geographically situated at township 25, range 4, west of third meridian, Elbow, Saskatchewan and extended to both Alberta and US [United States] borders. I'm sorry. In the answer we provided it says, Albert and US borders. It is Alberta and US borders. I'm sorry if we confused the written question.

Mr. Elhard: — So that is a very large geographical area and given sort of the central point that Swift Current would make, if there was an inspector based out of Swift Current and travelling to the four corners of that particular geographical area, travel time alone would have helped achieve probably better results in terms of the ability of the department to keep current with their inspection demands. Now if as you indicated, Mr. Minister, the changes to the inspection regulations will reduce the workload of any given inspector for that area, you may achieve the results indirectly that having an inspector based out of Swift Current might have achieved previously.

But assuming that we're not going to see any relocation of inspectors there, with the reduced obligations of the inspector for that particular region, could you tell me how many overdue inspections are there currently in that geographical area? And how soon do you hope to be able to make those inspections up?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much for the question. I'd like to indicate that the reference to ... The different geographical districts around the province are simply a management tool. The boundaries are only used as a management tool to in fact disperse or dispense inspectors to the area to carry out inspections within that geographical area.

I can't at this time provide you with an exact number of total inspections that are overdue in that area because, as you could appreciate, they fluctuate from day to day and we don't have that data with us.

Mr. Elhard: — Would you be able to give us an indication, Mr. Minister, of approximately how much overdue the most outstanding inspection might be at this point?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Well I can tell you as of March 7, the most recent data we have, we have 148 overdue boiler inspections in the Swift Current area.

I can also tell you of those 148, 120 of them are located in Hutterite colonies and are part of hog production operations. And one of the difficulties in, in fact, inspecting hog production operations is to avoid contamination of those operations or transfer of potential disease, a minimum of 24 to 48 hours is required before visiting the next facility. So you can inspect one and then you have to wait two days to inspect the next. So of the 148, 120 of those are in hog production operations.

Mr. Elhard: — So if you dedicated one inspector to just trying to bring the colonies current with their inspections, you could expect the best part of two-thirds of a year to just bring the colonies current, let alone any of the other ones outstanding. Now if you take travel time and holidays and all the rest of those factors into consideration, we're looking at probably a full year just to do the Hutterite colonies.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — But that's why we're not ... Thank you very much for the question, the hon. member for the question. That's why we're not approaching it in that manner.

What we are doing to deal with these types of situations and in fact sending several inspectors down and doing an inspection and then having them go elsewhere and do some inspections and then go back and once again inspect, after that period of contamination has expired, inspect other hog barn operations or producer operations.

It's just not a good use of our resources to have people having the type of downtime that would be required to do that if we had to wait 24 to 48 hours between inspections, when the majority of all outstanding inspections in that entire area would require two days of non-inspection in between. And so we have to utilize the resources of the province — as I'm sure you would appreciate that those resources are in fact the taxpayers' resources — in a most efficient and effective way.

So it in fact would be less effective to do that by actually having one inspector down in the area rather than using our full resources and going down, doing several, and then moving off and doing inspections in other parts of the province.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Minister, I understand the need to use resources at your disposal as effectively as possible, and knowing how well run Hutterite colonies are by, you know, my own experience, I don't think that there's any great urgency to get there. They probably have a much better handle on the requirements and the operational needs of their systems than the inspectors will have when they get there.

But the point is I guess that if you are that far behind in inspections at this point, and given the factors that are going to create additional problems in doing those inspections in a timely way, it's going to be very difficult to ever get that overdue inspection list under control any time within the next

year or year and a half.

So is that going to have any impact on inspections that are needed in other areas? The 20-odd inspections that you said were outside of Hutterite colonies, are they going to be impacted in a unique way or a specific way? And what about other inspections that come up in the meantime, how are they going to be handled?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Well I'd like to point out a number of things to the member opposite, and thank you very much for the question. First off, the nature of the pressure vessels that are located in these particular operations are low risk; the type of vessels that, after the changes, will most likely not require inspection.

And secondarily, I would like to indicate that the benchmarks that we have set for ourselves, as far as inspections and overdue, are to ensure that we in fact are putting in place an inspection program that allows us to ensure the safety of all these types of vessels throughout the province. And it is only . . . When we're making reference to overdue, it's a benchmark that they've gone six months beyond when we had anticipated to inspect them.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Minister, given the expertise that exists on Hutterite colonies to fabricate, to construct, to do all kinds of very unique projects, has it occurred to you or the department to provide them the same kind of latitude for inspection purposes that you've given to other industrial players, as has been achieved in this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — To answer the member's questions, yes. Those individual Hutterite colonies could become involved in our quality management program. But the likelihood is that these particular vessels they have will no longer fall under the requirement for inspection.

Mr. Elhard: — Can you give us a pretty clear indication of how soon you expect the backlog of inspections in the Southwest to be cleared up completely?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — If these 120 out of 148 backlog inspections are no longer required after the changes that come forward, I think that you can for yourself figure out that very quickly.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Minister, I think my colleague has maybe a few other questions in this particular vein. No? In that case I'd like to move to another topic and I think it's important on behalf of some of the constituents in Cypress Hills that were affected by severe storms this last summer to ask these questions.

I know that there was a large number of claims made of the department in terms of damage done in certain communities, on certain farms — damage to facilities on ranches and farms that are not insurable otherwise. I know that there were several constituents that suffered that kind of damage and have applied for financial relief from the provincial government. Can you tell us where you're at in terms of the applications that may have come in from the Cypress Hills specifically, but possibly in terms of the province as a whole?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Well I'd like to speak to this issue. Thank you very much for the question. Firstly from a broad provincial perspective, I think that the members could understand that in a normal year, looking at the number of claims that come in to the program, we have an average of about 20 a year. Last year we had 2,300, which significantly changes the scope of our ability to respond quickly on those claims.

I can tell you that we've hired seven additional staff to help deal with processing those claims, that we are making some headway on those particular claims. Now as far as the claims in the Swift Current area, I'm going to have to provide you with that number at a later date. We don't have that information with us and I will undertake to get that information and provide you that number.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would appreciate that. In view of the 2,300 claims that you said came in as a result of storms last year, rather an unusual and excessive number, can you give us some indication of how far down that list of claims you've been able to satisfy the individual claimants?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — At this point we have issued payments, either interim or final payments, on 412 of last year's claims. And we are continuing to work on the remainder of the claims.

Mr. Elhard: — The claims that have come in, have they been well articulated? Have they been well developed? Is there a problem with the way the claims have been made or is it just simply a matter of human resources and being overwhelmed by the number of claims?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much for the question. I think it can be best expressed as a combination. In certain types of claims as you could well imagine, they're very complex, particularly agricultural claims. As well, there are individuals, as would be in any type of claim process, that didn't . . . had difficulty in providing all the required information and it requires going back and forth to achieve the required information.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Minister, can you tell us, at this point out of the 400-odd claims that have been settled, what is the average amount of the payout?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — The average payout would be about \$3,000.

Mr. Elhard: — And have you any idea what percentage of the total damage that figure might represent on any given claim?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — That is difficult because some of these payments are interim payments. We're trying to get money out to people that need money to do improvements. But the final amount paid is 80 per cent of the allowable uninsurable claim.

Mr. Elhard: — Okay. You may have mentioned this earlier, but what is the amount that the department has set aside to satisfy claims that they have already fulfilled and met or expect to meet in the future?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — At this point it's \$16.4 million.

Mr. Elhard: — You indicated earlier that the department had hired seven additional individuals to help with the backlog of claims. Were these individuals hired on the basis of their experience in the insurance claims business?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — The answer is no, that the seven individuals that were hired were not necessarily experts in the insurance field. I should point out that those that are hired to do the adjusting of claims and require the knowledge of the insurance industry and adjustment are in fact . . . We contract that out, and it's contracted out to independent adjusters to do that work. So the people that we are hiring are processing those claims for payment. And they're not actually doing the adjudication or adjustment of the claims. That's done by independent and . . . that we contract out.

Mr. Elhard: — The seven positions are in-house, government departmental people that are doing the paperwork for these claims. The adjusters that you hire or contract, is the cost of their contract included in the \$16.4 million?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Yes it would be. The contracted cost for those adjusters would be in the \$16.4 million. The seven employees are temporary employees hired to deal with just this specific backlog and this unusual circumstance.

Mr. Elhard: — Are those seven employees considered to be contract people? Contract term?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — No, they would be temporary or term employees of the civil service.

Mr. Elhard: — I believe my colleague has additional questions, Madam Chair.

The Chair: — Mr. Toth.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Minister, what would be the time frame of responding to the claims when a disaster is precipitated, a claim is made, and cheques are issued? I think you indicated there is a number of cheques either in the process of being issued . . . What I'd like to know is what the time frame is normally to get cheques out in response to an emergency claim.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I'd like to thank the member for the question. It would be fair to say the average is three to four months, but some may take considerably longer than that, maybe even years based on when the individual actually submits the claim and the complexity of the claim. As you can appreciate, these can vary quite considerably. And in an average year getting 20 claims is considerably different than in a year like the one we've experienced, getting some 2,300 claims.

So we attempt to make interim payments where we can to individuals to help them with the process. That's what we're attempting to do now with many claims. As I indicated, many of the 400-and-some claims we've already made payment on are interim payments. But the time can vary quite significantly based on the nature of in fact the claim, the timeliness in which the individual puts the claim in.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. The reason I raise the question, and following on my colleague's line of questioning, is the news last night showed Premier Doer and the Prime Minister, Harper, touring flooded areas of Manitoba. And what caught my attention was this morning the Premier commented on the fact of the disaster assistance they have in their province, and if I heard the comment correctly, indicated that their disaster program seems to respond fairly quickly. So while the Prime Minister was in Manitoba yesterday, the province wasn't specifically asking for more money at that time in view of the fact they felt their disaster program was working quite well.

And we're mindful of what's happened certainly in the Northeast, and a lot of families are still facing major financial I would say possibly ruin in many cases because of the excessive moisture last fall. And I guess the question then is, is our program responding in what would be considered a timely fashion considering the fact . . . And I realize that each claim individually is different. Some can become a lot more complicated. But in view of the fact of the nature of the disaster that many individuals are facing, are we responding in what would be considered a fairly reasonable and appropriate fashion to address some of the financial shortfalls that individuals and families are facing?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Well let me start by indicating that the provincial disaster assistance program in Saskatchewan, like that in Manitoba, is entered into in an agreement with the federal government and that if a single incident or a single disaster or . . . reaches a cost of greater than \$1 million it is cost shared by the federal government. So that the situation that the Manitobans would be faced with or the situation that we're now facing in Saskatchewan, the federal government would be in a situation of cost sharing that with us. Because we will exceed I think, by all estimates, the \$1 million as a result of the flooding.

As with any situation where you have a significantly increased volume of claims — and some years you may have very little or no claims — we have increased our number of staff and our capacity to deliver those payments to individuals. As well, we are continuing to review our policies and practices of how we operate to see if there aren't ways we can be more efficient in getting interim payments to people and money to people that need it so that they in fact can start doing those repairs that they need to do.

And we will continue to monitor and examine our ability to respond to the communities' needs and individual needs as we move forward. And we at this time, on an ongoing basis, are reviewing where we're at and what we can do to be more flexible to meet the needs of communities.

The response, like the disaster, has to be fluid and flexible because we don't know ahead of time and we can't predict exactly what the outcomes are. So the officials and the department are doing all we can to respond in a timely manner to the needs of the people.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, I realize we're close to the time of adjournment for the day but I do have one question.

Over the past number of years we've endeavoured to kind of put a global set of questions together for the departments — just

saved us going through the tedious process of asking certain questions. And first of all I just want to know, has that global set of questions arrived? When can we expect them? Would it be possible to have responses before we meet together publicly next time in order that we may address the questions that may arise from the globals?

Hon. Mr. Yates: — I've been informed that we'll be able to meet the deadline that you've asked us to meet.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Seeing as it's past the time of adjournment, the committee stands adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 17:03.]