



STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE
2008**

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Mr. Trent Wotherspoon
Regina Rosemont

[The committee met at 19:00.]

**General Revenue Fund
Supplementary Estimates — March
Justice and Attorney General
Vote 3**

Subvotes (JU01), (JU03), (JU04), and (JU08)

The Chair: — Ladies and gentlemen, if you're ready, we'll call this meeting to order. And we're doing the supplementary estimates for Justice and the Attorney General, so I'd ask the minister to . . . We welcome you here and ask you to introduce your officials.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a number of officials with me. At the table tonight, I've got Doug Moen, deputy minister and deputy attorney general, and Lee Anne Schienbein, executive assistant to the deputy minister.

Seated along the back and behind me, I have Daryl Rayner, executive director of public prosecutions; Gerald Tegart, executive director, civil law division; Linda Bogard, executive director, court services; Betty Ann Pottruff, executive director of policy, planning and evaluation; Gord Sisson, director, administrative services; Marilou McPhedran, Chief Commissioner, Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission; and Rebecca McLellan, manager of operations from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to provide you with a very brief overview of the supplementary estimates request for the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General.

The supplementary estimates that are required are \$1.375 million. These offset unexpected expenditures related to the consolidation of information technology services under the ITO's [Information Technology Office] central service delivery model. The projected cost is \$300,000 which is largely related to telecommunications costs.

To ensure the continued operation of the courts, staff must be available to meet workload demand. An additional \$100,000 is required to backfill staff on medical leaves and address workload pressures in court services.

An additional \$75,000 is required for a retroactive reclassification of Queen's Bench deputy sheriffs.

There is also, Mr. Chair, an increase in costs associated with court-appointed legal counsel, requiring an additional \$125,000 in funding.

In public prosecutions, an additional \$50,000 is required for obtaining outside legal counsel for the appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada in the Klassen-Kvello matter.

As well, \$175,000 is required for the one-time signing bonus and flexible benefit payment provided to out-of-scope staff. The latter has significant impact, as prosecutions has the largest contingent of out-of-scope staff in the ministry.

An additional \$420,000 was required for the Milgaard and Stonechild inquiries: \$360,000 of that sum goes to the Milgaard inquiry to support the work of the commissioner with the assistance of commission counsel to complete his final report. We are projecting an additional \$60,000 to engage commission counsel for the Stonechild inquiry in the review of the commissioner's findings.

A sustained higher workload within the legal unit of the Human Rights Commission has required an additional \$130,000 to avoid lengthy delays for clients.

I look forward to answering questions from the members tonight. And as the questions come up, I'll just ask the appropriate official just to come forward and answer the questions from here.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. Are there any questions? I give the Chair to Mr. Nilson as questions.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay, thank you very much. I appreciate being here and returning to a role involving the Justice department, and I look forward to some answers on these questions. I also look forward to the estimates in the coming weeks as we look at the expenditures for the whole department.

The amount of money that you identify for the information technology funds relating to the centralized system, is this related to the personnel system or is it related to some of the many or one of the many Justice-related IT [information technology] systems? If you would provide an explanation for that, that would be very helpful.

Mr. Sisson: — Yes, I can provide you with that information. What this pertains to is the centralization of information technology services within the Information Technology Office. So previously the department had its own staff that looked after desktops, helpdesk, that type of thing. All those staff were transferred to the ITO.

What this is, is in joining their network there were some telecommunication costs, some extra infrastructure that needed to be put in place, and that's what this special warrant covers.

Mr. Nilson: — So the explanation is that you moved a number of employees out of the department and it cost you more?

Mr. Sisson: — There was a centralized delivery model where there's improved service delivery through the ITO. They can take some advantages of economies of scale. The trouble with the department of Justice is we were on the lower end of the IT within government so that there needed to be a bit of money to get us up to a sustainable level in the ITO.

Mr. Nilson: — So this was used to purchase equipment or software, or what?

Mr. Sisson: — Mainly to upgrade telecommunication lines, bigger pipes to fit into the bigger servers.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. The next area here you have is court services. And I will ask my question. You indicated that there's

pressure on the court services as far as staff go. Is that because the original estimates for the amount of money required were low or are we just seeing more business in the courts?

Ms. Bogard: — The pressure with respect to court services this year has been primarily related to a number of staff on medical leave. We have a number of staff in court services who are long-term employees, and they have sick leave but have gone off on medical illnesses. So what happens is we end up paying their sick leave as well as hiring someone else to fill out those positions for us.

Mr. Nilson: — And obviously in number and in amount of days much more than what you anticipated.

Ms. Bogard: — That's correct.

Mr. Nilson: — Yes. Is this also where the retro reclass for the deputy sheriffs is included?

Ms. Bogard: — Yes it is.

Mr. Nilson: — Can you explain what happened there?

Ms. Bogard: — There was a reclassification submitted to the Public Service Commission back in November 2004 for our deputy sheriffs in the Court of Queen's Bench. And the Public Service Commission has now reviewed the position description, determined that there should have been a reclassification of those positions, and they were compensated accordingly.

Mr. Nilson: — So does this include payments back then to 2004? Is that why you need to have extra money?

Ms. Bogard: — Yes.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. The next area where I have some questions relates to the Human Rights Commission. And my specific questions relate to the fact that there's more money required here to deal with timelines on response to complaints. Can you give us an idea what the timelines are right now and at what point you asked for more money to help you out in this area?

Ms. McPhedran: — So are you referring specifically to the legal assistance that we've contracted for?

Mr. Nilson: — Well you have \$130,000 here and the explanation was that it's to deal with the timeliness of dealing with complaints. So obviously it's both for lawyers and for other staff as well. But I'd just be curious as to what the timelines are right now.

Ms. McPhedran: — Well, let me place this in context. I became the full-time Chief Commissioner in January of this year. And in November when I started to make the transition from the university to the commission, there had been some very recent vacancies and at the point just prior to the vacancies, there was no backlog in terms of investigations per se.

Where we're seeing the largest need is in over \$100,000 for legal services. We have only one lawyer, one staff lawyer. If I

can put that in a quick comparison, New Brunswick for example, the commission there has three lawyers. So there was one particular case that had moved in and out of settlement and we needed to go ahead with it, because it went back into full tribunal process and subsequent appeals. And so the lawyer who had been at the commission for some 25 years, and therefore needed no additional payment to come up to speed, took that case, kept that case, and followed it through to its completion.

In addition to that the previous chief commissioner had a part-time lawyer helping with preparation, various aspects of dealing with complaints within the system. For example, dismissal decisions would be one specific example of that. And so that, those services, those legal services came to \$110,000 estimated.

The Chair: — Excuse me. If I could interrupt for just one second, for the aiding of Hansard, we would ask each new official to come to the microphone if they would identify themselves, just to make it easier for Hansard. My apologies. I didn't do that off the start, so I'm sorry.

Ms. McPhedran: — My apologies. I should have done that. My name's Marilou McPhedran and I'm the relatively new Chief Commissioner of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — If I can be of assistance, I have some statistics that give some indication of the commission's situation as of December 31, 2007. There was at that time 220 active complaint files. There was 13 of those complaints that were awaiting assignment to an investigator. The average time for an assignment last year was . . . wait time for an assignment was four months. The average time in settlement was five months, although more than 60 per cent of those were done in under five months. The average time in investigation was 10 months, but more than 50 per cent of those were completed in under 10 months. So our intention is to try and reduce the timeline at each step of the process. I think if you go back historically the complaints have dropped off and the time wait has dropped off. I can go back a little bit.

In 2004-2005, 406 files were concluded and those included 200 pay equity complaints. In 2005-2006 the commission completed 255 files. April 1, 2006 until the end of March 2007 the commission concluded 193 files. So we've got a relatively high completion rate for the number that are still in the system now.

Mr. Nilson: — I guess then the last area of questions that I would have relates to what you plan to do as you go forward. I assume you're advertising for more legal assistance at the commission, or are you going to be operating with one lawyer and contract lawyers, or what is the plan?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I think we're at a point where we would be dealing with things that are in the upcoming budget and it would probably be inappropriate to outline what our staffing plans are and budget for the next year until after the budget's released.

Mr. Nilson: — So how many lawyers were there there last year?

Ms. McPhedran: — One full-time senior staff lawyer and then on a term basis, a part-time lawyer doing the work that I was describing, the supportive work with the complaints system. But in terms of the tribunal work, the core of the litigation work, defending when there's a challenge to a tribunal decision for example, that's largely handled in-house by our senior staff lawyer. Personally I think it's rather miraculous what she does.

Mr. Nilson: — So I take that that we're going to hear some more about this and we will have a chance to ask further questions if there's not information there. I guess I'm not certain what the staff complement was over a number of years, but it seems to me it was a little bit greater than that.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We can certainly provide you with the historic staff complement going back, if that's of benefit.

Mr. Nilson: — Well I think the bigger benefit is that we get some assurances that you're going to meet the needs of the commission as far as the staff that they need.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We used to have Milton Woodard who has now gone back to private practice a year or two ago, and I think he was somebody that had been with the commission for a great number of years and was probably able to do far more work than somebody that's comparatively new because he'd (a) been there for a long time and it had become his area of expertise. I think with his leaving it's been difficult to try and find one person that would do that replacement. So I think we're going to be dealing this over the next while.

Mr. Nilson: — Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: — I turn the floor over to Mr. Quennell.

Mr. Quennell: — On that issue and perhaps rephrasing the question to the minister that my colleague had previously asked, without commenting on any potential increase to the budget of the Human Rights Commission in the upcoming budget, is the issue of the requirement or desirability of lawyers — staff lawyers for the Human Rights Commission — and the number of those lawyers that might most effectively deal with the work of the commission now that a very senior counsel has left, is that issue under review by the minister?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We recognize the independence of the Human Rights Commission. We'll probably have a review and some discussions with them as to how they want to arrange the staff complement. But your point about losing a senior person certainly posed a challenge for the commission, and we don't want to see that be something where we would lose ground that's been gained in the last while.

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Chair, maybe I'll try it this way. Has the independent Human Rights Commission requested that the minister provide more than one staff lawyer?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I don't think we'd want to deal with that just on the week before budget.

Mr. Quennell: — So that's, I guess, a maybe. On the issue of Klassen-Kvello which was mentioned in the review by the minister, there was a settlement agreement which allowed the

appeals of legal issues to proceed, first of all, to the Court of Appeal and then on a leave appeal application to the Supreme Court of Canada, which leave application has been granted. Has a new settlement been entered into to facilitate the payments that were clearly made outside of the previous settlement?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — The payments that were made were an *ex gratia* payment and would, in the event that the Klassen family is successful in the ultimate litigation, the payment would be applied to the agreed-upon settlement that was made under the previous administration. In the event that the decision by the Supreme Court goes the other way, then this would be treated as an *ex gratia* payment to the Klassen family.

Mr. Quennell: — What was the reason for an *ex gratia* payment outside of a settlement agreement that was mutually arrived at by all parties some time ago?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We felt it was an appropriate payment to make to the Klassen family regardless of what the outcome of the litigation might be.

Mr. Quennell: — The minister can confirm the payment wasn't made just to avoid a picketing at his constituency office. I know how unpleasant that can be.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I haven't had any threats of any picketing, and I'm not afraid of picketing, but yes, I'm sure it is an unpleasant process to be on the receiving end of. No, it was something that was certainly believed that was a correct thing to do.

Mr. Quennell: — Okay. I would like to move on, Mr. Chair, to the \$420,000 — do I have that number right? — for the completion of the Milgaard report. Does the ministry have a sense of when the report is expected to be completed and released to the public?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Yes. We believe there's a reasonable likelihood that it will be released in mid-May.

Mr. Quennell: — Now that's for payment to the commissioner, obviously. And commission counsel, is that Doug Hodson, Q.C. [Queen's Counsel]?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Yes it is.

Mr. Quennell: — Any other individuals?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — No, not that I'm aware of. No, none at all.

Mr. Quennell: — Can you advise how much of that's going to the commissioner, how much of that's going to commission counsel? Sorry, Mr. Chair, I should be directing it through you. Can the minister advise?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I can give you figures that relate to the entire process that's there. The commissioner's costs for Justice MacCallum, his salary is actually a cost that is paid for by virtue . . . the federal government pays that as part of his Queen's Bench salary, so we do not bear any of his costs other than his travel and incidental expenses. The firm of

MacPherson Leslie Tyerman that employs Doug Hodson has received \$4,498,332.25. Now as you're aware, there's payments to a number of other law firms that represented other parties to the action.

Mr. Quennell: — Now to go back to my question, Mr. Chair. Of the \$420,000 that is being requested in this special warrant, how much of that is going to the commissioner? How much of that is going to counsel, commission counsel . . . [inaudible] . . . two ways from the answer that the minister gave to a previous question.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Sixty thousand of this represents money for the Stonechild inquiry. The remaining portion — virtually all of that goes towards the commission counsel, towards MacPherson Leslie Tyerman. There's negligible expenses from the commission at this point in time.

Mr. Quennell: — Has the commissioner's contribution to writing the report come to an end?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'm advised by my officials that he's doing it out of his home in Edmonton.

Mr. Quennell: — But not being paid.

Mr. Moen: — Doug Moen, the deputy. He's paid by the federal government, and you know he's a Queen's Bench judge, and so he's certainly paid but he's paid in that way.

Mr. Quennell: — So no further expenses on his part, travel to Saskatoon to work on the report. So this \$360,000 is almost entirely going to commission counsel.

Mr. Moen: — There's a minimal expense for his travel. He has travelled a bit, but we're talking about a very small amount of money, and the vast majority, as the minister has indicated, is for the legal expenses. These are expenses in assisting the commissioner in doing the editorial work on the report, so it's that kind of effort that it's being put to.

Mr. Quennell: — I want to come back to the Stonechild inquiry briefly, but if I could ask a question or two about court appointed legal counsel. We've had a couple of high profile cases in Saskatchewan recently where the defendants have been or are being defended by Legal Aid, and in, I think, at least one of those cases by court appointed counsel. Is that the cost that we're seeing here, or is this a number of cases?

Ms. Bogard: — Linda Bogard, executive director of court services. The costs that are identified here are for a number of cases, both related to young offender and adult. It's just sheer numbers.

Mr. Quennell: — So it's an increased number over the previous year is it, not any particularly expensive cases?

Ms. Bogard: — It would be a combination of just the amount of cases that we are now paying for. So I don't have, you know, one particular case that would have caused the increase.

Mr. Quennell: — All right then. Now I will return to Stonechild if that's all right. Can either the minister or the

deputy minister advise as to the current status of the judicial review?

Mr. Moen: — The judicial review has been heard by the Court of Appeal, and we're waiting a decision.

Mr. Quennell: — And the \$60,000 has been expended in preparing for the appeal or what is the anticipated . . . Where is that to be spent?

Mr. Moen: — It hasn't been expended in the sense the department hasn't paid for any expenses up to this point, but we likely will very shortly. We're expecting some bills still to arrive and those are for certain counsel that participated in that hearing.

Mr. Quennell: — So those are legal bills for legal work that has been performed for which the lawyers had not been yet paid by the ministry.

Mr. Moen: — That's right.

Mr. Quennell: — Now are those lawyers for the Ministry of Justice or are those lawyers for other organizations?

Mr. Moen: — It's I think almost entirely for the payment of fees for Mr. Halyk for the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations].

Mr. Quennell: — And is the FSIN a party to this proceeding?

Mr. Moen: — Yes.

Mr. Quennell: — And Mr. Halyk's fees in representing the FSIN at the appeal are being entirely paid by the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Moen: — No. It's a cautionary arrangement with the FSIN. And this number of 60,000 is an estimate. We are still awaiting the final amount. We expect it very shortly from the FSIN.

Mr. Quennell: — If I could ask the minister if he wants to answer it, but the deputy minister, when did this become \$60,000? I have some recollection of this matter. And can we have a history of at what point or what was expended in the payment of the FSIN legal fees in the Stonechild judicial review over a period of time because this is a number much larger than I recollect being the case in — say — 2007.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — We can provide a payment history of all of that if you like.

Mr. Quennell: — Was the decision to make an increased payment for the FSIN legal fees made since November 1, 2007?

Mr. Moen: — Yes. I mean we certainly are, you know, are estimating what the amount might be. And that estimate would have been arrived at after the January 1.

Mr. Quennell: — That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Any other questions? I give the floor to Ms. Higgins.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And I'd like to welcome the minister and the officials from Justice. Just a couple quick questions back to the ITO amount. And when the member asked the question previously whether this was a purchase of equipment or precisely what it was for, I wasn't very clear on the answer. Was this a purchase of equipment to improve telecommunications? Or does this offset what Justice now pays to ITO to provide the service — a service fee?

Mr. Sisson: — Gord Sisson, director of admin services. I'll try to be a little more precise in my answer. What this amount relates to is, some of it is the relocation of equipment into the ITO central building that they have out on Research Drive, I believe it is. Some of it is for decommissioning of the computer room at our head office at 1874 Scarth Street. And some of the money would be for putting larger pipes in to handle the data flow back and forth to those servers that would be farther off of site.

Ms. Higgins: — With these changes, did you also move to the VOIP [voice over Internet protocol] system?

Mr. Sisson: — No, we have not.

Ms. Higgins: — And also just a number.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I understand from talking to the deputy minister that it is our intention to do that.

Ms. Higgins: — And in this shift over to ITO, how many staff moved over to ITO from Justice?

Mr. Sisson: — I don't have that figure right now, but we could provide it. I believe it was somewhere around the 20 mark, but we can get that for you.

Ms. Higgins: — Good. Thank you very much. That's it, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Are there any other questions?

Okay if there are no other questions, we're going to go to the votes starting with central management and services (JU01), the amount of 300,000. Is that agreed? Courts and civil justice (JU03), 300,000, is that agreed? Legal and policy services (JU04), 225,000, is that agreed? Boards and commissions (JU08) — and that's 130,000 for human rights and 420,000 for inquiries — is that agreed?

Be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2008, the following sums for Justice and Attorney General, \$1,375,000.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Vote 3 agreed to.]

The Chair: — I'd like to thank the minister and his officials for coming. And we will now have a short recess while the Tourism moves in. Thank you.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

General Revenue Fund Supplementary Estimates — March Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport Vote 27

Subvotes (TC09), (TC03), and (TC06)

The Chair: — Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. We're here to consider estimates for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport. And I'd ask the minister to introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I certainly will. Thank you, Mr. Chair. First I'd like to introduce to my left is Deputy Minister Van Isman. And beside Mr. Isman is acting executive . . . No, sorry, I'm getting it mixed up — director of corporate services, Melinda Gorrill. And in behind me on my right is . . . What have I got here? Okay, acting executive director of culture and heritage, Susan Hetu and beside her, senior policy analyst for strategic planning and partnerships, Elizabeth Verrall. And beside Mr. . . . Have I said, introduced Melinda yet? Oh I did. Okay. There you go. Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you very much.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — If I could start with some opening comments. The new Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport facilitates economic growth and employment in many ways. We foster a community vitality and help create a rich sense of place. We contribute to a high quality of life and help ensure visitors have an authentic and quality Saskatchewan experience. We assist in sustaining Saskatchewan's future through tourism, parks, culture, heritage, and sport initiatives and programs.

Let's begin with the Saskatchewan snowmobile trail management. Through an agreement with the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association, government returns all revenue from snowmobile registration to the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association as an investment in the trail network grooming and expansion.

Snowmobiling is a major component of Saskatchewan's growing winter tourism and recreation sectors and an important driver of economic activity in the province. There has been an increase in the number of snowmobile registrations sold in 2007 and 2008, which in turn resulted in higher cost to the ministry. As this cost is offset by registration fees for snowmobiles, the net cost to government is nil.

Next is the film employment tax credit. The film employment tax credit is the key provincial financial support mechanism for the film and video industry in Saskatchewan. It contributes to the development of the film industry in the province through jobs, economic activity, and investment.

The increase in the cost of the program is due to three factors: (1) a newly imposed two-year time limit to alleviate overdue applications; (2) increase in the film employment tax credit in 2006; and (3) increased film business being done in Saskatchewan.

The introduction of the two-year limit coincided with the rise of the Canadian dollar against the US [United States] dollar, which had the effect of increasing costs for American production companies working with Saskatchewan producers. Because producers borrow against the tax credit, one way of reducing production costs is to reduce the amount of time financing is required.

Finally, the Community Initiatives Fund. The Community Initiatives Fund receives 25 per cent less 2 million of gaming revenues. The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation's actual revenues were higher than expected for 2007 and 2008, resulting in a higher amount going to the Community Initiatives Fund.

The Community Initiatives Fund encourages community-based solutions and supports the aspirations of citizens and community groups who are working to make a difference at the local level. This program allows a fixed percentage of funds to flow to the Community Initiatives Fund from the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation for distribution to community-based projects and activities.

My officials and I invite any questions you may have. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. I'd ask when you have your assistants answer for you, if they would identify themselves to make it easier for broadcast to take care of that.

And now, I give the floor to the . . . Who's going to be our first asking questions?

An Hon. Member: — The member from P.A. [Prince Albert] will be . . .

The Chair: — Mr. Furber is going to take the first questions.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the minister and her officials for being here to answer questions this evening. If we could speak first, I guess, about the snowmobile trail permits. Could you explain what is the process for government reimbursement for permits?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Okay. Certainly. And I will turn that over to my officials.

Mr. Isman: — Thank you. Van Isman speaking. As is the case with any type of motor vehicle registration, this is done through the auspices of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] and the Sask. Auto Fund, I believe. And they in turn advise us on a monthly basis how many registrations were sold at the end of each month and the monies then flowing to the General Revenue Fund of the province. We then put through a cheque requisition for a corresponding amount to flow through to the Snowmobile Association in order to support their endeavours.

Mr. Furber: — Do we pay an admin fee to SGI for that program?

Mr. Isman: — No. I don't believe that such an admin fee is done. It's a straight \$40 registration fee that is collected which we in turn pass on.

Mr. Furber: — And that would be done at any SGI-accredited insurance broker?

Mr. Isman: — My understanding is that any office that is empowered to issue licences in the province would be collecting that registration fee and then it flows back through SGI.

Mr. Furber: — Do they get a fee for administering the program?

Mr. Isman: — The individual brokers? I'm sorry, I don't have the information on that. We can gather that information and provide it to you at a future point in time in a written form.

Mr. Furber: — I'd appreciate that. Could you inform us of the regional breakdown for take-up of permits? Is there one part of the province that's more represented than others when it comes to the purchase of permits?

Mr. Isman: — We can request that information from SGI. That is not information which has been provided to us.

Mr. Furber: — Do you have any projections? This year it obviously it ran over by 2.5. Do you have any projections for permits for this year?

Mr. Isman: — Consistent with the estimate that came forward, it was projected at an increase of \$160,000. And as it stands at the current time . . . Obviously we don't have final data in for the month of March yet which we are anticipating to see in the short term. But the latest information that we currently have is we are anticipating very close or slightly greater than what that projected amount was of 710,000 between the original 550,000 plus the 160. It remains to see what the final registration numbers are for the month of March which obviously we don't have yet.

Mr. Furber: — Does the ministry have any idea how the number of permits issued compares to the number of sleds total in the province?

Mr. Isman: — Are you asking how many are out there that are not licensed or are not registered? We don't have any information, any specific information in that regard. We can try and ascertain if it's available.

Mr. Furber: — Do you think that a measure of the success of the program might be to measure it against the number of sleds in the province in total versus the number of permits purchased?

Mr. Isman: — Conceivably it would be. The issue becomes one of knowing how many sleds are actually out there.

Mr. Furber: — Yes, that would be my point. In terms of a regional breakdown, I guess it would be the same point, right? In order to determine the success of a program in a region, you'd have to know what the breakdown is for permits in that region. So I'm anxious to get that information.

In terms of the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association, do you have any ideas on their corporate structure?

Mr. Isman: — We've had some preliminary discussions with these folks that represented this organization. However in terms of reviewing their corporate structure and an annual review, that's not something that we are privy to at this point in time.

I believe the Department of Regional Economic and Co-operative Development in the previous government had been administering the program previously, and I understand that they had had a good working relationship with the organization. I believe we will as well.

Mr. Furber: — So you can't tell me how many employees they have there.

Mr. Isman: — They typically work off of volunteers in terms of the number of employees. No, I'm not privy to that.

Mr. Furber: — Do we have a hard number for the cost of administration for the program through the Snowmobile Association?

Mr. Isman: — In terms of are they utilizing all the monies that they are provided? In terms of having seen a financial statement from them as of late, no, we have not seen one during the current year.

They have been requesting that we consider looking at an increase in the fee rate for the forthcoming years, indicating to us that the amount of usage of the funds as it currently stands is not as much as they would like to see done in terms of trail development and trail grooming. So I would suspect that they are utilizing almost all of the money.

Mr. Furber: — You would suspect that they're almost using all of the money. Does the minister have a comment on whether or not that's a measure of accountability that might need checked?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — As was mentioned by the deputy minister, that should we be considering raising fees as requested by the Snowmobile Association, we will be asking for an audited statement. As far as we can see, there has been no audited statement requested within the last year, within the last six months. So should we proceed further with the request of the Snowmobile Association, we will be requesting that information.

Mr. Furber: — When was the request made?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The formal request for an audited statement has not been made as of yet. And, Mr. Chair, I'd like to . . . Asking questions and raised eyebrows are not appropriate. I would like to answer the question without comment.

So my answer to my question is that the request has not been made formally from the Snowmobile Association, and hence the formal request for an audited statement has not yet been made.

Mr. Furber: — I think both myself and the people of Saskatchewan would be more interested in the accountability provided by the ministry than the members of this side's eyebrows. I would suspect that's true.

The Chair: — Before we get into a big debate, let's stick with the questions.

Mr. Furber: — And the answers, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — I would now hand the floor over to Ms. Morin.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. So getting on, talking about the accountability, what kind of mechanisms are currently in place in terms of accountability to gauge whether or not the increase that they've asked for is warranted or needed?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The mechanism for accountability has not been in place in the past with respect to how this money is spent. When the review takes place — and we are looking at the possibility of increasing the fees as requested — we will be asking for an audited financial statement in order to see where the monies have gone to date.

Ms. Morin: — So you're saying that at this point you have no idea about the accountability of the Snowmobile Association in terms of their responsibility to the government because of the fact that they're receiving funds through this rebate program through SGI. Is that correct? Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I'm letting the deputy minister speak to that.

Mr. Isman: — Thank you. My understanding is that audited financial statements or at least financial statements — I haven't seen them — were previously provided during the previous fiscal year to Regional Economic and Co-operative Development. That is something that we will be looking for in terms of receiving again. And my understanding from discussions with the Snowmobile Association, they've been very co-operative in terms of providing us with information. So I don't see this as being particularly significant issue. But we look forward to obtaining the information that we have available and providing it to you.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you for that answer, because it seemed to me up until now without . . . It sounded like there was no accountability process in place in terms of the Snowmobile Association. But now that you've answered the question, we clearly see that there is an accountability process in place and that they have been following through on that. And I just wanted to make sure that that was on record that that is in place because it'd be worrisome if it wasn't, shall we say.

I'll hand it back to the critic responsible for this area.

The Chair: — I give the floor to Ms. Higgins.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple more questions on the snowmobile trail piece. Did you say that you were looking at a review taking place? I don't know whether I understood you correctly or not. Are you looking at a review of the program, or I'm not sure . . .

Hon. Ms. Tell: — We are being asked — not in a formal sense at this point in time; nothing formal has come through — to consider raising the current fees paid to the Snowmobile Association at the time of registration. So there's no formal review taking place at this time. However in order to determine

whether increased fees are warranted or needed, we'll of course be undertaking a review of the program.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much for that clarification. Is there any intent to go to a mandatory registration of snowmobiles, or are you looking at that at all? Or is it your intention to go in that direction?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — As far as I'm aware — and then Van, of course, I'll let you speak to this — that we haven't looked at mandatory registration to date.

Mr. Isman: — My understanding of the process that is in fact presently in existence, if somebody is registering their snowmobile for the purposes of getting a licence plate on it and insurance, that at that point in time it's not really voluntary in terms of that registration fee, that it is a requirement at that stage.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much. Obviously this has been fairly successful when you look at the number of machines where the riders or owners have purchased . . . Sorry, the registration — have registered their machines and gone with the permit that goes towards the trails. Can you tell me currently how many miles or how many kilometres of trails we would have in Saskatchewan that are looked after by the Snowmobile Association?

Mr. Isman: — I'm sorry I can't provide that information. I have seen it so we will, we will provide it to you.

Ms. Higgins: — I don't have any other questions on the snowmobile trail but I do have a few on the film tax credit so if we can move to that. Just a question about the usage at the sound stage. What kind of an occupancy rate do we have at the sound stage now and what are the bookings like at the sound stage? It seems to be busy there quite a bit and it's been a great facility for Saskatchewan. It seems to be busier than ever.

Mr. Isman: — Thank you. I'm going to defer this question to one of our officials, Ms. Susan Hetu.

Ms. Hetu: — I'm Susan Hetu. The sound stage is booked to near capacity fall, spring, and summer. The sound stage has never run at capacity during the winter months and that's because there's less demand for outside shots.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much. I actually don't have any others. It was just the one. Does anyone else have . . . sound stage? I'll turn it over to Mr. Furber.

The Chair: — I recognize Mr. Furber.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the minister tell us how many productions went through the Saskatchewan film tax credit last year?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I'm going to turn that over to Susan Hetu.

Ms. Hetu: — There were 26 productions.

Mr. Furber: — Could you inform as to how many of those qualified for a rural bonus?

Ms. Hetu: — Seventeen productions.

Mr. Furber: — And do you have a dollar figure on what was paid out in terms of the rural bonus?

Ms. Hetu: — 1.672 million.

Mr. Furber: — Is that considered a successful year under the program?

Ms. Hetu: — Seventeen productions out of 26, so I think that's good.

Mr. Furber: — Well that's great news. Could you talk about at all the overall economic spinoff for the province as a result of the program?

Ms. Hetu: — Now these are approximate numbers, given that the fiscal year isn't over yet. Direct spending in Saskatchewan is about approximately 67 million. Direct spending on Saskatchewan labour, approximately 22.8 million. Direct expenditures in Saskatchewan — that would be things like hotel rooms, catering — was approximately 45 million. The economic spinoff is for every dollar invested generates \$1.96 in economic activity.

Mr. Furber: — Could you inform as to the overall cost to government of the program?

Ms. Hetu: — The overall cost to government for the program, now are you talking about specifically the film employment tax credit? In this current year to date, it's approximately 15.4 million.

Mr. Furber: — Do you have a return on investment number that's handy there for that?

Ms. Hetu: — I think that was the number that I just gave you — for every dollar generates 1.96 in economic spinoff.

Mr. Furber: — For every dollar spent on the program by government, there was 1.96 returned on investment?

Ms. Hetu: — Could you repeat your question? Well we have to do some calculating.

Mr. Furber: — What is the return on investment for the government's portion of investment in terms of an overall economic spinoff?

Ms. Hetu: — Approximately 11 per cent.

Mr. Furber: — I think I would guess that it would be more like 1,100 per cent. If you add up the 67 and the 22 and the 48, and it's on 15.4, this expenditure, which is right? Sorry, I'm right? Okay.

Ms. Hetu: — You're right.

An Hon. Member: — He doesn't hear that very often.

Mr. Furber: — I'm not sure I believed her. So I guess I would like to hear the minister's opinion on whether or not they see

that as a satisfactory return on investment for the province.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Yes.

Mr. Furber: — Do we have an aggregate total for the number of Saskatchewan residents employed by the program?

Ms. Hetu: — Well our best estimate is that there's over 1,000 full-time jobs. That's an approximate number.

Mr. Furber: — Could the minister answer whether or not she considers the film industry to be a mature industry?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I'm sorry, could you repeat that.

Mr. Furber: — Does the minister consider the film industry to be a mature industry?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — No I don't consider it to be a mature industry, especially not in this province and probably not in Canada.

Mr. Furber: — Does the minister know how many applicants for the Saskatchewan film tax credit were denied last year?

Ms. Hetu: — Yes we do.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — There were six projects that were denied.

Mr. Furber: — Does the minister know whether or not the federal sponsorship or censorship Bill, excuse me, will jeopardize federal funding for the province?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — What question are you asking in relation to the federal?

Mr. Furber: — The Canada film or television tax credit program, which is linked with ours. Does the minister know whether or not the federal censorship Bill, in association with that credit program, will jeopardize federal funding for filmmaking in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I defer that.

Ms. Hetu: — It may. And I think what it can do is generate some fear among producers.

Mr. Furber: — Has the minister lobbied the federal government to ensure that Saskatchewan interests are taken care of with respect to the censorship Bill?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — No, I have not.

Mr. Furber: — Will the minister lobby the federal government on behalf of the Saskatchewan film industry?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Once we have an idea about what we're dealing with and making a decision as to whether that's in the best interests of the film industry in the province, we'll make that decision.

Mr. Furber: — If I could ask a general question regarding the program. Does the minister have an opinion as to whether or

not . . . Or what is the official Saskatchewan Party government's philosophy or opinion regarding the Saskatchewan film tax credit program?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The film employment tax program is something that's needed and valuable to film producers and the related industries, the actors, etc. We are constantly . . . And so therefore we like it. And it's something that's needed to be competitive right across the country.

We're constantly evaluating different jurisdictions to see what types of incentive programs that they are offering and monitoring against that, so to ensure that we continue to be competitive in Canada — and obviously we're competing with US [United States] also — to make it viable for people to produce films in this province.

So it is needed, in our opinion. And it's certainly welcomed and has produced quite phenomenal results, not necessarily all in the economic field but also with two of our films being nominated or at the Sundance Film Festival. It's just but one example of what's going on in our film industry.

Mr. Furber: — Does the minister have an opinion on what the current regime in New Mexico might mean to productions in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — No, we don't have any knowledge about that.

Mr. Furber: — They've got the most competitive tax regime for film currently in the US, and they're already taking production away from Los Angeles. And I was wondering if you had an opinion on whether or not that's something that will also affect the province's program or whether or not we've monitored what's going on there so that we can remain competitive.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — As I alluded to earlier, or I actually stated that we're constantly evaluating the program to ensure that we are competitive within Canada and with other provinces.

Mr. Furber: — Now the province of Alberta currently has a cap on their program. Is that something that your ministry would ever consider?

Ms. Hetu: — We haven't considered it yet. Again as Minister Tell suggested, we're constantly monitoring the program, so we haven't considered a cap just yet.

I think that we have a good, competitive advantage in terms of the best sound stage between Vancouver and Toronto. We have three well-trained crews, and we have SaskFilm as an excellent and a sophisticated organization who administers the film employment tax credit. They report to us monthly.

So no, we haven't considered a cap.

Mr. Furber: — Just yet.

Ms. Hetu: — Again we need to do some more monitoring of what our sister provinces are doing and certainly don't want to drive film business to other provinces by introducing a cap.

The Chair: — I now give the floor to Ms. Morin.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you very much. Just continuing on with the question about Alberta having a cap, so this is obviously, as you said, this is something that's being monitored and such. We've already seen that it's caused problems in Alberta in terms of driving some of the business, the production business out of Alberta. We're seeing producers are now saying that they're not even going to engage in those productions there because the uncertainty of whether or not they're going qualify for funding.

So that to me seems like it would be something that, you know, we wouldn't even want to take under consideration in terms of doing here because it would potentially drive production out of the province. So I wonder if the minister might be able to state unequivocally that this is something that wouldn't be imposed in Saskatchewan, that there would not be a cap imposed because we already see the results of what a cap would do in Alberta.

Mr. Isman: — At this point in time, I would suggest that we are not looking favourably towards a cap. We actually have been monitoring film employment tax credit programs in other jurisdictions, and we've seen increases in terms of what has been provided in both Ontario and British Columbia over the course of recent months.

We've watched with great interest actually what's been going on here, and interestingly enough sound stage capacity seems to be one of the most prevalent factors at the present time. Now that can change very quickly in terms of where the demand is. We're also advised through SaskFilm and Video that there are potential sound stage projects being developed both for Kelowna and Calgary in the short term of new sound stages being created, which is something that we continue to monitor because that could have impact on our program here in the utilization of the sound stage.

Accordingly at the moment, we are not looking towards a cap on the program. We have leaned away from going in that direction, but really it's how the competitiveness of the sectors in these different provinces shapes up that we need to really keep an eye on in terms of making sure that we remain competitive.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you for that. I guess I'm looking for something a little more definitive, and I'll state my reasons why.

There are certainly citizens in the film production area right now, people that are interested — engagers, etc. — who are quite concerned that Saskatchewan might move towards a cap in the film tax credit. So if we could alleviate their fears — since some of them are watching this evening — by letting them know that this is something that would not be introduced in Saskatchewan, that would be most helpful. So that's why I'm asking.

Is it something that's being considered? Because that's sort of what I'm getting out of the language that I'm hearing so far. Or is it something that we are not interested in and would not put in place? Can the minister state that unequivocally?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — What I can state is at the present time, we are not considering caps. Now I mean, what happens, everything has to be evaluated as we go forward, but at the present time, in the current situation, current circumstances, given what's happening in other provinces, we are not considering a cap.

Ms. Morin: — Okay so I will just let them surmise what they will from the answers we've gotten so far. Thank you for that.

So I'd like to ask a couple of questions again about the situation with the federal government with respect to the issue of censoring, if you want to call it that. Who is going to be able to qualify for funding given that their parameters are somewhat subjective and arbitrary, in that if it's something that's deemed distasteful or such, that it would then not qualify for funding.

You've already stated that you have not yet lobbied the federal government on this issue on behalf of Saskatchewan engagers, producers. Is this something that you intend on doing, or are we going to be able to see a letter at some point in the near future of your concerns raised on this issue as to how it could affect Saskatchewan producers? Because there's clearly a number of projects that we've seen in Saskatchewan that I would have to say might fall under the auspices of being something that may not be seen as . . . as not seen as something that we'd, you know, falling into your tasteful realm of scope.

So are we going to look forward to some lobbying on your behalf or a letter on your behalf to try and express these sentiments to the federal government?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The amount of concern with respect to what's happening federally has only been expressed to us by two people. It is not something that's high on our priority list, not high on our radar. We're not seeing any significant impact at this point in time. Don't know. If it's something that we need to address federally, then of course we will do it. At this point in time, we're not seeing the need for it. That doesn't mean that we won't if it appears as though we need to.

Ms. Morin: — I would have to say I've attended a number of productions at the Globe Theatre that could potentially, like I said, fall under the auspices, so I'm curious as to why we would want to wait until it becomes a potential problem rather than try and mitigate those circumstances by at least expressing the concern that we have for the industry in Saskatchewan, given that it's an industry that has come such a long way in such a short period of time, is providing the economic benefit that it is to the communities in Saskatchewan, the economy in Saskatchewan. I mean this is clearly something that is hugely advantageous to Saskatchewan and is giving us that competitive edge in all sorts of different ways.

So that's why I'm asking why we wouldn't want to mitigate that potentially by making the federal government aware of the fact that this is going to cause some shyness in the industry potentially about doing those productions here and not going elsewhere where those restrictions might not be in place, where they would be able to qualify for, you know, those types of funds.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I've been corrected with respect to a letter has been written, and it was written by SaskFilm to the federal

government expressing concerns about the negative impact. Now with respect to the ministry, we have not discussed the issue that's happening federally or has happened federally, so we haven't had an opportunity to figure out what needs to be said or if anything needs to be said by the ministry to the federal government.

Ms. Morin: — I thank you very much for that correction. That certainly goes a long way in terms of the concerns that I'm hearing. I mean clearly, having had a little bit of knowledge about this portfolio, I have been contacted by quite a few individuals — and more than two, I have to say — with concerns about how this is going to affect productions in Saskatchewan. So the fact that SaskFilm has already written a letter is most helpful.

I would like to suggest perhaps that the minister follow that up with her own letter because again that just adds a lot more weight to the concern for the situation and certainly gives the industry in the province the feeling that there is strong backing from the government on this issue in terms of the federal government not going to the lengths that they may have gone to if they understand that there is a strong concern for especially the smaller productions that would come under fire.

So I'm assuming that we might be able to hope for a follow-up letter from the minister on that issue. Would that be correct?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — We will certainly consider that. As I said, we have not had a chance to sit down and discuss it as a ministry at this point in time, even though SaskFilm has formulated their opinion and put their opinion forward to the federal government. And once we have an opportunity to sit down and discuss it, then that option will certainly be considered.

Ms. Morin: — Now given you haven't spoken about the area around the censorship Bill, is what I'm understanding from you, you probably won't be able to answer my next question, but I'm going to pose it anyways because maybe at some point in the future I would be able to get a response on the next question . . . and that is that given that this is currently the situation that this Bill is out there, that there is concern that it would put a scare into the industry in terms of the potential funding that they might be able to secure and because of that potential scare would then be problematic for producers in terms of securing the loans they need from the financial institutions to get that production money, to get that production in the can and then unfortunately not knowing until the end whether or not they would get the funding, you know in terms of what the outcome would be on the decision-making process from the federal government.

I'm sure I'm going to get my answer correctly on this already. I am sure that there hasn't been any discussion around the provincial table in terms of how we might mitigate that provincially, if that ends up being the case, so that we wouldn't then see small production companies being either financially done by because of this fact that they wouldn't be able to secure that federal piece of funding. Would the provincial government look at mitigating those circumstances in those cases to ensure that we have that freedom of expression in Saskatchewan and that we can make sure that we have that quality of production going forward that we have right now?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I'm just trying to figure out what the question is, Sandra.

Ms. Morin: — The question is simply, has there been any discussions at the provincial level about mitigating those circumstances potentially if that funding does negatively impact the productions in Saskatchewan and then we see the hardship incurred by those productions or those producers here in the province? Would the provincial government look at mitigating those circumstances through financial means?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — We have not yet sat down and discussed it. We don't know what the impediments are, what the hardships are going to be should this be enacted. And until such time, you know we need an opportunity here following our budget process to sit down and discuss this.

And with respect to assistance, well I can't . . . We have to cross that bridge when we come to it. We don't know what we're going to be dealing with should it be enacted. It may come to the point where it may not be so, but we need to have a discussion as a ministry to figure out where we're coming from, okay.

Ms. Morin: — I thank you for that answer. I assumed that that was going to be your response because you already talked about the fact that there wasn't a large discussion around this piece yet. But I just wanted to get that question on record because as I said this is something that is of concern in the industry right now. Those questions are out there, and these are things that we have to consider going forward if that becomes a reality. Those are my questions, Mr. Chair, and my colleague from Regina Rosemont has some questions as well. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you. And I give the floor to Mr. Wotherspoon.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Minister, and your officials for attending here tonight. Just picking up on some of the last line of questioning here, I ask the minister if she feels that it would be prudent to have a report put together to study the implications and to encapsulate what those implications are, fairly quickly, or if you find it prudent to get those implications stated to the best of your abilities.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — We have not had an opportunity to even discuss this at a rudimentary level, dealing with the issue in Ottawa. And for me to say it would be the time to put together a report, I just don't know. We haven't even had a chance to discuss it.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I guess back to the minister. We have a pretty significant industry here in Saskatchewan — one that's blossomed, one that's really growing, one that's important to the culture and vibrancy of Regina and Saskatoon and actually across the province. We have some changes that have come forward through legislative changes federally. I guess I ask you again: do you believe it's prudent as the minister to understand the implications of that federal program on your provincial program?

Mr. Isman: — It is certainly the intent of the ministry to study the situation and continue to monitor it. My understanding is

that at the federal level right now, there's been a lot of discussion as to how this would actually be enacted and implemented. And that's one of the things that we do have some folks in the ministry that are in fact watching that carefully.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — That's good to hear. It might be nice for our minister as well to possibly involve herself on levels of discussions, if that's an ongoing process, for our federal government right now to establish those terms and those conditions to make sure that we have, I guess, a circumstance that allows our industry to continue to thrive. Does the minister agree with me?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — The industry continuing to thrive, and survive and thrive, in this province is a great concern and is something that is something we believe in. And the film tax credit and its continuance is something that speaks to that.

In relation to the situation evolving ... or has evolved in Ottawa and the rollout, as I said, we haven't had a chance to discuss it. We need to have an opportunity to discuss it as a ministry. And if it is prudent and if the circumstances are such that we must take a further action, then we will. If it isn't, then we won't.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you. I oblige the minister to definitely follow up on that and to ensure that we understand the implications very shortly as to what impact we may see from the federal government's actions. Thank you very much.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Absolutely. And we will ensure you get that information.

The Chair: — Deb.

Ms. Higgins: — I just have a couple of questions ...

The Chair: — I give the floor to Ms. Higgins then.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple of questions about the CIF [Community Initiatives Fund] grants. Obviously it has been a good year in the gaming industry when we see this kind of money, additional money going into the CIF. And I was just curious as to the distribution portion for grants and funding out of the CIF.

Mr. Isman: — I'm going to ask one of our officials, Elizabeth Verrall to step up. And Elizabeth works closely with the program on a regular basis and is best able to answer that question.

Ms. Higgins: — Even if we could get a little broader of an explanation of the CIF and how the money is distributed throughout the province. There is a number of new members, and it probably would be good timing.

Ms. Verrall: — Okay. I'm Elizabeth Verrall. And the Community Initiatives Fund does have a distribution strategy that's set periodically, and the current one that we're in breaks the money into a handful of areas. The main program is called the Community Initiatives Fund, and it is currently \$2.7 million, and it's for community-based projects. And it goes out through

the ... the grants are reviewed regionally through the intersectoral committees for human service delivery.

We have a few other components. One is the urban Aboriginal community grant program that's at \$620,000 annually. It goes to 14 municipalities that have been designated as having high urban Aboriginal populations. And it goes to community-based projects largely for community activities for children and youth and leadership development.

We have another component that has to do with physical activity, and that's 1.7 million annually; 1.4 of that is going to the Saskatchewan In Motion program which is a province-wide public marketing program that promotes people increasing their physical activity. Then we also have other strategic physical activity initiatives that are funded out of that component.

We have the problem gambling contribution which is half a million dollars a year that goes to support problem gambling, prevention, and treatment programs. And then we have the exhibition association's component which are mitigation payments that were negotiated at the time of gaming expansion that go out to those casino associations that were affected when the gaming corporation was established.

Ms. Higgins: — I have a question, and I'm not sure if I'm asking the right department or not. There is a program for summer employment that, my understanding is that it was always tied to the CIF. Now whether they are separate and just put together by this group or whether they are both administered through the same department, I'm not positive. But it's called the Student Employment Experience, and it runs summer programs and has to do with rural communities and regional activities.

And my understanding is that this application, the normal applications have been due by March 15. But up on the website currently, it says that it's being reviewed, and that the process will be delayed this year.

Now my only concern is, is that all of these programs are delivery into rural areas. So I can name you a number of regional parks and small communities — Craik, Bethune, just to name two off the top of my head — that normally access some of these dollars for summer employment for students in their area, and they run summer activity programs tied to the In Motion program and other things. So it's developed over probably five years, has been very successful and runs wellness, leadership initiatives for youth in the areas. This is all in rural areas. It's in smaller communities and in regional parks.

And to see a program like this delayed, we run the risk of having some cutbacks in these programs. So I'm not sure if these are tied. But I hope the review is done quickly because we could see some cutbacks in these programs over the summer in smaller communities in rural areas of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Isman: — Thank you. The Student Employment Experience program, experience employment program — SEE program as we refer to it — now resides with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Labour and Employment and is not tied into the CIF.

Ms. Higgins: — Not at all?

Mr. Isman: — No I . . .

Ms. Verrall: — What happens is, at the regional level, the regional intersectoral committees are . . . they get involved in that program as well as the Community Initiatives Fund. So they're looking at both. So from their perspective, they may seem related, but they're quite separate financially and actually out of different ministries.

Ms. Higgins: — While the program delivery, program money, and staffing money may come from different areas, they are important. And I would hope, if you have the opportunity . . . I'll bring it up with the appropriate minister. And I hope that maybe you can pass it along that we need this to be up and running quickly, or we will see a number of programs, successful programs in rural Saskatchewan that will have to be cut back. And that would be a shame, just for the sake of reviewing and it being a bad time of year.

While you've talked about the different components within the CIF and the different areas that the money is distributed to, do we still have the same mechanism, or what type of a mechanism are you using to decide where the grants and where the funding goes? Do you still have the arm's-length board of trustees and the regional committees that will make decisions on distribution of funding?

Ms. Verrall: — Yes.

Ms. Higgins: — It's the same. Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: — Are there any other questions? Mr. Furber.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you. Can the minister tell us if there have been any changes in eligibility requirement for qualifying for the CIF?

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I'll turn that over to the official.

Ms. Verrall: — There was an order in council that was approved that clarified that — I'll try to get the list — that included schools, school districts, municipalities, and health regions could apply on behalf of community-based, community-led projects.

Mr. Furber: — Has there been a change in the decision-making process?

Ms. Verrall: — There hasn't been significant changes. The basic structure is the same. There are different components, and they each have their own, but all grants are approved by the board.

Mr. Furber: — Have there been any changes to those boards?

Mr. Isman: — As is customary, people are from time to time have been on boards and their term of appointment expires. And currently one of the board members . . . I'm going to ask Elizabeth the gentleman's name who has stepped down.

Ms. Verrall: — Joe McKay.

Mr. Isman: — Joe McKay. Joe McKay has stepped down but also the gentleman from . . .

Ms. Verrall: — Oh, Lance Brown.

Mr. Isman: — Lance Brown. Thank you. Have both indicated that it's time for them to move on and that they're stepping down from the board. We're going through a process of trying to determine new board members. There are two other board members that their appointments also expire, and they've indicated possible interest in terms of staying on the board.

We're reviewing that. But one of the things that we take a look at is a little bit of turnover on the board on a regular basis, but we want to see some continuity for decision-making purposes. And there's certainly been a number of other folks that have come forward and indicated interest. A lot of those people have come forward, actually had raised their interest in being on the board in previous years.

Mr. Furber: — How many people make up the board?

Ms. Verrall: — Eight.

Mr. Furber: — So there've only been two, so it's only 25 per cent turnover on the board thus far.

Mr. Isman: — That's correct.

Mr. Furber: — Okay. Are there any funds that are unexpended under the program?

Ms. Verrall: — Yes. Yes.

Mr. Furber: — What's the dollar figure?

Ms. Verrall: — From their last audit . . . This is actual to year-end. At the end of '06-07, we were at just over \$3 million.

Mr. Furber: — Could the minister answer whether or not in those changes to the board, in those changes for eligibility, are there any exclusions?

Ms. Verrall: — There's no exclusions in the changes. Is that the question? Did the changes include exclusions?

Mr. Furber: — Yes.

Ms. Verrall: — No.

Mr. Furber: — Could the minister give a bit of a breakdown of the expenditures of the program, rural versus urban?

Mr. Isman: — I'm sorry. That's information that we don't have available at the present time. We'll be happy to ascertain it and provide it to you.

Mr. Furber: — I'd be pleased to see that. Thank you. That's it for myself, Mr. Chair. Ms. Morin has some questions.

The Chair: — I yield the floor to Ms. Morin.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you. Just a couple of quick questions

because it's piqued my interest. In terms of the changes that have been made to the eligibility process for the CIF fund, you've already clarified that schools have been included — school districts — and I didn't catch the third entity.

Mr. Furber: — Health.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you. And why were those changes made?

Ms. Verrall: — The changes were made to facilitate grassroots organizations being able to access funds to support community-driven activities. So what was happening was they were wanting to have the access to the . . . The access to the grant was being frustrated by the lack of capacity in the grassroots organizations to apply for the money. So what they wanted to do was have the school or, you know, a more established organization facilitate that. So that's why the order in council does say that the grant doesn't fund the school per se. It funds the community-based activity.

Ms. Morin: — You've already stated that there was a surplus of funds in the CIF program, so adding more ability to access the program would obviously be something that could be accommodated potentially within the funds that are available. Do we foresee a need for more funds to be going into the CIF fund, given that there's been an expansion of application eligibility?

Mr. Isman: — The monies that flow through from the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation, the 25 per cent of their profits less the 2 million that flows off to the Clarence Campeau Development Fund is the number that we've been working with and working with the most recent projection in terms of trying to gauge where the expenditures should be. We would like to see more. We would encourage Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation to continue to see their profits enhanced so that we can see more dollars going back into these types of activities. But given the resources that we've had to work with, I think that the board has done an excellent job in terms of making that allocation.

Ms. Morin: — Do we foresee a potential problem though in terms of now having to potentially deny projects that are making application to a CIF program by having the expanded application eligibility? Is that something that we see as problematic, or do we see ourselves as being able to accommodate that within the funds that are going to be available to the CIF fund?

Ms. Verrall: — Yes, there's not a concern there with an uptake that the fund wouldn't be able to handle.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you. Those are my questions.

The Chair: — Thank you. And if there are no other questions, we will go for the vote. Oh sorry?

Ms. Higgins: — I would just like to pass along a thank you to the minister and her officials for being here this evening to answer our variety of questions. Thank you very much.

The Chair: — All right. We'll go right into the votes. First from Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sports, recreation (TC09) for

160,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Culture (TC03) for 2,500,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Community Initiative Fund (TC06), 2,322,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: —

Be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12th month ending March 31, 2008, the following sums: for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sports, 4,982,000.

Could I invite a member to so move that?

Ms. Wilson: — I so move.

The Chair: — And agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[Vote 27 agreed to.]

The Chair: — We will now go on to considering the reports. And the minister and her officials could leave, and we're going to run through this report. Thank you very much for your time here. We appreciate it.

Okay. You have been distributed a copy of the report. Are there any questions? If not, I'd ask Mr. Bradshaw to move the report.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Yes. I move:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

The Chair: — The question before the committee is:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice be adopted and presented to the Assembly.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That includes the agenda for tonight. Would someone move adjournment?

Mr. Bradshaw: — I move we adjourn.

The Chair: — Thank you one and all. Good night.

[The committee adjourned at 20:50.]