



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Hansard Verbatim Report

No. 48 - March 19, 2007



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Twenty-fifth Legislature

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
2007**

Ms. Judy Junor, Chair
Saskatoon Eastview

Mr. Wayne Elhard, Deputy Chair
Cypress Hills

Mr. Lon Borgerson
Saskatchewan Rivers

Ms. Joanne Crofford
Regina Rosemont

Mr. Peter Prebble
Saskatoon Greystone

Mr. Don Toth
Moosomin

Mr. Milton Wakefield
Lloydminster

[The committee met at 15:02.]

**Bill No. 33 — The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied
Science and Technology Amendment Act, 2006**

Clause 1

The Chair: — Good afternoon. The Standing Committee on Human Services is meeting today with the first item on the agenda being the consideration of Bill No. 33, The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Amendment Act, 2006. And the minister is here. If she could introduce herself and her officials, and if you have a statement to make to the Bill, go ahead now then.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I'm joined this afternoon by Bonnie Durnford, the deputy minister; Rob Cunningham, the assistant deputy minister; Karen Allen, executive director of corporate services; Margaret Ball, director of facilities; Jan Morgan, executive director of career and employment services; Rick Pawliw, executive director of programs; and Raman Visvanathan, executive director of institutions.

I do not have an opening statement. I thought we could just get into the crux of the supplementary estimates.

The Chair: — And we also have the Bill. Shall we do the Bill first and then supplementary estimates?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — We can deal with the Bill or supplementary estimates. Your choice, Madam Chair.

The Chair: — We'll do the Bill first and then we'll move to supplementary estimates. So questions then on the Bill?

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Chair. And good afternoon, Minister, and once again good afternoon to your officials. The Bill before us is Bill No. 33 relating to The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Act. It's an Act to amend that Act. And we've had an opportunity to talk about this piece of legislation in the House on a couple of occasions. And if the minister was listening to our speeches, she will know that we didn't have too much to criticize in terms of this piece of legislation. We felt that most of the material contained in the Act, most of the amendments made, were appropriate and maybe even overdue, and reflected the reality that exists at the SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] campus now.

I do have some questions though that we omitted as part of our discussion in the House pertaining to this Act. One of the questions I wanted to ask the minister was the impetus for this piece of legislation. Is this something the government and the department undertook on their own, or did SIAST come to the department and ask for this legislative change to reflect the realities of the way they're doing business?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I think it was a combination of both the department and SIAST. But I can say, on balance, SIAST was requesting amendments to the legislation in order to modernize the legislation given, the types of programming and structure that SIAST has in place.

Mr. Elhard: — The view of governments generally toward post-secondary institutions at the university level is one of regard for their autonomy. Can the minister describe for us her government's view towards SIAST in that regard?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well historically the universities in this province and elsewhere in the industrialized world have had a arm's-length relationship with the state. In the case of SIAST, at one stage SIAST really was part of a government department. And in the 1980s the legislation was obviously changed and SIAST became its own institution with its own board of governors.

Nevertheless the legislation is not such that SIAST operates at total arm's length from the province. Because obviously SIAST is really important in terms of the economic and social needs of the province in that they train and educate people for industrialized or technical work in the province. So I would say that our relationship historically has been much different with SIAST than it has been with the universities.

Mr. Elhard: — Is there a move on the part of the board of governors for SIAST to try and advance their autonomous state?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I don't sense that at all, that they are moving towards a piece of legislation that would be similar to the universities Act. My sense is that they are usually cognizant of the relationship that they certainly have with sector groups, the relationships they have with employers. Many of the programs have sector advisory committees because they want to ensure that their programs are constantly meeting the needs of the sectors that they're training for.

So my sense is that they are comfortable with the relationship that they have with the Advanced Education and Employment department and the relationships that they have with various sectors of the economy.

Mr. Elhard: — As part of this piece of legislation, the board is required to meet eight times a year as opposed to the current 10. I'm wondering if that was a recommendation from the board, or did the department survey other institutions of a similar nature to see what they were doing? And is this a standard that is common among other similar institutions?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — My understanding is that this is a recommendation that came forward from SIAST. And my understanding is that this would be similar to other pieces of legislation — I think including the universities Act, but I'm going from memory — where there would be a similar requirement to meet a minimum number of times. And that's the requirement for SIAST, that they meet a minimum number of times. But nevertheless they can meet more often, and I get the impression they do.

Mr. Elhard: — I suspect they do. But as we indicated in our speech to this Bill in the House the other day, sometimes an expectation of a meeting each month is too onerous for people who are taking on the obligations of a position on a board, and might find it hard to donate or contribute that kind of time if that was the minimum requirement. So I don't have any

argument with this. I'm just wondering if you're finding it in practice elsewhere.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I think the other thing that we've tried to do, certainly with the board, in renewing the board we tried very hard to, in terms of the new appointments that were going to be made, we tried to ensure that we had people that certainly had a significant relationship with various sectors of the economy.

So we had what I would call the mining sector represented on the board through Gay Patrick, who's the executive director of the potash producers and has a relationship with the Saskatchewan Mining Association; Mr. Hanson, who owns a company in Saskatoon and is very familiar with the construction industry; Wil Olive has sat on and been the Chair of the Regina Economic Development Authority, so he's very familiar with business and their requirements; and we also named Jane Lindstrom from the Regina Health Authority who is involved in HR [human resources]. And as you know, SIAST has a very, fairly significant program when it comes to the various health professions in the province. So we tried very hard to try and move people sitting on the board to representing certain segments of our economy, both public sector segments and private sector segments.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, I assume that that response would beg the question: on what criteria or what basis did you appoint board members previously?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well I think in the past there was an attempt to try and appoint people on a regional basis, you know, people from Prince Albert and various regions of the province. For my purposes I tried really hard to appoint people that represented certain segments of the economy because I think it's hugely important that our training institutions — not only SIAST, but our regional colleges — have people that are very knowledgeable of the economy and are involved in the economy on a more day-to-day basis.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, the appointment of various people from a variety of economic sectors is an important and positive change, I think, in the approach to finding qualified people for the board. But one of the questions I want to ask — and it arises basically from the announcement that the minister made last fall about a large investment in additional training seats and the added educational capacity that would provide — one of the areas of focus was training for First Nations young people. And as a consequence of that, is there a seat on this institution's board for a First Nations representative specifically?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I think there is not a specific seat for a First Nations representative. But there is someone I believe from the regional colleges, Northlands regional college, that would represent an Aboriginal sector of the economy. Yes.

Mr. Elhard: — Is that in addition to the regional colleges' position that has been designated for this board?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — What I can say is there are . . . there's a fellow who represents Northlands community college on the board, but there's also — who's a Métis man — and there's

also a man on the board from Meadow Lake that's involved with First Nations, I believe, Flying Dust. I don't have their names here with me but they represent certain groups that we've tried to have represented on the board. As well, there is presently someone from the Apprenticeship Commission that's on the board. So we are trying to link First Nations people, Métis people, the Apprenticeship Commission, and the regional college to the board of SIAST as well as sectors of the economy.

Mr. Elhard: — As I understand the legislation, the number of board members can range anywhere from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 20. And given the emphasis that the minister and her government has put on First Nations training opportunities, especially through SIAST, I'm wondering if it wouldn't be appropriate to designate specifically one individual from the First Nations community to achieve that representation.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well we certainly have done that with the Labour Market Commission where we have . . . Certainly we want to make sure that people sitting on the Labour Market Commission represent First Nations and Métis people. I mean that certainly is a consideration. That is not what we . . . We have not designated a person from the Indian and Métis citizenry to sit on the board of SIAST. But that certainly is a consideration.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, did your government undertake broad consultations when it was looking to determine the new structure of the SIAST board? Did you review this board vis-à-vis other boards and agencies and their makeup possibly within the province and externally?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I think that, as a result of the training system review, the McArthur report, there certainly was consideration to make sure that we were linking the board to various sectors of the economy but also having a representative board.

And one of the things that we have tried to do, while we're moving forward on a representative workforce, we're also trying to have a representative board of governors when it comes to various institutions where there are people who are being appointed by the province.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, as part of the changes to the structure of the board, there is provision made for one SIAST student to be a member in the future. And I think I alluded to this in speaking to this Bill previously that one student is certainly better than none, but it's probably not quite to the standard or expectation that the students themselves would have liked given the fact that SIAST represents, you know, several different college campuses in the province and many, many thousands of students. So may I ask why you chose to restrict the board presentation — or representation maybe is a better word to use — to a single position?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I think we looked at the legislation that governs the universities, and there is a student representative on the university board of governors at both the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] and U of R [University of Regina].

And when you think of SIAST, it is governed by one board; it's

not governed by four different boards. So we took the approach that there would be a student on the board. And we've certainly had students on the board in the past. They've been appointed. But then their appointment might be for three years, and by the time their appointment runs out they're no longer a student. So we wanted to make sure that the board of governors always had a linkage to the institutions through today student representation.

And the board has worked out with the student associations how they are going to appoint a student each year to the board. My understanding is there's going to be a rotation through the four campuses, so each campus will have a representative once every four years.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, if I recall correctly, it was the position of the now-Premier — but then candidate for premier — that under his leadership a student would be represented on every major board and agency and so forth throughout government. I know there have been some appointments of students made in other areas. This one seems a little late or a little slow in coming. This is seven years after the fact. Are there other appointments of this type that the minister is aware of that need to be made yet?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — The student association had an alumni on the board. And I think what the Premier's commitment was that young people would be represented on our various boards and commissions, and we certainly have that in the Crown sector. There are young people that are represented on the boards of the various Crowns. There are students that are represented . . . or not students, young people represented on various boards.

In this case, as I said, there was an alumni, and the alumni would be a young person. SIAST has had young people on the board and certainly people who have been in a workplace for maybe a matter of one or two years. So they are young. But what we are now doing is ensuring through legislation that each year there will be an actual student representative sitting on the board.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Toward the end of the legislation, in section 17(2), the wording of the amended Act says that:

“The minister shall review the budget and the business plan submitted to him or her pursuant to subsection (1) and may approve them or may, after consultation with the board, require the board to revise all or any part of either of them in any manner that the minister considers appropriate.”

Madam Minister, can you provide us an example under which the minister might be obligated or desirous of making that kind of an imposition on the budget?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — An example might be this: that SIAST puts forward a business plan and a budget for programming at various campuses. And one might observe that Saskatoon for example is a very large city in the province of Saskatchewan, and they do not have a licensed practical nurse program for instance. I might say to the board, given my consultations with

people in the health sector, I believe, given what I'm being told by people in the health sector, we need to have a licensed practical nurse program at that campus. Obviously they would then need to amend their business plan. My job would be to make sure it was properly funded.

But there are times when ministers may have information or may have representation made from various sectors of the economy that make sense, and they're able to provide a fairly compelling case. And the minister might say to SIAST, I'd like to see you amend this business plan in order to provide this type of programming on this, you know, in this area because they are short of licensed practical nurses. That might be one example.

Another example might be that the province provides, you know, funding for SIAST, and they note that SIAST may have a huge amount in terms of reserves, and yet there's pressure by industry to put on additional programming. And I might say to SIAST, well I see you have within generally acceptable accounting standards a reserve that covers what you need to cover. I see you have excess revenue that's sitting in reserve. You might want to think about are there some additional pressures that you're experiencing in terms of programming, and could you think about putting on some additional programming with those dollars. So those would be two . . . I've given you two examples.

Mr. Elhard: — And I suppose they're fair examples given, you know, given the uncertainty sometimes or the way circumstances change moving forward.

But I guess, Madam Minister, if I have any concern about that, it would suggest to me that in fact SIAST really isn't much removed from the control of the minister and the department. There isn't a lot more to be said for the autonomy or the ability of the board to make appropriate decisions than previously. And while the minister might want to safeguard the authority of the minister and the government to make those kind of recommendations or suggestions, it really does minimize the role of the board in some way.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well I think this particular piece of legislation has powers of the minister, and the universities Act has very limited powers of the minister because of historical reasons.

SIAST is not a university, and so the minister has the ability, under powers of the minister which I don't believe are being changed today, to “give direction to SIAST on programs, courses, functions or activities to be provided or undertaken or discontinued . . . establish policies or procedures for the approval of programs, courses, seminars . . . give direction to SIAST on the establishment of any accounting or information systems for SIAST . . .”

You know, at one time I was the minister some years ago, and SIAST had some very significant issues brought to my attention by the Provincial Auditor. And you know, I did give direction that it was incumbent upon SIAST to sort out those issues so that the Provincial Auditor could give them a clean bill of health.

So I would say my experience has been that ministers usually

don't involve themselves to any extent in giving direction to SIAST. But there will be occasion when the minister might want to provide his or her comments to SIAST for public policy purposes, and I think that's fair.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, I used the word autonomy in error in my last question. I probably should have used the word authority, that this questions or brings into question maybe the authority of the board or the credibility even of the board in some respects.

And as you said, you may want to use this in a limited way. It's not something a minister would enjoy doing on a repeated basis. I think the entire board would want to resign if that happened. But nevertheless there is that dynamic, that potential for conflict. And I guess I'm looking at it from the perspective of a board member if I was charged with the responsibility of sitting on a board and making decisions that affected a very important institution and had potential impact — significant impact — as it relates to training young people for the workforce in this province.

I guess, after having grappled with those decisions and those issues, I'd really want some assurance that the minister wouldn't arbitrarily change those decisions or influence the direction of the board's decision making. So, you know, while I understand why you might want to protect the minister's prerogative, I'm also wondering about how that might impact a board's ability to make decisions with some confidence.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Each year I send out a letter to our training institutions outlining my expectations. And they're very broad expectations. My job is to set fairly broad public policy parameters. And their job is to govern the institution — and that would be the board — and then the administration's job is to administer the day-to-day operations of the institution. I believe that the people who sit on the board of governors of SIAST are very skilled citizens, and I get the sense that they would not take kindly to the minister inserting herself into discussions that are not mine to have.

But I do think, given the fact that we are facing a very significant labour shortage in the province, given the fact that we need to train and educate people — whether they're young people or, you know, people who want to retrain themselves for new jobs — I think that I as a minister should be able to give broad public policy direction. And that's what I do each year.

But I don't get into the micromanaging of how the board deals with various issues that boards deal with or how the administration administer the organization. And I think if I did, I think the board would certainly have something to say about that in the public. And the board would be quite right in resigning.

Now this is not a rogue board. This is a board that takes its job very seriously, and I think this is a board that functions very well.

Mr. Elhard: — We'll leave that topic for now, Madam Minister, and go to one final area of discussion. The next subsection, 17(3), reads that:

“On approval of the budget and the business plan by the minister, the board shall adopt them for SIAST as approved by the minister.”

Can the minister give us an indication of what type of approval process is undertaken in her office when the SIAST budget appears before her?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — So the SIAST would provide their budget to the AE and E [Advanced Education and Employment] officials. We do have an institutions branch that deals with the various institutions. They would review all of the budgets of the training sector for instance. The department would make a recommendation to me as to the approval of the budget, and based on their recommendation, I would approve the budget.

Mr. Elhard: — When do officials in the department look at the budget and say, Madam Minister, this budget does or does not meet your public policy objectives?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I think if they had those kinds of concerns, because of their relationship with the training sector, they would have ongoing discussions with the training sector, and they would try and have a joint recommendation to me so that I wasn't in the position where I would have to arbitrate between the department and SIAST. So my sense is — having been in this job for just a little over a year — that these budgets are discussed and in a sense arrived at through consensus between the department and the institutions. A recommendation is given to me, and then I send the letter of approval.

Mr. Elhard: — What is possible as an outcome if the SIAST board does not agree with the minister on that budget proposed?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well I would think that if the officials at both the SIAST level and in the department were not able to arrive at a consensus opinion, then the employees at SIAST would take that difference to their board. The deputy no doubt would take that difference to me. And then what I would do is have a chat with the board, the Chair of the board to see if there was something we could do to, you know, break the logjam, so to speak. But that's never happened as far as I know.

Mr. Elhard: — Well that's reassuring, and I hope it continues to be the case, Madam Minister.

As I indicated earlier, I really don't have a lot of concerns about the legislation. I think we've covered all of the outstanding issues. And I would like to thank the minister for her response to the questions this afternoon. Those are the questions for today. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. Mr. Wakefield.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to just follow up. Madam Minister, you talked about broad public policy parameters with regards to SIAST. Can you give me an idea of what you're talking about?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I think we'll be able to get in that shortly under supplementary estimates. Let me give you an example. You have discussions with SIAST for instance about the need for more capital construction because there is huge

pressure on the training system in the province to provide more programming. So an example would be at SIAST Kelsey Campus, there isn't a very big footprint there. They're running out of space in essence.

And so you might say to the people at SIAST, you know, I really think that there is an opportunity at — I'll give you an example — Mount Royal Collegiate where there's a new high school being constructed on the west side of Saskatoon. They were a comprehensive high school that was built in the late 1960s. There will be students certainly on the other side of the freeway in Saskatoon will be going off to the new high school that will open this fall. So there is a potential that there will be fewer students at Mount Royal. They have a huge capacity — in my view — to provide industrial and technical programs for post-secondary students.

So you might say to SIAST, there's an opportunity here to partner with the public school board, the DTI which is the Dumont Technical Institute, and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies to provide post-secondary education and training in the inner . . . in a sense in the . . . on the west side of Saskatoon where a number of students live — post-secondary students or potential post-secondary students.

So you might say, I think that you need to get going in terms of discussions with the Saskatoon Public School board to see if we can use this facility, renovate this facility, and provide additional programs and classes to people who require training. That would be an example. Instead of building onto SIAST Kelsey Campus, that might be an example of using existing space.

Mr. Wakefield: — I guess it goes to — from my trying to comprehend this — it goes to whether you are directing the traffic as a minister in the department or whether you have allocated that to the board and giving them the responsibility of saying they're going to try and solve the problem as they see it. Do you recognize the problem, or do they recognize the problem, and why would you do that?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Okay an example would be . . . I think that in the case of new capital or additional capital construction, the board certainly has recognized a problem in Saskatoon in that they're running out of space. There are more programs that are being provided, and they have their management looking for space.

And, you know, I'm out and about in the community. I have people coming to speak to me all the time. And so you say, you know, here's an opportunity for the use of existing space that may soon be vacated and this might help you solve part of your problem. It might help you. Now I wouldn't go and involve myself in getting all of these parties together, but I would certainly make a suggestion. So that would be a suggestion. They of course through their management would determine whether or not they wanted to pursue that suggestion.

Mr. Wakefield: — If you, Madam Minister, determine that there needs to be additional training spaces — and obviously we need that — how does SIAST or the department and the apprenticeship work together? Where I'm asking this is, does the industry dictate what's needed? Does the department dictate

what's needed? Does SIAST? Who develops the program? Who determines the need and at what level?

Because, as you know, with the need for skilled training, there's an urgency. There's a relevancy of training. There's an expediency of training. Who in this system of . . . You're talking about putting policy directions in place. The board talks about how SIAST is operating. Who dictates what is going to happen, and how is the program both compiled and delivered? Is that a dictate of, for instance, the apprenticeship program in this case?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — An example would be SIAST through the business plan would put forward the needs that they have identified for training.

Mr. Wakefield: — Who identified that?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — SIAST. They would put forward the needs that they have identified because many of the programs have sector partners or sector advisory committees that advise them. In the case of the Apprenticeship Commission, they look at how many young people or people are being indentured as apprentices in first year. You need to be able to provide classroom training as part of the apprenticeship program. And so they would be identifying that and certainly speaking to Kelsey . . . or not Kelsey, SIAST, and perhaps the regional colleges about, can you provide first year electrical training or second year electrical training because as you know they do a combination of hours and classroom training. So the Apprenticeship Commission and SIAST would be identifying the need generally for more training opportunities.

Mr. Wakefield: — Who then would identify the need and to put in place the number that the society feels necessary for licensed practical nurses, for instance? That's a need, a desperate need, and there's a restriction, it appears.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — So we have in the Department of Health the health human resource planning branch. As well we have . . . And they would interact with the various regional health authorities. We would have information that comes from HRDC [Human Resources Development Canada] in terms of labour market information. And so based on the information that you would have from a number of different sources, SIAST would put forward as an example a need for additional training opportunities in particular programs. So it's a combination of sources.

Mr. Wakefield: — You, as a minister, would not direct that additional seats needed to be put in place for this . . .

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I just told you I did. For the licensed practical nurses . . .

Mr. Wakefield: — That's not the way I heard it.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Pardon?

Mr. Wakefield: — That's not the way I heard it. Sorry.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Oh. I didn't direct but I suggested that we needed a licensed practical nurse program in Saskatoon

because we had licensed practical nurses . . . there's programs across the province. The largest city in the province, the largest community in the province did not have a licensed practical nurse program, and I asked SIAST to determine whether or not they could put together a program for licensed practical nurses because we had a very . . . The largest health authority in the province did not have a licensed practical nurse program in their region.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Any further questions on the Bill? Seeing none then, short title, clause 1, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 11 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Amendment Act, 2006. Could I have a member move that we report this Bill to the Assembly without amendment?

Mr. Prebble: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Prebble. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Thank you very much.

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — March
Advanced Education and Employment
Vote 37**

Subvotes (AE02) and (AE08)

The Chair: — Now we can move on to the consideration of supplementary estimates, which is on page 7, vote 37 for Advanced Education and Employment. Same officials are here. Nobody's leaving. Does the minister have a statement to this?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I do not, and the same officials are in the room.

The Chair: — Questions then. Mr. Elhard.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Chair. And once again we're dealing with a situation that looks pretty straightforward, but I'm not convinced that it's quite as clear-cut as the very brief explanation on page 7 of the Supplementary Estimates would indicate.

Madam Minister, we went through a fairly complicated set of questions and answers with the Minister of Learning on the similar project scheduled or proposed — I might use that word — for Regina. And I guess I'm hoping that the proposal for Saskatoon is a little more advanced and a little more specific

than we learned of the Regina venture.

So if I might, Madam Minister, we've got \$17 million required to provide a grant to . . . [inaudible] . . . for redeveloping a portion of Mount Royal Collegiate into a training facility in partnership with Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, the Saskatoon Public School board, and the Dumont Technical Institute. And we have a further \$3.574 million to address ownership issues of an addition to SIAST at the Kelsey Campus.

Madam Minister, this project for Saskatoon as proposed, where are we at in this particular endeavour? How thoroughly planned is this, and can you give us some details about how this project is going to unfold and what it's going to look like?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Sure. I'm going to ask the deputy minister to outline what we intend to do. I can tell you that it is intended to do the necessary renovations to Mount Royal Collegiate on the west side of Saskatoon. And it will provide for a separate entrance into the facility for students who will be attending to complete their post-secondary education.

So it will continue to be a high school for students from grade 9 to 12, but it will also be a post-secondary institution, not unlike the joint use facilities that we see at many of our comprehensive high schools across the province. An example would be in Weyburn, Estevan, North Battleford — I'm thinking here — Tisdale, Biggar, where they have a school but attached to the school or as part of the school is the regional college system which provides training and education for people in their particular region. But I'll let the deputy minister give you the details.

Ms. Durnford: — As the minister has indicated in a couple of her comments, the Mount Royal project was really driven from the sense that we needed to find more space for skills and trades training in Saskatoon because of some dilemmas at the Kelsey Campus.

And here, I'll pull out the \$17 million and speak to that. The 3.574 is a different issue. SIAST was asked . . . In our conversations with SIAST, we had met with them probably about a year ago to start some discussions to take advantage of the opportunity that the minister has alluded to with the opening of the west side high schools. There was a real opportunity with Mount Royal Collegiate because of the nature of the space that's there and the nature of the community in which it's located to try some different kind of programming, and to try a different model of partnership between the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system and the post-secondary system.

So there was an opportunity here, I think, to sort of bring together people and ask them to start to think about a different kind of program, and a program that I think would work better for some adults that have become disengaged from the K to 12 system, where they've not completed but yet we know that they have opportunities and have the ability to participate in work with the appropriate kind of training. It also gave us an opportunity to think about how you would do programming in a more community-based delivery.

So that was sort of the inception of the discussion. It was driven by the need to find space at Kelsey, by the fact that there was space and the kind of space that we would be looking for available in Mount Royal. And it was driven from the sense that we had a population of folks living in that community that could benefit from a different kind of approach.

So the discussions came along over the course of the fall time period. And at that time we started to work with them and with the Saskatoon public, SIAST, and SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies] particularly, and DTI later with regard to what would a successful program actually start to look like and what would the elements be. And it was very clear in the conversations that we needed to think about sort of adult programming and what successful adult programming would look like, and particularly for First Nations people.

And so the sense about creating kind of an adult environment in the context of Mount Royal grew up. So the minister has talked about a separate entrance that would allow for the look and feel of a more adult-oriented facility as opposed to a high school is there, the sense that we can do potentially over time some movement of adult basic education from the Kelsey campus into that environment.

SIIT, the minister has spoken, I think, on previous occasions about the new and emerging relationship with SIIT. One of the dilemmas that SIIT has had over the past is finding a location from which to deliver programs. Mount Royal seemed to be by then a unique opportunity.

And so all of these things came together to sort of start to put together a plan around a new kind of space that would encourage a different kind of adult programming, encourage a different kind of partnership amongst the training system partners, and hopefully produce better outcomes that are connected to the local labour market.

So the funding that's being provided in these supplementary estimates will allow us to work with the partners through SIAST and SIIT and the Saskatoon public to renovate the space at Mount Royal — update some of the labs and construction areas because there's significant lab space there, large lab space. So this will allow us to update it and then to make it look and feel like a First Nations and Métis delivery point too.

So what I think, over time we'll see more cultural type of programming invested in there too. So you know, it gives us an opportunity over the next two to three years, which is the time period by which the high school population will start to move over to the west side to really customize this into an adult learning environment in the west side of Saskatoon. So maybe I'll stop there.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you for that explanation. I guess what I'm trying to understand is how significantly different this particular proposal is to the one that is to be undertaken here in Regina because in the Regina instance, the money is going to the Regina Public School Board through the Department of Learning. In this case in Saskatoon, the money is going to SIAST through the Department of Advanced Education and Employment.

And having listened to the deputy minister's explanation, the only thing I can kind of attach the difference to is the word adult, as opposed to what we heard for Regina. And I mean if that's the case, if that is really the single difference in this whole undertaking, that might explain why the funding is coming from two different departments. But I guess if I'm wrong, I'd like the minister to clarify what has created the difference in terms of source of funding for these two projects if, in large measure, they're very, very similar.

Ms. Durnford: — Perhaps if I can and then . . . I think the member is correct in noting the difference in my language. It is around an adult program. The other comment I would make is SIIT is already offering welding classes, short-course welding classes, at Mount Royal. They started in January, and this is part of the program funding that was government-provided to them. So there is a difference relative to the orientation. I mean, we are trying to create an adult learning environment. I think over time what we will see is young people from the high school system also participating in these classes and these opportunities, but we are trying to create an adult learning environment.

I think one of the differences between this proposal with the proposal in Regina is the Regina doesn't have the opportunity that the Mount Royal space provided in Saskatoon, the immediate and apparent opportunity, so we have to look for that.

I think the other part of the conversation that's . . . There would be two other things that I would say would be different between the projects is . . . In Regina, a lot of the thinking around how this has come forward has come forward through articulation, this notion around articulated trades training between the Regina Public School Board and SIAST. So it's really . . . The thinking about how this might move forward has really come through the public system. So I think that's one difference.

I think the other difference is the connection also to the community centre in Regina and the plan around the community centre, and the potential connection to that, I think, is also another difference. And that community centre is certainly being driven more from the K to 12 system and the orientation there around community education than it has been driven from the adult side of the equation.

Mr. Elhard: — So the \$17 million we're talking about for the Saskatoon project is to underwrite renovation costs. But what about ownership of the facilities? Where does ownership reside once the renovation is complete?

Ms. Durnford: — Ownership will continue to reside with the Saskatoon Public School Board. It is their facility, and so the ownership will continue to reside there. The \$17 million is really being provided for the leasehold improvements to orient this space into the kind of thing that we're going to need to do successful adult education.

Mr. Elhard: — Is it anticipated that the \$17 million is a fixed number and the total cost? Or is that just the share that the department is bearing, whereas other partners in this project will also have expenditures that will come into play here?

Ms. Durnford: — The \$17 million, as I understand it, is our estimate at this time of what we think some of the capital costs will be with the renovation. We need still to do detailed design work with the architects, and you know we need to define that as we define the kind of programs that will be offered there.

I think certainly there's a very clear sense that as we go forward on this project that we need to engage private industry in this. We really are trying to connect this project to the local labour market and the needs of the local labour market so that as we educate people in this particular area that they are going to real jobs, so that it's not training for training sake. It's that they will actually make that transition into real jobs.

And I think that affords us an opportunity to also then start to work with private industry about sort of, so what do you need in terms of workers in this community, and can we start to supply it through the project? And I think then that opens up other doors to start having other conversations with private industry about what else we might be able to contribute because the project is trying to meet . . . very clearly we're trying to meet labour market needs, you know, in Saskatoon obviously on the first hand, but probably other provincial labour market needs as well.

Mr. Elhard: — But is it your understanding at this point that the other known players — for instance, I guess, the Saskatchewan institute of technologies and the Saskatoon Public School Board and DTI, Dumont Technical Institute — will contribute financially to this renovation and project completion?

Ms. Durnford: — Not at this time. We're not asking them. We may ask, for the physical renovation, we may ask some of the partners — I think particularly SIIT — if they can contribute to some of the capital costs related to equipment inside of the facility. But the physical renovations at this point we plan to work through in terms of the \$17 million.

Mr. Elhard: — If your plans unfold as you indicated, Madam Deputy Minister, what type of level of financial contribution do you see the private sectors providing?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I think it could be equipment. One of the things that SIAST is trying to do at the moment is really engage the private sector in providing scholarships, perhaps equipment because we know in other jurisdictions the private sector does provide scholarships and equipment to various technical institutions.

So I think what we're hoping to have, given that we're trying to link this facility as closely as possible to the labour market . . . [inaudible] . . . the Labour Market Commission, we were hoping that we will have private sector involvement in the renovation of the facility, but also the equipping of the facility.

Mr. Elhard: — Is it the minister's expectation that the federal government will provide any money for this particular project?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I don't know, I mean . . .

Mr. Elhard: — We should be watching the budget.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I know I should be. One of the realities for us, and a real reality is that the previous labour market agreement that we signed with the previous federal government in December '05 didn't come to being last year in the last federal budget. And as a result of that, for us, we have a significant need to educate and train Aboriginal young people. And we had an agreement with the previous federal government, the Liberals, for \$109 million over five years. And this was money that was basically going to be directed towards First Nations and Métis people in our training institutions.

So we had some mid-year money, and we decided that we needed to absolutely begin to train people on-reserve. We had to do it. We have no choice because we have a huge labour shortage here. We also, I mean, we need to train everybody in the province that can work — young people.

And the reality is that in certain communities, particularly in Saskatoon and Regina, we have young people that may be in school but they're not necessarily going on to post-secondary education. So from a public policy point of view, we had an opportunity at Mount Royal Collegiate given that young people, we thought, on the other side of the freeway were going to go to the new high schools that . . . And certainly the Saskatoon Public School Board believes that. They think that there will be significantly fewer students at Mount Royal.

We had a problem at Kelsey. They wanted to build, you know, on more onto that site. It's very difficult because that site is running out of space. You look at other technical schools that you find in other cities, they have campuses located throughout the city not just at one location. So here was an opportunity. And certainly the public school board was promoting this opportunity to begin to provide post-secondary education for young people on the west side of Saskatoon, particularly in that area. And young people that were attending Mount Royal could see that there was a possibility to go on to post-secondary education right at that location.

So I would say this is, we have a huge opportunity here. We've got SIAST engaged, SIIT, DTI, and the Saskatoon Public School Board. And we have a huge opportunity to engage the private sector that are looking for workers, and skilled workers. So we've got the \$17 million that is going to be dedicated to this facility to ensure that it is updated and renewed and properly equipped to provide the latest equipment and skills to those young people that are going to be going there.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, if it's allowed me to make this observation, I don't have much problem with the concept or the project. In fact this one seems to be more clearly defined than the Regina one. The Regina one seems kind of amorphous yet. It's a moving target. This seems much more specific and direct.

I guess the question I would have is . . . we've got \$17 million as part of the supplementary estimates now. We're two days away from the next budget. Where are we at in this project? Is money being expended as we speak on this particular project? And if not, when is it expected that this renovation project will commence?

Ms. Durnford: — As I indicated, SIIT is currently delivering

programs right on site. They started in January. I think we will be continuing to refine the plan over the next couple of months because we want to see more delivery of programs into this space come the fall.

So SIIT has indicated the need for additional classroom space. I think SIAST is going to need some additional classroom space. That classroom space right now looks like typical K to 12 classroom space or 9 to 12 classroom space. It needs to be re-examined and looked at in the context of adult learners using it and to respond to adult learners.

So I think that over the next few months we're going to start to see some actual work associated with this one relative to the kinds of things that we'll want to start delivering in the fall.

Mr. Elhard: — Just so I'm clear on this, what we're going to see for the \$17 million in the short term is maybe conceptual design work, some drawings that might address the space needed for this facility, this adult learning facility, in the days ahead but no actual renovation or construction until the fall at the earliest.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — See what was clear in the third quarter results, that we had the fiscal capacity in 2006-07 to make this particular investment. And what this certainly says to the partners is that we're committed to funding this high-priority item. So the \$17 million . . . And by the way construction costs continue to escalate everywhere, and it doesn't really go far in terms of equipping facilities. But the \$17 million is there, and they can get on with it. They can get on with it. There is money that has been given to SIAST. They can get on with their partnership. We have made a commitment. It's going to be funded. Get on with the planning and get this done because we need to train people.

We don't need to build new. It's not as though we're building a brand new building. We're taking an existing building, and we're going to renovate it for adult learners. And we're going to make sure that those labs or that industrial space is up to standard, is properly equipped to provide people with facilities and equipment that will get them into the labour market.

And one of the difficulties is, if you're building new space, you're waiting. And if we're renovating existing space, then that can take place fairly quickly. And so we're optimistic that the renovation can start as soon as possible to get the space renovated and updated as soon as we can do this.

Mr. Elhard: — So once again, just so I'm clear, the \$17 million we're talking about here is sitting in a bank account someplace. The proponents of this project — but most specifically SIAST — can draw down against that to undertake the planning and preparation and the design work and ultimately the renovation. But this is all going to be done on the basis of this past year's budget to facilitate that activity. But is the \$17 million already in the possession of SIAST?

Ms. Durnford: — No, it's not in the possession of SIAST because it's subject to the supplementary estimates that we're discussing today.

Mr. Elhard: — So the day we pass these supplementary

estimates, can SIAST tap into that money?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — The day we pass these supplementary estimates, then money will be transferred to SIAST. SIAST can begin — if there's equipment that needs to be purchased for that facility, if there are renovations that obviously will need to be undertaken getting it up to Occupational Health and Safety standards, all those things — SIAST can begin to get this project done in consort with the various partners.

Mr. Elhard: — The department has not imposed a drop-dead date in terms of starting and completing this project?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — One of the things that we're sort of subject to is the reality that we don't know how many students that are presently at SIAST are going to attend the new high school. We believe that the students on the other side of the freeway will go to the new high school. That will have an impact upon space at Mount Royal. So there will need to be some planning done around the space that's going to be renovated. And there will have to be planning done around the programming that the public school board will have for its grade 9 to 12 students.

But we have a pretty good idea of what space needs to be brought up to today's standards, and we have a pretty good idea of what that space will be used for. We have a program, as the official said, a welding program that SIIT is delivering for some of its students. But there are lots of other opportunities there: machining, plumbing, electrical. I mean there's just tons of opportunity at that facility to provide post-secondary education for adults that live in that area of the city, and there's certainly an opportunity to provide adult basic education.

Right now at SIAST, I believe they have about 19 classes. Maybe I've got the number wrong, but we have a significant number of classes at SIAST. And they need to have space for some other programs that are going to be going into SIAST, and we'll wait for the budget. And so some programs are going to have to be moved, and one of the thoughts is that some of the adult basic education can be moved to that location.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, it sounds to me like you have a fairly good idea of what programs are immediately possible and, you know, what might be achievable in a very short time. And yet you indicated earlier that you want to look at what other programming possibilities exist so that renovations could be accomplished to accommodate those other areas. Since you know pretty much what's achievable now, what other programming possibilities are under consideration?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Sure. You know I had an opportunity to go through SIAST Kelsey Campus probably a month ago, and I was with several people that provide programming at SIAST. There is a need for some updating of facilities there. There is a need.

They are telling me that industry is wanting more programs. They need more people trained and educated. They simply don't have the space there. And so I know, for instance, that they are in the process of getting a space just off campus now going because they need to provide more programming for students. I know that they are over . . . They are looking at

Mount Royal, about what Mount Royal might be able to be used for in the fall.

I know that they are under tremendous pressure at Kelsey because there are lots of students there and lots of need for additional programming, but they simply don't have the footprint on that site to provide additional programming. So they are looking for programming off-site, space off-site right now for next fall. And they're looking not only off-site close to SIAST Kelsey Campus, but they're also looking at Mount Royal.

Can all of this, I mean, can it be renovated totally by fall? I don't think so. But there's some things that might be able to be done if we can get the contractor in place, let the tender, that sort of thing.

Mr. Elhard: — I guess the concept is quite creative and . . . well maybe innovative is a better word to use, and I'm hopeful that it's going to work and produce the kind of the results that we're looking for in the province.

I guess if I have any hesitation in supporting this initiative entirely, it's that there seems to be so many loose ends. You know, there doesn't seem to be enough sort of hard information that we can talk about as part of this proposal. And you know, \$17 million might not be a lot of money in the scheme of things, but you know, to the average taxpayer and those of us around this table, \$17 million is still quite a bit of money.

So I guess I'm concerned about whether or not we're going to sort of meet the objectives — whether we're going to meet the hard objectives, whether we're going to meet the program objectives, whether we're going to meet the human objectives with this kind of expenditure.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well I think what we're trying to do . . . And when I said 17 million isn't a lot, I didn't mean to leave the impression . . . I know it's a lot to citizens. \$17 million is a lot of money.

But I do note that a \$6 million renovation at SIAST, if you were to go there and look, you'd think there's not a lot here, but it's the cost of construction, the cost of equipment. Six million doesn't go very far in comparison to what it might have done 20 years ago. So in the case of Mount Royal, I mean employers are approaching SIAST all the time — can you do this; can you do that — and they're trying to respond to employers.

One of the things that we're going to try and do is have space that's flexible, that you can move equipment in and out to provide different types of training because we know that the types of skilled workers that we require is changing. The kinds of skills they need is changing. So if you look at the infrastructure of the 1960s, I mean it basically provided space that wasn't hugely flexible. So we're trying to figure out — and this is why it's not as precise as one would like it to be — what can we do with the space? You know, you have to have various exhaust systems, electrical systems, depending on what is going into a particular lab or a particular space. So they're trying to look at the space in terms of multi-purpose.

So I apologize for not being precise, but there's a lot of what-ifs

depending on the types of programming that might be able to go in, and how do you design space or bring it to a standard where it can be used for a variety of different programs depending on what's required in terms of skills training.

I do know this — that welding you need to make sure that the facility is such that it is properly exhausted, that you have all of the fire retardant walls and all of that sort of thing. So whether that could be mobile or not, I don't know. We are in desperate need of trained welders in the province. There's welding going on all across Saskatchewan, and this is one space where we're hoping that it can be multi-purpose.

Mr. Elhard: — As I indicated earlier, Madam Minister, I hope this project is successful. Like I hope to see the results of this in a year or two as having been, you know, an investment well worth undertaking.

I guess I'm a little concerned at this point whether or not this will meet the objectives, this amount of money will meet the objectives that your government and your department has set out for this project, and whether or not we see real return on our investment in terms of human capital after the project is completed. So I'm going to terminate questioning at this point on this. I guess the . . . Well time will tell. And we'll see in the days ahead whether or not it was a good investment and whether it came about the way that the department and the minister and her government anticipated.

Let's move just quickly to the other expenditures in this particular vote on the supplementary estimates. There's three and a half million dollars roughly for ownership of the addition to the SIAST Kelsey Campus. Can I assume from this that the addition was paid for by SIAST through some kind of financing program and that this reimburses SIAST for that expenditure?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I am going to ask Karen to answer that. Karen is the head of corporate services.

Ms. Durnford: — Perhaps I can just make a couple of comments in advance of Karen because this is a bit of an accounting exercise that . . . It's a bit technical, but we'll try to explain it.

This started with . . . In the fall of '05, the government approved SIAST to add onto their space at Kelsey Campus a machine shop and welding area out the back of the campus. And the intent at that time was to fund that expansion from the accumulated surplus that SIAST had grown over a number of years. And so we had originally, as we started to work through this, we had originally planned that this would be recorded in SIAST records as a leasehold improvement.

As we got deeper into the discussion, what we discovered is that it is an extension to the footprint to the building, so there is an actual extension there and would need to be recorded by the building's owner which is the Department of Property Management. SIAST is not the owner of any of the buildings that they reside in. It's all owned by the Department of Property Management.

So at that point we recognized that, when it became time to record the capital part of this one, it needed to be determined

based on ownership as opposed to ownership of the capital, as opposed to leasehold improvement, and that meant it needed to be recorded through the Department of Property Management.

So essentially what we've done is advance the funding to DPM [Department of Property Management] to pay for the resources, and then SIAST will pay government back through the GRF [General Revenue Fund] essentially. So at the end of the day it's an add of zero to government.

Mr. Elhard: — That was a very clear explanation. Even I think I understood that but . . .

Ms. Durnford: — I had to have a few accountants explain it to me a few times.

Mr. Elhard: — Yes, well I probably would have required several explanations, but you did a very good job. So in effect we're talking about Department of Property Management owning the facility, SIAST being the leaseholder on that particular piece of property. Okay, so I would take it that this isn't necessarily the normal way of doing this kind of thing. So what would be normal?

Ms. Durnford: — Well no, it wasn't normal when it was occasioned by the fact that we had seen an accumulated surplus at SIAST, and we thought that there was an opportunity. And our recommendation was to use that accumulated surplus around capital development. But maybe, Karen, can you explain the normal? Or is that a better question to ask Raman?

Ms. Allen: — The normal one we deal with SIAST. And what has normally happened is they've only ever had leasehold improvements, so they never extend the size of the building. And then the money is funded into SIAST, and they deal with doing leasehold improvements, just like anybody else who leases a building from an owner. So that is the normal way with SIAST how it would be done.

If we were talking the normal within government, that is different where the individual departments receive the appropriation. And in the end the Department of Property Management owns the building, so we had a little bit of a hybrid here. And so it took just a lot of thinking to get this one right after the fact.

Mr. Elhard: — I don't have any further questions, Madam Chair. Thank you very much, Minister, and your officials. I appreciate your time again this afternoon.

The Chair: — Any further questions? Then thank you to the minister and officials, and thank you for the questions. I'll now entertain a motion to recess until 7.

Mr. Elhard: — So moved.

The Chair: — Mr. Elhard, thank you. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

Bill No. 7 — The Public Health Amendment Act, 2006

Clause 1

The Chair: — The committee is now back in session. The items on the agenda for tonight's session are consideration of Bill No. 7, The Public Health Amendment Act, 2006. The Minister of Health is here with his officials. After we do the Bill, we'll move into consideration of supplementary estimates for the Department of Health.

So if the minister wants to introduce his officials and if there's anything you have to say to the Bill at this time, start there please.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — All right. Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity to be with you in committee here tonight. We are doing The Public Health Act amendment, is that correct, Madam Chairperson?

The Chair: — I guess I could've read the Bill, yes. It is An Act to amend The Public Health Act, 1994 — that's the actual Bill we're discussing — and it's the amendment Act, 2006.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — All right. I just want to introduce, to my right, Louis Corkery who is with the department and takes the lead on The Public Health Act. And to my left is Lauren Donnelly, associate deputy minister. I have a number of officials with me tonight who are behind me, but they are here primarily for the supplementary estimates later in the evening.

The amendment to The Public Health Act, 1994 that is in front of us tonight is an important step to authorize the creation of regulations allowing restaurant information to be released to the public. The amendment provides the authority to regional health authorities to make restaurant inspection information public, and this is the first step to changing the way in which this issue is handled in Saskatchewan. I am prepared for questions.

The Chair: — Questions then. Mr. McMorris.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess a number of questions on the Bill. I don't think it'll take a whole long time. But I guess my first question is, is what was in place prior to this Bill being presented as far as any disclosure on restaurants, any public disclosure? Was there no disclosure of some of the inspections that were done on restaurants? Was there no disclosure publicly done?

Mr. Corkery: — My understanding is Regina Qu'Appelle RHA [regional health authority] disclosed a couple of inspection reports, probably two over the last five or six years. I posed the question to the other regional health authorities and basically there has been no interest in the public accessing these reports — up until about 2006 when a *StarPhoenix* reporter started making inquiries. So it hasn't been a common occurrence.

Mr. McMorris: — But there was an avenue then for health authorities to disclose reports publicly. If the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority was disclosing, all of the other 11 or 12 weren't, but there was a vehicle for the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority to disclose?

Mr. Corkery: — Once this I guess came to the fore last year again and when the media were raising it, then it's at that time we started asking questions with our Justice department. And at that time they thought, well it might be best to have clear authority in the Act to allow such disclosure. So what happened basically was Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region was disclosing really without maybe clear authority to do so.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — And if I might add to that, the legislation will now assure consistency amongst the regions for disclosure. Whether or not they had in the past a desire to do so, or there was a public request to do so, the answers now will be provided in a clear, consistent way across the province and not just the way in which a particular regional health authority wishes to disclose information should they have felt the desire to do so.

Mr. McMorris: — Just one further question on that kind of line of questioning then. Was there any ramifications on the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority for disclosing some of the inspection reports on those? You'd mentioned that you've talked to Justice and they really didn't have maybe even the legal authority to voice those concerns. Was there any ramifications for the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority?

Mr. Corkery: — No, there wasn't. In fact if you talk to the provincial Privacy Commissioner, he believes that there is authority right now to disclose that, but that's basically the opposite opinion of what our Justice department was providing. So it's kind of in a grey area and Justice is basically advising, because it's in a grey area why not have clear authority in the Act? So there was no ramifications, specifically to answer your original question.

Mr. McMorris: — So I mean I guess it clears it up for all the health authorities then moving forward on what they can and can't do.

When I looked at the news release, you talk about some consultation once the Bill is passed with stakeholders as to regulations. Who are the stakeholders that you're looking at bringing to the table? And you haven't talked to any like for example the restaurants association prior to this Bill being put in place? There was no consultation done before. It will all be done after, once the Bill is passed, regarding regulations. Am I correct in assuming that, or reading that?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I'll turn to Louis in a minute to provide a little more detail. When the amendments to the Act that are in front of us today were originally brought forward, what we were trying to do was ensure that we had the authority for the regional health authorities to proceed with the process of disclosing. The intention when this was first brought forward into the fall was the Act would be passed in the fall, that the consultation would occur over the course of the winter, and that we'd be in a position by the end of March to actually have the regulatory package in place. The comments that were made at the time was built around that time frame or that timeline.

As a result of the Act not having achieved third reading in the fall, we felt, that is Saskatchewan Health and the regional health authorities felt that there was no need to not proceed with our timetable in any case and consultation should occur. So over the course of the winter we've engaged in consultation with the

industry, with the regions, and with others. I'll get some additional information here added to the minutes in just a second.

We proceeded with that in any case to help to speed along this process so that if there is general concurrence the Act passes, that we can move into actual draft regulations here relatively quickly. So the bottom line is we have done a considerable amount of consultation at this point in time and we're quite prepared to share that with members of the committee.

Mr. Corkery: — Yes. Back in 2005, we had already consulted with stakeholders regarding a proposed food safety regulation. We were going to go again in early 2006 but then this disclosure of inspection report came around so we delayed that. But when the Bill wasn't dealt with in the fall session of 2006 we decided to go ahead in December 2006 with another stakeholder package on the proposed regulations, which now included the proposed disclosure section.

So stakeholders — and there's about at least 40 different agencies including the Consumers' Association of Canada, Saskatchewan branch and also the Canadian Restaurant Association, plus a number of other agencies plus about 250 food processors and restaurants chosen at large by the health regions — were consulted on the proposed regulations which included the disclosure piece.

So we just got those comments back in January, February. We finished consolidating those and there's general support for them. There's a few concerns raised, especially if the information is put on a website, and that was a concern. I think there's general support for disclosure but the concern was how that would be basically posted on a website.

Mr. McMorris: — I have a number of questions around, you know, what will be disclosed and further on as to how it will be disclosed, where it will be disclosed, whether it's on the website.

But I want to go back, and this question is directed then to the minister specifically. When you said that you felt or assumed that the Bill would go through in the fall, what would give you that assumption in a short fall session that a piece of legislation would go through all three readings? Certainly when I think the rules of this legislature were set up in the fall sitting, spring sitting session it was more or less intended that legislation would be introduced and passed in the spring session. So what would have given you that thought that it would achieve third reading in the, I guess it would be the fall session?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Actually that's a fairly simple question to answer. I think it all boiled down to the fact that some Bills would go through in the session with the House leaders' approval. And in fact some did — introduced in the fall, passed in the fall.

We felt that this was a direct response to public interest, that that public interest was shared by the industry and by members of the government and the opposition. And that once very quick consultations had occurred, there would be general consensus that this was a Bill that could go forward. We were being optimistic that there was an outside chance that it could pass

and we wanted to have a process in place that allowed things to move fairly quickly if indeed that was the will of the House.

Mr. McMorris: — So further questions then on the whole inspection process and what is to be reported. I think, you know, it's interesting that you would say that there was, you know, there's general agreement or agreement among all parties whether it's consumer groups as to what they feel should be reported and the industry as to what it feels should be reported. Can you give us, you know, give us some examples of where the agreement is, what will be reported under this Bill once the regulations are put in place?

Mr. Corkery: — Just to give you an example, the Consumers' Association of Canada agree with disclosure, but in the draft regulation we were suggesting a \$30 charge if they wanted to access a particular report from the regional health authority. And that's basically in line with FOI [freedom of information] requests and it basically covers admin costs, a search, and whatnot, photocopying.

They said it would be nice to have that information on a website. And also they wanted a red, green, yellow system like in Toronto. And so far we felt right from the outset we wouldn't go that way because it causes all sorts of problems especially . . . Well the restaurant association is totally against that particular approach because the public would make some decisions without really knowing how those, basically, colour schemes came to be, what card colour they have. So that was one of them.

The Canadian Restaurant Association are fully committed to having the full report disclosed, but not necessarily on a website. Because a website would make it quite easy, I guess, for people to make decisions on whether to eat in a place or not. And yet, if you look at the in-depth inspection regime, it's a lot more complicated than that. Like you identify there's a smaller risk type infraction and there's larger ones. And the Canadian Restaurant Association felt that by having that sort of scheme that people will make erroneous, I guess, decisions on going to a particular establishment.

So everybody basically agrees to transparency. It's just how much information will be put on and in what manner, whether it's the website or actually going on site to get the information from a regional health authority.

Mr. McMorris: — Yes, I can certainly see there being some issues with, you know, a report that doesn't have a lot of information and the public then making assumptions, assuming you know that it's got a, whether it's a failing grade or a lower grade and assuming without more information. So that's going to be probably a pretty tricky piece, trying to figure out what will be disclosed.

I mean, the restaurants want a lot of information disclosed? Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Corkery: — No. They have no problems with individual reports that are contained or housed within a health region disclosed to the public. What they are reluctant or not supportive of having that information posted on a website where people make some quick determinations as to whether a

place is safe or not and yet the inspection process is a little more complicated than that.

They just didn't want some simple decisions made without fully understanding what's on the inspection report. If they went on site to get a report, there would be some other information provided to the applicant on what an inspection regime includes, what to look for, what are the more serious type infractions, as opposed to a more nuisance type infractions. So there would be an opportunity to share that information on site, as opposed to on a website. That was the concerns that they raised.

Mr. McMorris: — So right now, I mean, if a health inspector goes into a restaurant before this piece of legislation and inspects and they find some problems, then what happens? They go back to the restaurant in a month's time, in two months time, and make sure those infractions are cleaned up or corrected, I should say?

But this legislation now is once that health inspector goes into a restaurant and sees that there have been, you know, a couple of issues, then how will the public know that and when will they, when will the corrections be made and how will the public know that? Like how is that all going to be made public?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think, first and foremost, what we have to recognize today is that the legislation in front of us establishes the framework with which we can proceed to consult on the very questions that you are asking us for answers today. The legislation simply authorizes that information be disclosed. And our commitment as a government to the industry and to the public is that, before we proceed with the regulations, we will consult thoroughly.

Consultation also includes reviewing the activities of the other provinces. For example we are aware that British Columbia and Ontario have a website-based release. Other provinces simply have a request; it's like a freedom of information request.

We do know that as far as the legislation is concerned or a authorization to proceed, we have support from the restaurant association to do that, and we also have agreement to proceed with the continued release of public . . . support for public inspections of the facilities.

I think one of the concerns is the timeliness of the information, and this gets to the questions that you're talking about. And in this consultation process, we have to ensure that there's enough information circulated for those we are consulting with so that they understand what it is that we're trying to achieve.

For example right now public health inspectors have access to and participate in inspections in restaurants right across this province — food establishments — not just restaurants. Those public health inspectors draft a report, and it goes into files. If the report calls for something to be fixed, the restaurant owners generally fix or mitigate the deficiencies very, very quickly. The next time the inspector is around, marks those things off, it goes back into the file. The file now shows that the deficiency has been mitigated.

The difference in time between when the report was first done,

the mitigation occurred, and the next report is released could be substantial in some cases. If all of this information is accessible on the website immediately, it may not show that mitigation has taken place and the public might be making decisions based on old information. After the mitigation is done and a new inspection has been done, one would assume that that information gets loaded up right away — right away quick.

I think in this consultation process, we have to be prepared to recognize the timeliness of this type of reporting if it's going to be website-based. My personal feeling is there's an advantage to website-based as long as the information is timely. And so we have to ensure that if mitigation has occurred, that we have the resources necessary to ensure that inspectors are available to report on mitigation activity to ensure that the public is aware. Because a lot of what we're finding in Saskatchewan, the reports of the public health inspectors are indicating very minor deficiencies and the restaurant association are very quick to respond with their mitigation efforts. The public needs to know that, instead of simply being told there's a deficiency that needs to be corrected.

This is part of the consultation and our commitment to the association and to the public is to ensure that we do this in a timely, professional, and efficient manner before the regulations are drafted and brought forward for approval.

Mr. McMorris: — Can you give me an example then of or some examples then on disclosing the information? If it's not through the website then, which the restaurateurs association may not want, what are the other avenues of disclosing this information then? Like, how would you do that? You're not going to be advertising in the paper or anything. How else are you going to disclose the information if it's not through a website?

Mr. Corkery: — Well right now, in some cases, you would have to make application to the original health authority to request inspection reports on a particular restaurant.

And just to correct myself from before, I didn't necessarily say the Canadian Restaurant Association is against a website. I think they're supportive of a website as long as it provides meaningful information, so I think that's the trick. But you'd have to go on site to get the information rather than a website, the two options.

Mr. McMorris: — Once this piece of legislation is passed and the regulations are worked out, which I think will be the biggest chore on this piece of legislation is to getting all parties to agree on . . . I guess you won't get them all to agree on all the regulations, but on how those are worded and time frames and everything else, are you looking at the health authorities needing to increase the number of health inspectors or should that make no difference? I mean they're already doing the job. This piece of legislation won't really affect the number of health inspectors that the authorities have on staff.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — At this point, we have not had any requests from the health inspectors for additional resources to meet the needs outlined here. However that's not to say that once the process begins and timely response to mitigated activity does require additional resources or additional time

from inspectors, that's not to say that we could not be asked for additional resources in the future. But at this point, with the knowledge of what's coming, we haven't had any indication that additional resources would be required.

Mr. McMorris: — Will there need to be any extra training of the health inspectors that we do have, as far as, you know, once these reports are done? It's one thing when it was done and went into the department's hands and the department dealt with it internally or the authority dealt with it internally and went back and saw that restaurant. But now that there is some public disclosure, will there need to be any extra training done of the inspectors?

Mr. Corkery: — Yes. That's actually been identified by a working group, and we're working on that right now. So there will be some upgrading to make sure the inspectors are actually being consistent in what they're reporting.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think the one thing that I want to make very clear goes back to my very first comments earlier; is that we want consistent inspections; we want consistent reporting across the province. Therefore we're going to require consistent inspections so that . . . We want the public to be aware that they will have access to credible, reliable, consistent, inspection information across the province, and therefore we just got to make sure that everybody's on the same page.

We have had virtually no concern about our restaurant inspection process raised to date. We have no reason to believe that we need to be doing things any differently. But if we want consistency, we need to bring everybody to the table and do that type of work.

Mr. McMorris: — So the health inspectors currently and into the future are employed by the authorities, but it will be the department that will oversee the training of the inspectors to make sure that they're all on the same page on this and they're reporting the same things on the same facilities or different facilities, but the same type of reporting process consistency. That will be the department's responsibility for training then?

Mr. Corkery: — We'll be taking the lead role. In fact, I chair that particular committee, so that's our commitment to get consistency. Yes.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay. I have no more questions.

The Chair: — Any other questions? If not then, Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: The Public Health Amendment Act, 2006. Could I have a motion that we report the Bill without amendment? Mr. Borgerson.

Mr. Borgerson: — I'll so move.

The Chair: — All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. Carried. Thank you.

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

Subvotes (HE04) and (HE03)

The Chair: — The next item up before the committee are supplementary estimates for Health. That's Vote 32 on page 9 of your Supplementary Estimates budget book.

We have a couple of new officials the minister may want to introduce, and unless you have a statement we'll move into questions.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — All right. Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss supplementary estimates for the Department of Health. I will introduce officials who are with me here tonight. And actually I have what I would call a substantial opening statement, in an attempt to perhaps answer some questions in advance but also to clearly outline exactly the direction taken in the supplementary estimates.

On my right is John Wright, the deputy minister of Saskatchewan Health. And as previously, Lauren Donnelly, assistant deputy minister, is to my left. Behind me sits Ted Warawa, executive director, finance and administration branch; Patrick O'Byrne, director of community hospitals and emergency services; Rob Isbister of Saskatchewan Property Management. And of course, now moved from beside me to behind me, Louis Corkery, with disease prevention and health promotion, and Faye Schuster, consultant with primary health services.

I will focus my remarks in introduction this evening on the two important investments contained in the supplementary estimates, which were recently announced: the purchase of two new aircraft for Saskatchewan's air ambulance service and support for Station 20 West, a partnership of primary health care and community-based services in Saskatoon's inner city.

To go back a short ways, on February 5 I announced a \$12 million investment for the purchase of two new Beechcraft King Air B200 aircraft for Saskatchewan air ambulance service. Air ambulance is also known as Lifeguard, was developed and launched in 1946 as the first non-military air ambulance service in the world. Today it has the distinction of being the world's longest-serving program of its kind, having just observed its 60th anniversary.

Lifeguard was developed in response for the need for a safe, secure, long-distance transfer of critically ill or injured patients, particularly residents in rural or remote areas of the province. It's a vital symbol of Saskatchewan's commitment to health care access for all of our residents.

Today Saskatchewan air ambulance is based at the Saskatoon airport. The program is funded and administered by Saskatchewan Health. Saskatchewan Property Management provides the pilots, aircraft, and maintenance, and Saskatoon Health Region provides air medical staff through St. Paul's Hospital and MD Ambulance.

The current Lifeguard fleet features three dedicated aircraft: two 2001 King Air B200s and a 1990 Piper Cheyenne which was introduced to service in 1997. Lifeguard transports patients from remote communities to larger centres within Saskatchewan. Also it transports patients outside the province if they require highly specialized treatment that is not available inside the province. These patients are not only adult, seniors, and young people but have also included newborns and infants requiring highly-specialized neonatal or pediatric medical attention.

You can appreciate then how critical it is that our air ambulances be maintained in excellent condition and that our fleet be sufficient in number and well positioned to respond to the call whenever needed. Lifeguard's three dedicated aircraft are equipped with monitoring units and medical supplies similar to those found in a hospital intensive care unit. The flight crew consists of a pilot, a critical care nurse, and when necessary, a paramedic. This crew assists in stabilization and transfer of emergency patients, inter-facility transfer of urgent and emergent patients and transport of less urgent patients from remote areas of the province that do not have access to regular road transport.

Whatever the urgency of a particular case, we can be sure that the patients and the families involved appreciated how important it was that they had access to top quality care and equipment and a fast reliable means of accessing specialized care.

In the past several years we have seen a significant increase in the utilization of this service. In 1999-2000, Lifeguard provided transport to 984 patients at a total cost of \$3 million. In the fiscal year 2006-07, we are projecting that Lifeguard will provide service to 1,334 patients at a cost of 5.5 million. Currently our air ambulances are making more than 1,300 flights every year and covering nearly one million kilometres. Needless to say that kind of use makes heavy demands on the aircraft and their equipment.

There are a number of factors that have contributed to the increased utilization of this service in recent years. One of the key factors has been the growth in our northern population, a trend that in all likelihood is going to continue in the foreseeable future. An important point that I want to emphasize this evening is that throughout this steady increase in utilization and in the face of increasing demands and wear and tear on its aircraft, Lifeguard has maintained an exemplary safety record with not a single fatal accident since its inception. This is an outstanding achievement and it's just one of the many aspects of this program about which we should be very proud.

Our \$12 million investment this year is an investment in the continuation of this outstanding track record. We are investing in the continued reliability and safety of this service. The fact is Lifeguard's pilots and other employees were informing us that

it was becoming more difficult and more expensive to maintain the existing planes at the current levels of usage. One plane needs to be retired because of its age, and parts for other aircraft were becoming increasingly difficult to find and expensive to purchase.

This investment allows us not only to replace the 1990 Cheyenne, which is due to be retired. It also allows us, with the purchase of two King Air B200s, to supply our crews with more modern aircraft and increase our efficiency in standardizing the Lifeguard fleet. By making use of one model of aircraft, maintenance becomes standardized, parts are interchangeable, and pilots do not need to be trained on different types of aircraft. This is an investment that will save time and money, not to mention enhance the service's safety and reliability.

Extensive study went into the selection of the new aircraft. We have had outstanding success with our current King B200s and they have emerged as the most suitable aircraft for Lifeguard's needs and the needs of our patients.

In short, this \$12 million investment recognizes the key role that air ambulance service plays in our health care system and the need to maintain this vital service. The new aircraft will help to ensure that patients have safe, rapid access to emergency care and that Lifeguard can continue to meet the growing demand.

In the best tradition of our province, air ambulance continues to be a co-operative effort and I'm very pleased to support it.

The other initiative is represented from an announcement February 23 when Sask Health was pleased to participate with the Premier in the announcement of a \$100 million plan to revitalize Saskatchewan inner cities and northern communities. Included in that commitment was an investment of \$8 million from Saskatchewan Health to improve health and community services for residents of Saskatoon's inner city. In November of last year, a Saskatoon study entitled "Health Disparity by Neighbourhood Income" reinforced what population health professionals have long known, that residents from low socio-economic neighbourhoods are experiencing comparatively poor health.

This is not a situation that we can reverse in a matter of days or even months, but it is important that we address it. It is important that we invest in the potential of children, teens, and young adults in these communities, not to mention the well-being of all the residents. The \$8 million investment will help to improve access to primary health care and community-based services by supporting projects such as Station 20 West, a partnership for the development of community programs that promote health and well-being. Station 20 is fundamentally an urban renewal project involving a number of community organizations with a vision of developing a centre that would provide multiple services to the community.

The proposal envisions a broad variety of services including everything within community-based services from child care, integrated primary health services, and including a grocery store. This concept includes a mix of cultural, social, educational, recreational, and health service delivery

components. It provides a venue that will not only attract residents who want to participate in community life, but will also enhance access to needed resources. It becomes a centre for direct delivery of services.

In December of last year, the partners of Station 20 West provided us with a thoughtful, well-developed, and impressive business case. This is a project that has taken some years to develop and it is based on a philosophy of partnership and integration. In short, the more that community-based and health services can work closely together, not just programmatically but geographically as well, the better we can make access to these services for the people who need them the most.

Station 20 West will see a number of programs and services co-located and more easily available to inner-city residents. Many of these residents do not have ready access to health care professionals or convenient transportation to access services in other areas of the city. As a result they will often use the nearest hospital for basic, everyday health care. If we can provide these residents with primary health care and community-based services that are close to their homes, it's better for them and it's better for the system as a whole.

As currently envisioned by Saskatchewan Health, Saskatoon Health Region and our partners in Station 20 West, these services may include dental care, immunization, substance abuse counselling, and healthy baby programs. Imagine the difference it would make to a young mother and child in Saskatoon's inner city if they could access these services in one location that is just a short bus ride or even a walk away.

Our government already supports a number of health service providers such as the Westside Community Clinic, the White Buffalo Youth Lodge, the student wellness initiative toward community health, or SWITCH as an acronym, and the West Winds Primary Health Centre.

These initiatives are all paving the way for a model of primary health care that strives to provide residents with ready access, helpful information, and the tools they need to enhance their own well-being. The Saskatoon Health Region will work with its Station 20 partners to finalize the model for this project and determine which services will be located in this community centre.

Station 20 West is an excellent example of the kind of intersectoral work that can best address the social, health, and economic challenges of inner cities. We have heard from a number of community groups and organizations that, if we want to make the best use of the resources available to us, we need to work closely together. When organizations operate in an isolated fashion with individual efforts to raise capital dollars, plan, and implement projects, the results can be prohibitive and unnecessarily expensive. We need to complement each other's efforts, not duplicate them. We need to plan together and implement together.

So co-location is more than just a grouping of community and government services in one building. It's more than just cost saving. It's a vehicle for co-operation and collaboration. Most importantly, it brings the services to the people rather than requiring the people to find the services. It removes barriers and

builds communities.

Saskatoon and Regina both have active, organized community associations that work at the grassroots level and understand the needs of their own communities. Each of them has been working on potential plans to address these needs, but require funding to support the infrastructure as a first step in realizing their goals. Station 20 is an exciting opportunity to improve quality of life for some of our most vulnerable residents. This kind of model builds better processes, improves relationships, and creates greater capacity to respond to local needs with a more efficient use of resources. It will help us to address health and social needs in a more comprehensive, integrated, and seamless manner.

The province's strong economy and increased revenue puts us in a position to begin addressing the disparities in health status between these communities and other more advantaged neighbourhoods. Those disparities are undeniable and represent an enormous cost in lost human potential. I believe that Saskatchewan Health's \$8 million investment in support of more accessible services could be a significant part of the solution.

Madam Chair, with those opening remarks I am prepared to answer questions on our supplementary estimates which, as I've indicated, deal with the air ambulance services essentially run by SPM [Saskatchewan Property Management] and Station West, essentially being developed and worked through the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority.

The Chair: — Thank you. Questions. Mr. McMorris.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Chair, and Mr. Minister, for those opening remarks. It might have answered a few of my questions; it might have created some more questions as well.

I want us first of all to talk about the \$12 million that has been spent or is budgeted to be spent on two new aircraft for the air ambulance fleet. I'm not quite familiar . . . I'm looking at a press release here that was on February 5, and you talk about Saskatchewan Property Management providing aviation services, Saskatoon Health Region providing medical staff. So who is, and this may be a pretty simple question, but who will be buying the aircraft? Who is tendering and purchasing the aircrafts?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — This is actually a fairly simple answer. I can take a little bit of time to answer it, but SPM, Saskatchewan Property Management. Saskatchewan Health provides the capital through our budget. SPM tenders for the aircraft, then houses, maintains, and looks after the aircraft. And as you had indicated in my remarks previously, Saskatoon Regional Health Authority through St. Paul's Hospital and MD Ambulance provides the medical personnel to accompany the aircraft and the pilots.

Mr. McMorris: — So really, I guess, Sask Health is simply giving SPM \$12 million to go out and buy two aircraft?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The answer is both yes and no. The capital costs comes through Sask Health, but the air ambulance

program is a Sask Health program. The infrastructure is managed by SPM, but Sask Health created and oversees the operations of the Lifeguard program, and as a result we are responsible for the delivery of air ambulance services.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay. I realize that, but at the end of the day, the two aircrafts, whose asset is that? Is that SPM's or Health? I realize that you're going to do the management of it and you're putting in \$12 million, but Sask Health does not own two aircraft at the end of the day when they put in \$12 million. Does SPM then own the two aircrafts?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The answer to that is yes, SPM owns the aircraft. They have requested of Sask Health that we provide them with additional capital to provide the replacement of the Cheyenne aircraft and second, the King Air B200.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay. And since you brought it up then, the two aircraft that are being replaced, those are SPM's owned aircraft as the new aircraft will be owned by SPM, funded by Sask Health, but owned by SPM. The two aircraft that are being taken out of service, they'll, I assume, will be sold. Where does that money go to then? Will that come back to Sask Health eventually, because . . . Did Sask Health buy those aircraft?

I guess what I'm saying is that we've put a \$12 million investment into having these aircraft which is, you know, which is a good idea — a great idea. But at the end of the day I mean, we certainly can use them. But if they were to be sold, is that money then, is it recouped by Sask Health or does SPM take ownership and then also have, you know, the use of the money after those aircraft have been sold?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I would like to think that there was some cash coming back, but I think the simple fact of the matter is the 1990 Cheyenne has indeed reached the end of its lifespan. I do not expect that we will see any financial recovery from that aircraft. Potentially it's there. If there is, that dollar value will come back, I'm assuming, into the General Revenue Fund of the government. That's how revenues are generally handled. So I would expect that it would come back for allocation somewhere else within the system. The second aircraft will be held within SPM.

I guess I should outline, although I can't necessarily speak for Saskatchewan Property Management, but Saskatchewan Property Management owns six aircraft; three of which are used, allocated to and used by the air ambulance and three are used by executive air services which provides aircraft for members of the legislature, cabinet ministers, the Lieutenant Governor, heads of the Crown corporations, and department heads. Those six aircraft are: we have two Cheyennes in the system and four King Airs.

What we will do is, what SPM will do is get rid of the two Cheyennes, bring in two new King Airs. Remember I'm speaking for SPM here so I have to think my way through how this is all going to work. We now have, or SPM now has a full fleet of King Airs so that the training is all the same for all the aircraft in the fleet. All of the parts are available for the same aircraft throughout the fleet, reducing training costs, reducing maintenance costs, those sorts of things.

One of the current air ambulances will be moved over to the executive air fleet so that they can get rid of the Cheyenne. And then the air ambulance fleet Lifeguard will have one existing King Air and two brand new King Air 200s.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay. Simple. So the two new King Airs, of course, are going to be used through air ambulance or Lifeguard. And it's a price tag of about \$12 million. Do you know how that number was arrived at?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Perhaps I could ask Rob from SPM to try and help me answer that question. I think it's based on simply a review of the current marketplace. But let me just check with Rob Isbister from SPM.

Mr. Isbister: — Hello, members. That's correct. It was an estimate of the cost to acquire the base plane and — if I can refer to it as such — and then to put the aircraft modifications, medical modifications that are required to convert it into the air ambulance service.

So that was the work that went into the estimates to purchase the basic LifePort systems that go into plane. I think it's capable of a two-stretcher system, so it can haul two patients. And then the base cost of the aircraft.

Mr. McMorris: — Could you give me a bit of breakdown first of all then. And I don't need the exact number, but I don't have any idea of what it would cost to buy an airplane and equip it to be an air ambulance. What would the costs, the medical costs associated with taking a base plane, as you called it, and turning it into an air ambulance?

Mr. Isbister: — The basic plane costs — and I'll give in US [United States] dollars because our contract here we're dealing with a US supplier — is just about 4.718 million for the base plane. The cost to purchase the LifePort system for one of the aircraft is \$133,800. And the cost to do the interior modifications to put the plane into service and to include the engineering and maintenance costs to get it ready and ready for Canadian use is about 511,000 for one plane and for the other plane it's about 393,000. And the reason there's a difference in those two is we're reusing one of the LifePort systems from the existing air ambulance plane. And we're able to reuse that and put it into the new aircraft.

Mr. McMorris: — Was there any consideration, looking at these costs then, was there any consideration of leasing as compared to purchasing, leasing an aircraft — because I know that's certainly done far and wide — leasing aircrafts as opposed to purchasing an aircraft?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I'll try and answer that, and maybe Rob can either correct me or add something to my answer. Certainly all avenues were reviewed but, given the number of hours that we spend in the air and the actual wearing out of the aircraft, it certainly appeared . . . or I think our calculations were that we were better off purchasing than leasing.

Mr. McMorris: — When you were looking at purchasing the aircrafts — and I wouldn't have any idea — are there a number of suppliers that you could look at? Were there tenders let? How did you arrive at . . . And I guess where did you purchase

them from? Obviously you'd mentioned the United States. I'm surprised that there weren't Canadian suppliers, or were they not able to come close to the pricing?

Mr. Isbister: — I'll back up and speak to the process in terms of this.

In this case here, they had determined this specific type of aircraft to acquire the King Air B200 aircraft. And in this case we were dealing directly also with the manufacturer of that aircraft which is Raytheon — I'm not sure of their full title, but Raytheon Aircraft — the manufacturer of that particular plane.

So in terms of the process that we went through, we used the tool from a tender process rather than a full open tender called an advance contract award notice. So in that situation we had identified the supplier; we had identified the particular equipment. We post those reasons and rationale, why we're going direct . . . plan to go directly to them and negotiate a contract, and we advertise that very similar to a tender. And it was advertised in December — from December 6 through 14 I believe were the dates. And in that case there no one challenged the case that we were acquiring the plane directly from the manufacturer.

I think in this case here directly, the manufacturer doesn't use resellers per se. And that's the case why there was no one that challenged it there.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Could I also add to this piece that I don't have the information in front of me, so again Rob might be able to correct or add to this answer. But the King Air is becoming the standard plane for ambulance services across Canada and indeed North America. This plane adapts extremely well to the medical uses, and it provides relatively easy access to most airstrips and has a very good . . . the amount of airtime that it can have on a tank of gas that sort of thing. It suits the purposes for air ambulance extremely well. Other provinces and even other air ambulance companies are utilizing this aircraft for this purpose.

Mr. McMorris: — Yes, I have no doubt that you know that it's probably the right aircraft — not that I would know — but it sounds like it would be the right aircraft for the job. I'm very interested in the fact that so you're able to negotiate with the manufacturer himself. I mean buying two aircraft is not a large amount for this manufacturer. I mean it's not like you're buying a number of planes and this manufacturer would have dealers throughout United States and Canada as well.

I'm interested in the fact that you would be able to go direct . . . and not really, I guess what you're saying is you've used no dealership or no middleman to buy these aircraft, and it's only two. I'm surprised that you're able to do that. And that's why — just so I understand this correctly — that's why you're saying that no other dealer, I guess you'd call them dealer, had chose to bid on this contract because you went directly, and they couldn't match that price because you're getting it at wholesale price compared to what a dealer would have to sell it at. Am I understanding that correctly? And I'm surprised that the manufacturer would do that.

Mr. Isbister: — I think in this case here the manufacturer deals

in net sales network as I understand it that way. They were more than willing to discuss and sit down with us for the purchase of the aircraft. The second part that I want to add on, there were a couple of separate tenders that were done for the modifications that are being done to convert and do the interior work and those tenders and also to buy the LifePort systems. Those tenders were conducted separately and through an open tender process for that work. So it's a combination of the two things for the total purchase price.

Mr. McMorris: — So the other two tenders, one is the equipment and the other one is more or less the installation, to be kind of my terminology. Those were awarded to American companies as well?

Mr. Isbister: — Correct. The modifications are being done by, I think, it's Elliott Aviation and the medical interiors, there are only — I think we had two bids on it. There were two manufacturers of the particular LifePort type of systems or the medical structure systems that go into the aircraft that were bid, and I think they're both American companies as well.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay, not to go too much further on this, but I'm interested that it's . . . all the money is going to the American companies for this, and I'm surprised that there were no — and I know you've answered it — but I'm surprised there were no Canadian dealers because I know there's a dealer here in Saskatchewan that sells King Air and that those options weren't looked at. We don't have any idea of how much extra it would have been if we would have used, for example, a Saskatchewan dealer to buy these aircraft. We wouldn't know what the price would be — difference?

Mr. Isbister: — I can only deal with . . . in this case no one challenged it, so we were able to deal directly with the manufacturer.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay. A couple of other questions then on the amount of usage, you had mentioned that — and I wrote it down here somewhere — that you had . . . it was around 900-and-some-odd, 984 flights or people used the air ambulance in the past, and you're looking at over 1,300 flights a year now. That's quite an increase and I think if you went back you'd find that, you know — what? — probably in the last 10 years the number of flights will have doubled. Can you give me some reasons as to why the air ambulances are being used so much more now than they were before?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, I can answer that question. Some of the reasons for increase in flights are, first and foremost, there is a growth in our northern population, an increased demand from northern and remote areas. We also see an increased demand for specialized out-of-province services that demand critical care transportation. Also I think we have to recognize Lifeguard nurses and paramedics — very highly trained — so that rural physicians do not have to accompany their patients and leave their community without physician coverage. And as a result, some of the communities in southern part of the province where you have got a single physician, who would otherwise on a road transportation have to accompany a patient, are able to use air ambulance instead of road transportation ensuring that physicians don't have to leave facilities in the province.

And that's probably basically the sum total of it: increased northern population, increased demand, and in southern Saskatchewan, greater use to assist in maintaining physician status in our communities.

Mr. McMorris: — Is there any cost for the people that are using this service? How does that work? I mean I understand the ambulance cost, but when you're starting to talk about air ambulance, what are the cost breakdowns? How does that work?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — There are costs to people, so there's a revenue stream that's attached to this. Maybe if I addressed the revenue side of this it would help to answer that question as well.

The air ambulance is a provincial program. It has an annual budget of about \$5.5 million a year. That's the number anyway for '06-07, and that budget is administered by Sask Health. The province covers the majority of the operating costs of the program, but 1.5 million is collected annually from provincial and out-of-province residents. Third party payers would also include SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] and WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] and from Health Canada on behalf of First Nations residents.

The revenue is collected from a charge, a patient charge of \$350 per trip for provincial residents, \$5.29 per flown mile billed to third party payers, SGI and WCB, on behalf of eligible patients, and \$5.29 per flown mile billed to out-of-province patients for use of the Saskatchewan air ambulance services. This results in total revenue collected by the finance and administration branch of Saskatchewan Health of about \$300,000 annually. A charge of \$5.29 per flown mile billed to the non-insured health benefits program of Health Canada for use of the service by First Nations patients results in total revenue collected of \$1.2 million. In 2005-2006 that was 1.08 million.

So for a Saskatchewan resident who is billed directly, \$350. For those who are using the service for WCB or SGI reasons, it's billed out at \$5.29 per flown mile. Same for the First Nations paid for by the federal government.

Mr. McMorris: — So any First Nations that's using the air ambulance, and I would think that there would be . . . you know, when you look at the demographics of the North and the population of the North, certainly a lot of First Nations using the air ambulance, and that is all covered then through the federal government on that rate that you were mentioning?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — That is correct — anyone who is eligible to receive their coverage paid by the federal government on behalf of the First Nations, yes. So it costs us \$5.5 million a year to run the system, and we collect 1.5 million back in revenues from individual patients, third parties, as well as the federal government.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay I just . . . One other question following up on that. Again I'm amazed, you know, we're looking at almost four flights, almost four flights a day going forward at 1,300 flights. And that's increased significantly. And as you mentioned, some of your rationale was that there's definitely an increase in population. I think that's part of it.

What type of an impact does the shortage of human resources, shortage of doctors, nurses . . . I don't know if there's a shortage of nurse practitioners, but maybe they're not being used to their fullest scope or to their fullest in that area. Do you think that a shortage of health care professionals is another reason why we're looking at having to fly as many people from the North if that's . . . And it's not, I know that's not all flying from the North. We're taking some people out of province. But do you think that is another . . . I would suggest that would be another reason for the increase in the number flights.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — By and large, what we see the air ambulance used for is critical care in rural and remote areas where we do have shortages. Critical care is not generally provided in any case, and as a result you've got to move these people one way or another — air ambulance or road ambulance. And in the cases where the air ambulance is used, it's almost always used in relation to that critical care where road ambulance just isn't acceptable.

So by and large the answer is no, but it's not an unequivocal no. And I say that because any time we have a facility or a unit that is short-staffed because of a vacancy or a vacancy that's created by a maternity or sick leave or vacation leave or those sorts of things, it will have an impact on the ability of that facility to provide full services.

So there's no doubt a shortage of health care professionals could indeed have some impact. But I would hesitate to say it was a significant impact on the system.

Mr. McMorris: — I think two more questions. Who makes the determination then as to how the patient will be travelling? You know, I mean, you've used the example of road ambulance and there's air ambulance. Who makes the determination?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — That's a very good question. I had to actually ask my officials to help me with that question as well, although they nodded when I gave them my answer. So if this was the \$64 question I probably just earned \$64.

It's the physician that makes the call to transport — or a triage nurse where the circumstance may exist. But it's primarily the physician who makes the call that this particular patient must be transported. They make the call to the Lifeguard system.

Mr. McMorris: — And this my final question is, we're looking at increasing up to 1,300 flights estimated this year. And you know, if we look out three or four years is that going to no doubt increase, then what is the life expectancy of these aircrafts? Maybe that's the wrong term to use in this type of . . .

Mr. Isbister: — I'll take one and I'll maybe have to take an undertaking on the second part. Obviously there's two parts to aircraft. The biggest part on an ongoing basis would be your engines, and that and those require replacement, and they have certain life cycles that require replacement. In terms of the airframe, I don't believe these airframes have a specific life on them. I will have to double-check that though and get back to you on that.

Mr. McMorris: — I guess it's not my final question on the air ambulance then. And I certainly know after so many hours the

engines have to be checked, and after so many hours they have to be rebuilt and then eventually replaced. Whose responsibility financially is that then? Because when you look at the aircraft, I mean just when you said base aircraft, the base aircraft itself is really not a very large expense. It's the motors that, the engines that you're putting on it. So whose responsibility is that ongoing maintenance into the future?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Actually the responsibility is SPM for maintaining it, but for all intents and purposes Sask Health is paying through our annual contract with SPM for maintenance services, if I'm not mistaken. So we provide SPM with operating funds as well for the services.

You're absolutely right about the main frame and the engines. That's one of the reasons why the Cheyenne is currently being discharged from the system. We're replacing it with a King Air. The Cheyenne that we are getting rid of is, I think it was 1976 and . . .

A Member: — I think ours is a 1990 and exec air is a 1976.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Okay. We have two Cheyennes in the fleet, as I explained earlier. One is with SPM for exec air. That's the 1976 plane. And the aircraft being used currently for Sask Health is 1990?

A Member: — 1990.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — 1990. They are very difficult to find parts for now. This is an aircraft that we still use — have been using — every day, but they're in for maintenance more often than they're in the air. It's a frustrating process for those who are managing the fleet and as a result, as I indicated earlier, the new aircraft are warranted.

Mr. McMorris: — Which leads to another question then. You're saying that there's a \$5.5 million budget for air ambulance and you recoup, you bring in revenue, it's about 1.5.

So of this 5.5 then that Sask Health puts in, that goes to paying medical, the staff, staffing of these planes, plus some of that goes then to SPMC for operational costs too. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes.

Mr. McMorris: — And you wouldn't know the breakdown right now.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I don't have it in front of me, but if someone does and wants to hand it up to me, that's fine but I don't have that.

While that's being written and handed forward, I just, when we were looking at the number of flights, I thought something that you would probably be interested in knowing is on a percentage basis of where these flights go. Forty per cent of the aircraft use is total air ambulance flights, 40 per cent are northern flights, 36 per cent are rural flights, and 24 per cent are tertiary or out-of-province flights. That's fairly evenly balanced across the province.

Mr. McMorris: — And the breakdown of the 5.5.

Ms. Donnelly: — It's roughly one and a half for the clinical staff and four to SPM for the pilots, the engineers and maintenance, the lease on the hangar, the maintenance costs for the plane, depreciation, etc.

Mr. McMorris: — So \$4 million a year for that; for depreciation of the aircraft, maintenance of the aircraft. Now that we are looking at having two new aircraft where the maintenance is not nearly as high as the Cheyenne that, not the one that's for executive air but for air ambulance. Will you see a difference in that? I would think there'd be quite a difference in that when you've got two brand new airplanes and you're just finished saying that the cost to maintain the one Cheyenne was very high. It will be interesting to see where that budget ends up.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Perhaps when SPM is in front of you, you can call me back and we'll arm-wrestle here at the committee over that very point. There are negotiations that have to take place over these lease agreements and so I don't know exactly the answer to your overall, to the question that you've asked.

Mr. McMorris: — Well I would just hope that there would be at least a savings of a couple million dollars that could go to front-line care workers.

Mr. Isbister: — Well just add basically . . . The depreciation by Health paying for the capital costs has basically been covered, you know, I think in terms of the full costs. You know, in terms of the ongoing operating and maintenance and operational costs of providing the program are the ongoing costs I think and any additional capital changes that happen, as we talked about, engine maintenance and stuff like that.

Mr. McMorris: — Anybody else have any other questions on airplanes? Okay. Thank you for that and for the official from SPMC, SPM I guess.

My other questions will be around the \$8 million that is being spent, I would think, through the Saskatoon Health Authority. That money would go directly to the Saskatoon Health Authority but targeted, specifically targeted, towards the example you used. Is that how that would work? Or does the department supply the funds directly to this west 20, Station 20 West facility?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The answer to that question is quite simple. We will provide the funds to the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority and the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority will be responsible for the expenditure of those funds in partnership with Station West.

Mr. McMorris: — Just so I can have a bit of an understanding, whereabouts is this Station 20 West located in Saskatoon?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The actual location is expected to be in and around Avenue L and 20th Street in Saskatoon. The reason I say expected to be is the land is still being discussed with the city of Saskatoon. I think tonight — maybe it was last — tonight the city of Saskatoon council, city council will be dealing with this piece of land and whether or not they will provide that piece of land to the partnership for a very fine sum of money.

Mr. McMorris: — So there is no facility there at all. This money isn't going into an existing facility, existing programs. This is being virtually started from scratch.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — That is correct. The land has been cleared. It is anticipated and expected that a community facility of some sort will be provided. It would be built on that particular piece of land, which is why it's under consideration, for all intents and purposes, granting from the city of Saskatoon.

This project, the business plan that's been brought forward, is for a \$12 million facility of which Sask Health is bringing forward this \$8 million. This will facilitate Health's interest in the facility, that interest being primarily the possible relocation of the Saskatoon community health clinic and offices supported by and sponsored by the College of Medicine and the College of Nursing to provide dental and other services to the community through that facility.

Mr. McMorris: — Not knowing Saskatoon real well but having an idea of the constituencies, what constituency would that be, would L and 20th be located in, do you know?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I'm looking at my Saskatoon friends over here. I think it's the riverside constituency.

Mr. Prebble: — L and 20th is in, sort of borders Pleasant Hill and Riversdale and will be in Pleasant Hill.

Mr. McMorris: — Well I guess that would mean . . . But it would be in the Riversdale constituency.

Mr. Prebble: — It would be in Minister Forbes's constituency, right on the edge of the Premier's and Minister Forbes's.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay. You say it's a \$12 million project. Then the other \$4 million is coming from . . .

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I look closer at my notes; it's about a twelve and a half million dollar project. The other funds come forward through a group called Child Hunger and Education Program, CHEP, C-H-E-P, which is an existing organization within the city of Saskatoon; Quint Development, which is an economic development community corporation inside the city of Saskatoon; and fundraising activities that they would engage in to come up with the remaining dollars. And of course the business plan also calls in addition to those dollars this partnership primarily led by CHEP and Quint would assume a mortgage for any dollars outstanding at the end of the fundraising.

Mr. McMorris: — So there's no further obligation then from the Department of Health. This is a one-time only lump sum of \$8 million that's going to go this project and then and I'm not exactly sure of those two organizations that you mentioned but I believe one would definitely a non-profit I think — CHEP but I don't know about Quint. They have then the responsibilities moving forward of the facility, the operating costs, all of that. I realize that any of the medical costs such as doctors and you know that would be some of Department of Health. But it's a one-time \$8 million and that's it?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — If I might add to this. The business plan calls for some commercial development in the facility as well. The organizers, that is CHEP and Quint, would be raising funds through leases on this space. Obviously space that is held by any department that we might fund would be paying lease fees to be a part of the facility. So there's a number. The ongoing operating costs will generally be raised by the use of the facility.

There is the possibility of services that government provides that would be delivered through that facility. The costs of those through the Saskatoon Health Region would increase from where they are currently being delivered, partly because where . . . for example, the College of Medicine or the College of Nursing, moving facilities there. Those are costs that are not currently being incurred where they are presently.

To move the community clinic and to expand their services there could be some additional costs attached to that but it would be the normal types of costing that they would bring forward through Sask Health. As far as start-up costs are concerned, again there could be a contribution towards the overall project management as the project develops, quite simply because with the substantial investment that Sask Health is making in the project we want to ensure that we have access through the developmental process. So contributing towards project management or project development costs is a way of ensuring our presence during that process.

Mr. McMorris: — A few more questions on this. I'm not very familiar with the two organizations that you're going to be partnering with, CHEP and Quint. Do you know how they generate their funding? Where does their funding come from?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Just looking through the prospectus of the organization known as CHEP here, that might help us to answer this question. The Chair of the board of directors is an individual whose name is Susan Whiting. Their financial overview, their income sources include donations and fundraising, the Good Food Box customers, certain foundations, the United Way, the city of Saskatoon, and from the province of Saskatchewan they get some funding from the Department of Community Resources.

Their expenses primarily break down for children's nutrition programs, nutrition education programs, collective kitchens, bulk buying, the Good Food Box program in Saskatoon, community gardening program, and some expenditures for policy, research, and development. Overall their total income and expenses balance out at about three-quarters of a million dollars a year.

As far as Quint is concerned, Quint's revenue comes significantly from grants, including grants from the Bronfman Family Foundation, the city of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Credit Union. They have some revenue from the University of Saskatchewan. They also have money provided through the Department of Community Resources and through the Regional Economic and Co-operative Development departments. They have some donations. They provide some management services for which they receive fees, and they receive funding for rental and property management of . . . I think it's housing facilities within the city of Saskatoon.

On the expense side it is, by the looks of this, largely wages and salaries to manage the various programs that they operate, and again their expense and revenues balance out in the neighbourhood of \$1 million dollars a year.

The Chair: — Thank you. For a change of pace we'll go to Mr. Prebble.

Mr. Prebble: — Just a little more clarification on Quint for members of the opposition. Quint is, first of all, it's a non-profit organization, and it represents five of the inner city neighbourhoods in Saskatoon: so King George, Pleasant Hill, Riversdale, Westmount, and Caswell. So it represents those five neighbourhoods and advances the economic and social well-being of those neighbourhoods in a variety of ways. And the location of the project will have been chosen by the groups involved. The location was not chosen by the province. The location was chosen by the organizations in discussion with the city of Saskatoon. So I just hope that provides a bit of extra clarity. Thanks, Madam Chair.

The Chair: — Mr. McMorris, you had further questions?

Mr. McMorris: — Sure. So \$8 million and then four coming from the other organizations and it's a building starting from scratch. At the end of the day, does the Saskatoon Health Authority own the facility?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — No, the Saskatoon Health Authority does not.

Mr. McMorris: — So do these two other organizations own the facility?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The partnership would own the facility.

Mr. McMorris: — The partnership of all three?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes plus others. AIDS Saskatoon is involved in the project as well the Westside clinic. Currently the Westside clinic in Saskatoon owns its own building and property and is simply funded by Saskatchewan Health. They would continue to have a partnership interest in this project.

Mr. McMorris: — Are there any examples of this type of a project in Regina?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Nothing that we have . . . nothing that comes to mind. The community clinic of course in Regina functions and has a multidisciplinary approach to providing health. But in terms of co-operating with other organizations, like those providing housing, economic development, doing an inner-city partnership of multiple organizations, no, nothing similar to this.

Mr. McMorris: — Again I'm not real familiar with the community clinic, but you used it as a bit of an example in Regina. Are there other organizations or is that just the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority that runs and operates the community clinic here in Regina?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — In actual fact they are affiliated to the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, but the community clinic in

Regina just as it is in Saskatoon are essentially stand-alone clinics. We also have community clinics in Lloydminster and in Prince Albert that are also stand-alone facilities that are separately, individually funded by Saskatchewan Health, but affiliated with the health regions that support them.

Mr. McMorris: — So this Station 20 West is really unique then in the province, bringing in all the organizations as well as the health authority having a direct link.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Let me say that this represents a very exciting opportunity for the province. The community organizations have long felt the need for bringing together a multidisciplinary approach. The Saskatoon Health Region responded to the disparities report from last year recognizing that it needed to take health services more closely to the people of the inner city in Saskatoon.

Having a look at this business plan brought forward from the community organizations excited the regional health authority and Sask Health as a way of responding to not only the needs expressed by the community, but in responding to the information that was coming forward in the report that basically said, to improve health outcomes is a multidisciplinary approach on income, on housing, and on delivering closer to where people are.

So we've got an opportunity here for the delivery of health services in conjunction with other community-based health services. And the Saskatoon Health Region, as I said, very excited about the opportunity. This is exactly the sort of thing that Sask Health is happy to be a partner in.

There's still some way to go in this process. What we have done here is identified a dollar value that we're prepared to bring forward and put on the table to support the concept. A working group has been put together that includes representatives from Sask Health to develop out the concept over and above the business plan that's currently on the table. The community clinic also has some decisions to make about the delivery of health programs through this facility. And the door is wide open for a lot of opportunities to be expressed, to be discussed, and ultimately to be delivered to a very important part of the city of Saskatoon.

Mr. McMorris: — Just one final question then. So it's an \$8 million investment this year. What is the ongoing investments that the department will have? Will there be another line item next year, another \$1 million going to Station 20 West? What are the obligations of the provincial government going forward, or is this just one-time block funding of \$8 million?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — This is a one-time allocation of dollars, one-time allocation that will find its way into capital same as the other item before us tonight in supplementary estimates.

Each of the Sask Health funded groups that are part of this have ongoing funding that would just continue in the normal line items within our budget. And just as Saskatoon Health Region would make requests from time to time for equipment purchases for any of their facilities, there's a possibility that they could make requests in future budget for equipment or additional operating costs to support programs, expanded

programs through the community clinic, that sort of thing. But each of those items would come through the normal budget process but it would not be identified as Station 20 operating or Station 20, that sort of thing.

Mr. McMorris: — That's all I have. Thank you to the minister and all of his officials that were here tonight for both the Bill and the estimates. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thanks. Ms. Crofford had a question.

Ms. Crofford: — I was just going to provide maybe a little more information. I'm not as knowledgeable as Peter is — it's actually Minister McCall's riding — but I do know that in that community they're taking more of an approach like Tisdale with the multi-use centre. And I think we may see in that community Four Directions Health Centre and the library and the high school and different people like that coming together. It'll be a little different than Saskatoon's model, but it'll be a similar idea of providing a multiplicity of services in a closely adjacent area. So it'll be a little different but sort of the same. But Four Directions Health Centre is the one there that's involved in that health district, I believe.

The Chair: — So seeing no further questions, then the committee will recess until 9:00 when we're going in camera to discuss Bill 40. Thanks to the minister and his officials.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you and I thank the officials for accompanying me here tonight, and I thank you all for your questions and interest.

[The committee continued in camera.]

[The committee adjourned at 21:57.]